



The Brookdale  
Foundation



# SOUTH CAROLINA

A State Fact Sheet for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children



May 2007

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 South Carolina, there are 90,866 children living in grandparent-headed households (9.0% of all children in the state). There are another 21,178 children living in households headed by other relatives (2.1% of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in South Carolina, 49,894 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 South Carolina, 51,755 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [1,073 in North Charleston and 944 in Charleston]: 55% of these grandparents are African American; 1% are Hispanic/Latino; and 42% are White. 40% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present. 72% are under the age of 60; 24% 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 [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 Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging, Area Agencies on Aging, Councils on Aging and local community service providers** across the state provide support to family caregivers in South Carolina through the Family Caregiver Support Program. In South Carolina, 11 Family Caregiver Advocates are available to assist older grandparents and other relatives (60 and older) who are raising children (18 and younger). Call to receive one-on-one assistance and support, information about resources in your area, counseling, support groups, respite and other services, educational materials and caregiver tips, or the Grandparents Raising Children newsletter. *Contact:* Eve Barth at (803) 734-9872 or [barthe@aging.sc.gov](mailto:barthe@aging.sc.gov). The website is [www.aging.sc.gov](http://www.aging.sc.gov).
- **Parents Anonymous** is a non-profit organization that offers support to parents and kinship caregivers. Parents Anonymous offers support groups for caregivers across the state, including relative caregivers. These groups also provide kinship care families with information on child development and discipline techniques and referrals to local resources. *Contact:* Sharon Dean, Program Director, at (843) 747-0480, (800) 326-8621 or [sharrondean@bellsouth.net](mailto:sharrondean@bellsouth.net) or log on to [www.parentsanonymousofsouthcarolina.org](http://www.parentsanonymousofsouthcarolina.org).
- **Pee Dee Community Action Agency Head Start** has a "Kin Folks Program" which has collaborated with community partners and program members to develop a guide for parenting education training. "Kin Folks" who are unemployed or unable to return to work are encouraged to participate in daily Head Start activities with the children. This program increases awareness of information and benefits to help strengthen kinship care families. *Contact:* Kathryn Woods, Head Start Director, at (843) 678-3414 or [kwoods@pdcaaheadstart.org](mailto:kwoods@pdcaaheadstart.org), and Eleanora Hennigan, at (843) 676-8521.
- **Support groups** for grandparents raising grandchildren in South Carolina include:
  - Grandparents Raising Children, Beaufort – *Contact:* (843) 322-5414 or [stcsp@hargray.com](mailto:stcsp@hargray.com).
  - Grandparents Raising Children, Catawba – *Contact:* Help Educate Loving Partners (803) 230-1814 or [lizzy29704@aol.com](mailto:lizzy29704@aol.com)
  - Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Columbia – meeting location: Columbia Bethlehem Community Center *Contact:* Joe Ritchey at (803) 376-5390.
  - Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Saluda – meeting location: Communities in School – *Contact:* Barbara Wright at (864) 941-8067 or [bwright@uppersavannah.com](mailto:bwright@uppersavannah.com).
  - Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Sumter – meeting location: Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments- *Contact:* Toni Brew at (803) 775-7381.

## 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 South Carolina, the Department of Social Services, Division of Foster Care Licensing reports:

**Number of children in kinship care:** As of November 2006, there were 5,270 children in out-of-home placements under Department's care. Of these children, approximately 367 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 the Department's care.

**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 the foster care system, some states 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. South Carolina currently does not have a subsidized guardianship program.

**State kinship care contact:** Questions about kinship foster care placements should be directed to Thomas E. Harris, Sr., South Carolina Department of Social Services, Out of Home Care Unit, at (803) 898-7726 or [teharrissr@dss.state.sc.us](mailto:teharrissr@dss.state.sc.us).

## 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.

- 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 (803) 898-7462 or log on to [www.state.sc.us/dss/fi/index.html](http://www.state.sc.us/dss/fi/index.html).

**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, call 1-800-768-5700 or log on to [www.healthyhelpings.org/food\\_stamp.htm](http://www.healthyhelpings.org/food_stamp.htm).

**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 South Carolina’s Partners for Healthy Children program. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free coverage under Medicaid. For more information about Partner’s for Healthy Children, call (888) 549-0820 or log on to [www.dhhs.state.sc.us](http://www.dhhs.state.sc.us) and search the term “South Carolina Partners for Healthy Children.”

**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 (S.C. Code Ann. § 59-63-32):** This law allows an adult caring for a child to enroll the child in school by signing an affidavit confirming that the child’s residency in the district is not primarily related to attending a particular school in the district and that the adult accepts responsibility for the child’s educational decisions, including receiving discipline notices, attending conferences, and giving permission to participate in school activities.

<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.*