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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 Rhode Island, there are 11,231 children living in grandparent-headed households (4.5% of all children in the state). There are another 3,372 children living in households headed by other relatives (1.4% of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Rhode Island, 5,170 are living there without either parent present.

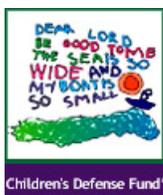
### *The Grandparents*

- 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 Rhode Island, 5,060 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [1,219 in Providence]: 9% of these grandparents are African American; 16% are Hispanic/Latino; 1% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; 5% are Asian; and 65% are White. 36% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present. 70% are under the age of 60; 16% 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,

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and other categories. Log on to [factfinder.census.gov](http://factfinder.census.gov). Additional data on grandparents and grandchildren are available at [www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/cen2000/briefs.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/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 Rhode Island Department of Elderly Affairs* offers KidKamp Connection for relative caregivers over the age of 60 and children being raised by grandparents and other relatives under the age of 18. KidKamp provides scholarships for the children to participate in camp during summer and school vacations, as well as other recreational programs during the year. The program offers respite for both the children and the caregivers. KidCamp is funded through the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP). *Contact:* Joan D'Agostino, Chief, Program Development, Department of Elderly Affairs at (401) 462-0507 or [joand@dea.state.ri.us](mailto:joand@dea.state.ri.us).

## 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 Rhode Island, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) reports:

*Number of children in kinship care:* As of February 1, 2007 there were 1,683 children in out-of-home placements under the DCYF's supervision. Of these children, 673 were placed with kin.

*Preferences for kinship care:* State policy requires that kin be considered first when an out-of-home placement is sought for a child under DCYF's care. State law further requires that the department's social workers search for kin and assess possible kinship placements during the first 30 days that the case is open.

*Kinship care licensing:* There is no separate licensing program for kinship foster parents. Kin have to meet the same licensing standards and requirements 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. Rhode Island has a policy memorandum which authorizes relative caregivers to receive guardianship subsidies. The ongoing permanency assistance payment is the same as the state's rate for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) with an incremental payment for each additional child. It is granted only to those who pass DCYF qualifications. *Contact:* Diane Savage, Department of Children, Youth, and Families, Post Adoption/ICAMA Administrator,, at (401) 254-7020 or [diane.savage@dcyf.ri.gov](mailto:diane.savage@dcyf.ri.gov).

*State kinship care contact:* Questions about kinship foster care placements should be directed to Maureen Robbins, Department of Children, Youth, and Families, Chief Casework Supervisor, at (401) 528-3799 or [maureen.robbins@dcyf.ri.gov](mailto:maureen.robbins@dcyf.ri.gov).

## 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 Family Independence Program (FIP).

- 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 (401) 462-5300 or log on to [www.dhs.state.ri.us/dhs/famchild/dfipgm.htm](http://www.dhs.state.ri.us/dhs/famchild/dfipgm.htm).

**Food Stamps:** Kinship care families may also be eligible for food stamps to help meet their children’s food and nutrition needs. For more information, log on to [www.dhs.state.ri.us/dhs/famchild/fsfamchi.htm](http://www.dhs.state.ri.us/dhs/famchild/fsfamchi.htm) or call (800) 282-7021.

**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 RIte Care, a Medicaid expansion program. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free coverage under Medicaid. For more information about how to apply for RIte Care, call (401) 462-5300 or log on to [www.dhs.state.ri.us/dhs/famchild/shcare.htm](http://www.dhs.state.ri.us/dhs/famchild/shcare.htm).

**AARP Foundation Benefits QuickLINK:** Other state and federal benefits may also be available to eligible children and caregivers, such as disability benefits, prescription drug coverage and support from other programs. To help connect grandfamilies with the programs that are right for them, the AARP Foundation Benefits Outreach Program offers Benefits QuickLINK, a free and easy-to-use on-line tool at [www.aarp.org/quicklink](http://www.aarp.org/quicklink).

## State Laws

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

**Educational Enrollment (R.I. Gen laws sec. 16-64-1):** When parents die, abandon a child, or are unable to care for the child due to illness or family break-up, Rhode Island law considers a child a resident of the town where child lives with legal guardian, natural guardian, or other person acting in loco parentis (as the child’s parent).

<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>             |
| The Brookdale Foundation                                 | (212) 308 -7355 | <a href="http://www.brookdalefoundation.org">www.brookdalefoundation.org</a>         |
| Child Welfare Information Gateway                        | (800) 394-3366  | <a href="http://www.childwelfare.gov">www.childwelfare.gov</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>                         |
| National Aging Information Center                        | (202) 619-0724  | <a href="http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov">www.aoa.dhhs.gov</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@aarp.org](mailto:gic@aarp.org). Please write “State Fact Sheets” on your e-mail subject line.*

