



# NORTH DAKOTA

A State Fact Sheet for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children



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The Brookdale Foundation

Across the United States, more than 6 million children are being raised in households headed by grandparents and other relatives; 2.5 million children are in these households without any parents present. As the children's parents struggle with substance abuse, mental illness, incarceration, economic hardship, divorce, domestic violence, and other challenges, these caregivers provide a vital safety net to children inside and outside of the foster care system. This fact sheet provides important information and resources for the grandparents and other relatives raising children in your state.

## National and State Data\*



### The Children

- Nationally, 4.5 million children are living in grandparent-headed households (6.3% of all children under age 18). This represents a 30% increase from 1990 to 2000.
- There are another 1.5 million children in the United States who are living in households headed by other relatives (2.1% of all children under 18).
- In North Dakota there are 3,901 children living in grandparent-headed households (2.4% of all children in the state). There are another 1,079 children living in households headed by other relatives (0.7 % of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in North Dakota, 2,414 are living there without either parent present.



### The Grandparents

- Nationally, 2.4 million grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them: 29% of these grandparents are African American; 17% are Hispanic/Latino; 2% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3% are Asian; and 47% are White. 34% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present. 71% are under the age of 60; 19% live in poverty.
- In North Dakota, 2,547 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [223 in Fargo]: 3% of these grandparents are African American; 1% is Hispanic/Latino; 35% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; and 62% are White. 41% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present. 74% are under the age of 60; 19% live in poverty.



### Additional Information

- United States Census data on grandparents who are responsible for meeting the basic needs of their grandchildren can also be broken down by county, congressional district, and other categories. Log on to <http://factfinder.census.gov>. Additional data on grandparents and grandchildren are available at [www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/briefs.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/briefs.html).
- Additional national and state data on grandparents raising children is available on AARP's website at [www.aarp.org/grandparents](http://www.aarp.org/grandparents).

\* These data are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau Table DP-2. Profile Selected Social Characteristics:2000.



## Programs That Can Help

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- *The North Dakota Department of Human Services Aging Services Division* offers several programs that serve eligible grandparents and other relatives raising children, including Family Home Care which provides room, board, supervisory care, and personal services for an elderly or disabled adult or child. The Department also offers the Senior Infoline at 1-800-451-8693, a free confidential service that provides information for seniors who are providing full-time care for a loved one. The Senior Infoline also has a web site, <http://ndsenioreinfoline.com>, for senior caregivers, including grandparents and other relative caregivers raising children. The Aging Services Division also offers the Family Caregiver Support Program. The program provides information referrals to local services and supports, and offers assistance from a trained caregiver coordinator to help assess the specific needs of caregivers. In addition, the program also offers counseling, holds support group meetings, training, and respite care services. *Contact:* Judy Tschider, program administrator, at (701) 328-4643 or [jtschider@nd.gov](mailto:jtschider@nd.gov).
- *The YWCA Minot* offers a range of support services for grandparents and other relatives raising children, including support groups, a database and listing of information and other services in the local area, and other resources. The YWCA Minot also offers support and individualized referrals over the phone. *Contact:* Barb Kapple at (701) 838-1812 or [barbywca@srt.com](mailto:barbywca@srt.com).

## Children in Foster Care

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Sometimes state child welfare agencies place children in foster care with grandparents or other relatives. Most state agencies call these placements “kinship care.” In North Dakota, the Department of Human Services foster care program is supervised by the state, but run by local counties. Each county has a different office of social services, which offers counseling, referrals, and other support, as needed to kinship care families.

*Number of children in kinship care:* In December 2006, there were 2,209 children in the foster care system under the supervision of the Department of Human Services. Of these children, 569 were placed with relatives in licensed and unlicensed homes.

*Preferences for kinship care:* State policy requires that kin be considered first when an out-of-home placement is sought for a child under the Department’s care.

*Kinship care licensing:* Kin have to meet the same licensing standards and receive the same foster care payment rate as non-kin foster parents.

*Subsidized guardianship programs:* In addition to foster care payments and other benefits available to kin raising children in foster care, some states also have subsidized guardianship programs. Most of these programs offer ongoing subsidies to children who have left foster care to live permanently under the legal custody or guardianship of relatives. North Dakota offers a subsidized guardianship program that provides a subsidy to qualified relatives and non-related caregivers caring for children in the child welfare system between the ages of 12 and 18, after they have obtained guardianship from the court. The subsidy is also available for children under 12 if they are part of a sibling group, and children over 18 if they are still in school. Prospective guardians must undergo a complete home assessment. Criminal background checks are conducted for all adults in the home. *Contact:* Deb Petry, Director, Subsidized Guardianship Program, Department of Human Services, at (701) 328-3581 or [sepetd@nd.gov](mailto:sepetd@nd.gov).

