



CALIFORNIA

A State Fact Sheet for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children



September 2005

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 California there are 625,934 children living in grandparent-headed households (6.8% of all children in the state). There are another 327,623 children living in households headed by other relatives (3.5% of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in California, 389,631 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 California, 294,969 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [30,511 in Los Angeles and 8,840 in San Diego]: 12% of these grandparents are African American; 42% are Hispanic/Latino; 9% are Asian; 1% are American Indian and Alaskan Native and 33% are White. 25% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present.

Additional Information

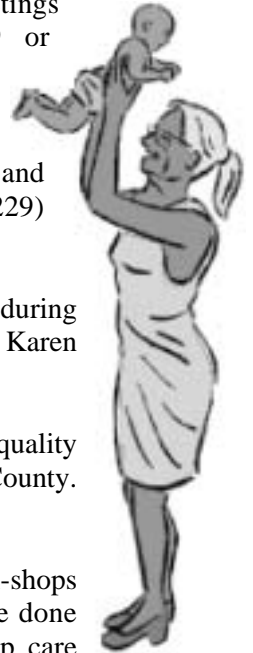
- United States Census data on grandparents who are responsible for meeting the basic needs of their grandchildren can also be broken down by county, congressional district, and other categories. Log on to <http://factfinder.census.gov>. Additional data on grandparents and grandchildren are available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

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



Programs That Can Help

- **The Brookdale Foundation** has funded three projects in recent years in California through its Relatives As Parents Program (“RAPP”) initiative: Grandparent Caregiver Resource Center in San Jose, Jewish Family Services South Bay, and West Coast Children’s Center in Oakland. The Grandparent Caregiver Resource Center, sponsored by Catholic Charities of San Jose, is the sole provider of comprehensive year-round kinship care services in Santa Clara County. Services include: support groups, a “warmline,” case management, health screenings, a resource library, educational seminars, recreation and respite activities, resource referrals, advocacy, and assistance with legal guardianship processes. *Contact:* Beth Berezovsky, Program Social Worker, at (408) 325-5194 or bberezovsky@ccsj.org.
- **West Coast Children’s Center** runs year-round support groups meeting twice a month, a tutorial program for children raised by kinship caregivers (held concurrently with caregiver support groups), and educational meetings covering topics chosen by caregivers. *Contact:* Lenora Poe, Ph.D., at (510) 845-7189 or poe@sbcglobal.net.
- **The Relative Caregiver Program** provides case management services, home health care evaluations, information and referral services, support groups, parent education, parent/child group activities, and other supports to relatives caring for children of family members. *Contact:* Dr. LaVerne Worthy at (229) 931-5138 or lgw@canes.gsw.edu.
- **Jewish Family Services South Bay** holds weekly support groups for caregivers and their children during the school months and educational forums twice yearly open to all kinship caregivers. *Contact:* Karen Tobias, RAPP Program Coordinator, at (310) 540-6646 or jfssouthbay@jfsla.org.
- **BANANAS, Inc.**, a non-profit based in Oakland, helps grandparents and other relative caregivers find quality child care, subsidies for child care, support groups, and other related services in Northern Alameda County. *Contact:* Arlyce Currie, Program Director, at (510) 658-7353 or BANANAS@bananasinc.org.
- **California Community Colleges** currently receive funds to provide educational programs and work-shops for kinship caregivers. This statewide program is built upon the work that community colleges have done for over 25 years in California providing education and training for foster parents and kinship care providers working with foster children and youth. Sixty-five community colleges currently participate in the program. The State Chancellor’s Office of the California Community Colleges provides oversight and works closely with the State Department of Social Services and local community colleges. *Contact:* Lucy Berger, Coordinator of Foster and Kinship Care Education, at (916) 323-5276, or Lberger@cccoco.edu.
- **The Kinship Support Services Program (KSSP)** provides State funds to eligible counties having a minimum of 40% of county foster children in relative care. KSSP encourages collaborations between county social service departments and private non-profit agencies. The agencies provide supportive services to relative caregiver families whose children are dependents of the county social services or juvenile court systems or who are at risk of dependency or delinquency. Currently, 11 counties participate, 10 in collaboration with local non-profits who provide the direct services. There are a total of 22 sites in Alameda, Contra Costa, Los Angeles, Monterey, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Stanislaus. *Contact:* Lou Del Gaudio, MSW, Manager, Kinship Care Policy & Support Unit, California Department of Social Services, at (916) 657-1858 or lgaudio@dss.ca.gov.
- **Grandma’s House**, a program of Children’s Institute International (CII), provides kinship care support services in the Los Angeles area. Drop-in counseling and assessments for children and families are available along with weekly support groups and social/recreational activities for relative caregivers and their children. In addition, referrals to CII and other community programs for child care, legal aid, medical and developmental services for children, child and family mental health services, etc., are offered as core services. *Contact:* Frances Crawford, Program Coordinator, at (213) 807-1821 or fcrawford@childrensinstitute.org. The Institute’s website address is www.childrensinstitute.org.



