



VERMONT

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 Vermont, there are 4,067 children living in grandparent-headed households (2.8% of all children in the state). There are another 966 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 Vermont, 1,838 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 Vermont, 1,934 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [74 in Burlington]: .1% of these grandparents are African American; .5% are Hispanic/Latino; 1% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; 2% are Asian; and 96% are White. 49% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present. 70% are under the age of 60; 10% 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/socdemo/cen2000/briefs.html.

- Additional national and state data on grandparents raising children is available on AARP's website at 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

- **Vermont Kin as Parents (VKAP)** is committed to supporting relatives who are raising children and educating the public and community partners about the joys and difficulties these families experience. VKAP published a monthly newsletter, VCAP Voices, holds an annual kinship care conference each April, assists caregivers families with information and referrals, meets with community members to help develop support groups, educates service providers and community members through presentations and meetings, and represents the voice of kinship caregivers on the state and local level. *Contact:* Lynn Granger, Coordinator, at (802) 338-4725 or kinlmg@com or info@vermontkinasparents.org. The website is www.vermontkinasparents.org.
- **Grandparents as Parents (G.A.P.)** provides support, education, and advocacy for kinship care families across Vermont. In addition to support groups at the Milton Family Community Center and the Winooski Educational Center, members of G.A.P. make presentations to organizations across Vermont that are interested in starting similar support groups and related activities. In addition, G.A.P. provides referrals and offers a monthly newsletter for caregivers and agencies. *Contact:* Charlotte Parot at (802) 893-1457 or parotch@yahoo.com.
- **Kinship Care Support Groups in Vermont** include the following:
 - **Grandparents as Parents, Milton:** First Monday of the month at the Winooski Educational Center in Winooski. Other Mondays at the Milton Family Community Center, Milton. From 6:30 to 6:00 p.m. Child care provided. *Contact:* Charlotte Parot at (802) 893-1457.
 - **Grandparents Raising Their Children's Children Support Groups:**
 - **First Wednesday** of each month at Williamstown Elementary School from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Onsite childcare provided.
 - **Second Thursday** of the month from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Bethany Church in Montpelier; childcare provided; pot luck if interested.
 - **Third Tuesday** of the month at the Wesley Methodist Church, Main Street, Waterbury, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Light refreshments and onsite child care provided.
 - **Fourth Monday** of the month in the Woodbury Community Room in the town of Woodbury from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Childcare and snacks provided. For more information, call Evelyn Sawyer at (802) 433-1513.
 - **Grandparents Together:** Third Monday of the month at the PCC in St. Johnsbury, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Potluck. For more information, call Chris at (802) 892-6176.
 - **GRASP: Grandparents & Relatives As Surrogate Parents:** Second and fourth Mondays from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at the Vermont Achievement Center (VAC) on Park Street in Rutland. Childcare and food provided at each meeting. For more information, call Alison Grant at (802) 773-2381.
 - **Kinship and Foster Care Support Group:** Every Thursday from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. in the Early Education Services Conference Room, 130 Birge Street, Brattleboro. Childcare available by reservation. For information, call David or Jennifer at (802) 254-3742.

- **Lamoille Valley Kin As Parents:** Second and fourth Thursdays of the month from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at the Lamoille Family Center in Morrisville. Dinner and childcare provided. For more info, call Rhonda Barr at (802) 888-1376.

Children in Foster Care

Sometimes state child welfare agencies place children in foster care with grandparents or other relatives. Most state agencies call these placements “kinship care.” In Vermont, the Department for Children and Families reports:

Number of children in kinship care: As of March 2007, there were approximately 1,150 children in out-of-home placements under the Department’s supervision. Of those children, 150 children 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. Kin are required to attend the same training as other foster parent applicants and have the option of requesting an exemption using the same process as other applicants.

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. Vermont currently does not have a subsidized guardianship program.

State kinship care contact: Questions about kinship foster licensing placements should be directed to Lucy Abair, Department for Children and Families, Residential Licensing Unit, at (802) 241-2159 or lucy.abair@ahs.state.vt.us.

Resources for kinship foster parents: Partners In Service (PINS) is a non-profit organization contracted with the state of Vermont to act as a liaison that links religious congregations with children in the state’s custody. Through PINS, congregations provide children in foster care with such items as sporting equipment and tuition to summer camps. PINS’ services are available statewide. **Contact:** Rebecca Strader, Program Director, at (802) 241-2123 or Rebecca.strader@ahs.state.vt.us.

Public Benefits

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 Reach Up, the Vermont District Programs.

- 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 1-(800) 287-0589 or log on to www.dpath.state.vt.us/Programs_Pages/Reach_Up/Reach_Up.htm.

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 1-(800) 287-0589 or log on to www.dpath.state.vt.us and click on “food expenses.”

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 Vermont’s Dr. Dynasaur Program. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free health coverage under Medicaid. For more information about how to apply for Dr. Dynasaur, call 1-(800) 250-8427 or log on to www.dsw.state.vt.us/Programs_Pages/healthcare.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.

State Laws

The following state law may be helpful to grandparents and other relatives raising children¹:

Educational Enrollment (VT. Stat. Ann. tit. 16 § 1093): This law allows non-resident students to attend school at the discretion of the school board.

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

National Resources

AARP Grandparent Information Center	(888) 687-2277	www.aarp.org/grandparents
The Brookdale Foundation	(212) 308 -7355	www.brookdalefoundation.org
Child Welfare Information Gateway	(800) 394-3366	www.childwelfare.gov
Child Welfare League of America	(202) 638-2952	www.cwla.org
Children’s Defense Fund	(202) 628-8787	www.childrensdefense.org
Generations United	(202) 289-3979	www.gu.org
Grandfamilies of America	(866) 272-3761	www.grandfamiliesofamerica.com
GrandsPlace	(860) 763-5789	www.grandsplace.org
National Aging Information Center	(202) 619-0724	www.aoa.dhhs.gov
National Committee of Grandparents For Children’s Rights	(866) 624-9900	www.grandparentsforchildren.org
National Eldercare Locator	(800) 677-1116	www.eldercare.gov

Fact sheets are updated annually. Changes or additions should be e-mailed to the AARP Grandparent Information Center at gic@aarp.org. Please write “State Fact Sheets” on your e-mail subject line.