*State kinship care contact:* Questions about kinship foster placements should be directed to Don Snyder, Department of Human Services, at (701) 328-2316 or [sosnyd@nd.gov](mailto:sosnyd@nd.gov). Information can also be found on the North Dakota Department of Human Services website. The website offers resources for families caring for children in the foster care system, including information about foster parent qualifications, adoption opportunities, and American Indian Fostering at [www.ndfosterparent.com](http://www.ndfosterparent.com).

*Training and support for kinship foster parents:* For training and support for foster parents, including kinship foster parents, contact James Schnabel, President, North Dakota Foster Parents Association at (701) 684-6211 or [jmpmfarm@drtel.net](mailto:jmpmfarm@drtel.net).

## Public Benefits

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Children are often eligible for state and federal benefits even if their caregivers do not have legal guardianship or custody. These programs include:

**Financial Assistance:** Cash assistance may be available to children and their grandparents and other relative caregivers through the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Program.

- A “child-only grant” is for the child and based *only* on the child’s income.
- An adult caregiver may also be included in the grant — based on their income and subject to work requirements and time limits.

Call (800) 755-2716 (in-state only) or (701) 328-2332 or log on to [www.state.nd.us/humanservices](http://www.state.nd.us/humanservices).

**Food Stamps:** Kinship care families may be eligible for food stamps to help meet their children’s food and nutrition needs. For more information, call (800) 755-2716 (in-state only) or (701) 328-2328 or log on to [www.state.nd.us/humanservices](http://www.state.nd.us/humanservices).

**Health Insurance:** Grandparents and other relative caregivers may apply for free or low-cost health insurance on behalf of the children they are raising through North Dakota’s Medicaid and Healthy Steps programs. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free health coverage under Medicaid. For more information about how to apply for these programs, call 1-877-543-7669 or log on to [www.state.nd.us/childrenshealth](http://www.state.nd.us/childrenshealth).

**Other Benefits:** Other state and federal benefits may also be available to eligible children, such as child care subsidies, disability benefits, and special education services. For more information about these, download CDF’s benefit guides for grandparents and other relatives raising children at [www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org) or call (202) 662-3568. For more information on the federal benefits that may be available to caregivers, log on to the National Council on Aging’s Benefits CheckUp web site at [www.benefitscheckup.org](http://www.benefitscheckup.org).

## State Laws

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The following state laws may be helpful to grandparents and other relatives raising children<sup>1</sup>:

**Medical Consent (N.D. Cent. Code § 23-12-13):** This law includes a list of those adults who may be consulted when medical treatment is needed for a minor. Beginning with the child’s parent or legal guardian, “grandparents of the patient who have maintained significant contacts” with the child are also listed among those who may be provide informed consent if a parent or legal guardian is not available.

<sup>1</sup> *Laws change and are subject to different interpretations. These general descriptions are not intended as legal advice in any particular situation.*

## National Resources

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AARP Grandparent Information Center	(888) 687-2277	<a href="http://www.aarp.org/grandparents">www.aarp.org/grandparents</a>
Child Welfare Information Gateway	(800) 394-3366	<a href="http://www.childwelfare.gov">http://www.childwelfare.gov</a>
The Brookdale Foundation	(212) 308 -7355	<a href="http://www.brookdalefoundation.org">www.brookdalefoundation.org</a>
Child Welfare League of America	(202) 638-2952	<a href="http://www.cwla.org">www.cwla.org</a>
Children’s Defense Fund	(202) 628-8787	<a href="http://www.childrensdefense.org">www.childrensdefense.org</a>
Generations United	(202) 289-3979	<a href="http://www.gu.org">www.gu.org</a>

Grandfamilies of America	(866) 272-3761	<a href="http://www.grandfamiliesofamerica.com">www.grandfamiliesofamerica.com</a>
GrandsPlace	(860) 763-5789	<a href="http://www.grandsplace.org">www.grandsplace.org</a>
KINship Information Network	(772) 501-0502	<a href="http://www.kinsupport.org">www.kinsupport.org</a>
National Committee of Grandparents For Children's Rights	(866) 624-9900	<a href="http://www.grandparentsforchildren.org">www.grandparentsforchildren.org</a>
National Eldercare Locator	(800) 677-1116	<a href="http://www.eldercare.gov">www.eldercare.gov</a>

*Fact sheets are updated annually. Changes or additions should be e-mailed to the AARP Grandparent Information Center at [gic@aar.org](mailto:gic@aar.org). Please write "State Fact Sheets" on your e-mail subject line.*