



WYOMING

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 Wyoming, there are 5,150 children living in grandparent-headed households (4.0% of all children in the state). There are another 1,229 children living in households headed by other relatives (1.0% of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Wyoming, 2,738 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 Wyoming, 3,582 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [340 in Cheyenne and 267 in Casper]: 1% of these grandparents are African American; 10% are Hispanic/Latino; 13% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; 2% are Asian; and 73% are White. 38% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present. 74% are under the age of 60; 13% 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

- **Wyoming Kinship Advocacy** is a collaborative effort of Community Action of Laramie County and Casey Family Programs. Monthly conversations and dialogue are open to kinship care families in Laramie County and surrounding areas on the third Thursday of each month at the Senior Activity Center in Cheyenne from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. A free meal and child care are included. Issues such as medical assistance, legal matters, child care and financial resources are discussed. *Contact:* Alice Carter, Casey Family Programs, at (307) 638-2564 (ext. 283) or jackson6197@msn.com or Dianne Johnson at (307) 638-2564 (ext. 283) or dianne@wyomingkinshipadvocacy.com. The organization’s website is www.wyomingkinshipadvocacy.com.
- **The Wyoming Department of Health, Aging Division** is responsible for the National Family Caregiver Support Program, a federal program which provides services to grandparents who are the guardians of children 18 years of age or younger. These services include respite care, counseling, information and referrals. The program serves every county in the state. *Contact:* Kim Latta, Program Manager, National Family Caregiver Support Program, Wyoming Department of Health, Aging Division, (800) 442-2766 or klatta@state.wy.us.
- **The Wyoming Department of Family Services** in collaboration with Prevent Child Abuse Wyoming has established a statewide Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP). The program offers five new support groups for kinship care families raising children outside of the child welfare system across the state. In addition to support groups, the Department is also developing a service network of local organizations serving kinship care families as well as to offer kinship care trainings for members of the professional community and other interested individuals. *Contact:* Zaffer Sharif, Social Services Consultant, Wyoming Department of Family Services, at (307) 777-6203 or zshari@state.wy.us or Charlene Smith, Prevent Child Abuse Wyoming, at (307) 637-8622 or info@pcawyoming.org.
- **Kin and Kids** is a grassroots group of grandparents and other relatives raising children in Wyoming. Located in the Lyman area, the group offers statewide support, information, and referrals to Wyoming grandfamilies. As its numbers grow, the group also intends to engage in legislative efforts to improve the lives of children and their families. *Contact:* Susan Henningson, Kin and Kids, at (307) 786-2142 or kinandkids@yahoo.com.

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 Wyoming, the Department of Family Services (DFS) reports:

Number of children in kinship care: As of June 2006, Wyoming DFS had a total of 1,371 children in all types of out-of-home placements (including juvenile justice placements). Of these children, 204 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 an abused or neglected child.

Kinship care licensing: There is no separate licensing program for kinship foster parents. Kin have to meet the same licensing standards and training 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 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. In Wyoming, if family financial concerns are the only barrier to legal guardianship, DFS may negotiate a subsidy with the family caring for the child. The amount of the subsidy will be negotiated between the family and the local field office staff, similar to an adoption subsidy. The subsidy may be initiated once the guardianship is ordered.

Funding for the program is contingent upon the availability of state money and is subject to termination at the annual review if funds are not available. *Contact:* Zaffer Sharif, Social Services Consultant, Wyoming Department of Family Services, at (307) 777-6203 or zshari@state.wy.us.

State kinship care contact: Questions about kinship foster placements should be directed to Zaffer Sharif, Social Services Consultant, Wyoming Department of Family Services, at (307) 777-6203 or zshari@state.wy.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 Wyoming’s Personal Opportunities With Employment Responsibility (POWER) 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 (307) 777-7290 or (307) 777-5841 or log on to <http://dfsweb.state.wy.us/POWER.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 1-800-457-3659 or (307) 777-6786 or log on to www.dfsweb.state.wy.us/foodstampinfo.html.

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 the Wyoming Medicaid and Kid Care programs. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free coverage under Medicaid. For more information about how to apply for Medicaid, call (800) 251-1268 (in Cheyenne, call (307) 772-8402) or log on to <http://wyequalitycare.acs-inc.com>. For information about Kid Care, call (877) 543-7669 or log on to <http://kidcare.state.wy.us>.

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:

Standby Guardianship (WYO. STAT. § 3-2-108): This law allows a child’s parent or legal guardian to appoint a standby guardian to assume the care of the child upon the death or incapacity of the parent or guardian.

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.