- ***Grandparents as Parents*** is a non-profit organization serving the greater Los Angeles area. Its mission is to provide programs and services that meet the urgent and ongoing needs of grandparents and other relatives raising children at-risk. The program provides families with food, medication, help with utilities, and many other services. GAP currently runs seven weekly support groups throughout the area and publishes a quarterly newsletter, sponsors family social events and hosts educational events, including an annual conference. *Contact:* Laurence Gordon at (818) 727-9160 (ext. 3003) or laurencegordon@sbcglobal.net.
- ***The Relative as Parents Program (RAPP)*** at the Hathaway Family Resource Center in Los Angeles offers a variety of services and supports for grandparents and other relatives raising children, including a support group, children's therapeutic playgroup and family-centered therapeutic and recreational opportunities. The families in RAPP also participate in L.A. Bridges tutoring program and the Family Development Network case management program which links them to family and individual counseling services. *Contact:* Silvia Esqueda at (323) 257-9600 or sesqueda@hathawaychildren.org.
- ***Edgewood Center for Children and Families (ECCF) Kinship Support Network (KSN)*** provides full service, center-based kinship programs in collaboration with the San Francisco and San Mateo Departments of Social Services to kinship care families in and outside of the foster care and juvenile justice systems. Services include support groups, case management and emergency response services, recreation and respite, advocacy and mental health assessments. *Contact:* Falope Fatunmise, Program Director, at (650) 588-9580 or falopef@edgewoodcenter.org.
- ***Aldea Treatment Family Center*** is a non-profit agency that provides services to kinship families including: support groups for caregivers in Vallejo, Vacaville and Fairfield; support groups for children (including a mental health component and art therapy); educational workshops; and social events for families (picnics and holiday parties). *Contact:* Barbara Stone, Coordinator, Kinship Project, at (707) 557-4560, ext. 8104, or bastone@aldeainc.org.
- ***Grandparents Parenting . . . Again (GPA)***, a Northern California non-profit organization, has been supporting grandparents and other relatives since 1995. GPA offers eight monthly support groups throughout the county, facilitates four monthly self-help guardianship clinics (in conjunction with Sonoma County Superior Court), holds several family gatherings annually, including a children's holiday party and holds an annual kinship care conference for relative caregivers and professionals. *Contact:* Anne Pierce at (707) 566-8676 or grands@sonic.net.
- ***California Coalition of Grandparents & Relative Care givers (CCG/RC)*** is a statewide coalition of support groups organized in 1992 to provide a networking opportunity for individual support groups to share resources and information and to raise public awareness about kinship families' needs. It currently meets twice yearly in Sacramento, using the occasion to network with other kinship caregivers and to meet with state legislators. *Contact:* Lenora Poe, Ph.D., at 510-845-7189 or lenorapoe@aol.com.
- ***Grandparents as Parents, Inc., (GAP)***, a non-profit organization, has worked in the Los Angeles metropolitan area since 1987. It currently runs 7 support groups in Sherman Oaks, Inglewood, Panorama City, Pasadena, Carson, Long Beach and Compton. The groups meet weekly and child care is provided during some meetings. GAP also publishes a quarterly newsletter, sponsors family outings and educational workshops, hosts a holiday party and annual conference, and maintains a clothing exchange and warm line for information and referrals. *Contacts:* Sylvie de Toledo at (818) 789-1177, or Barbara Wasson at (714) 761-2231 or glwasson@juno.com.
- ***The Grandparent Advocacy Network of Northern California (NorCal)*** is a non-profit organization serving relative caregivers and smaller support groups throughout the northern counties of the state. NorCal is a coalition of individuals organized to educate local officials, social agencies, and the general public about those who are raising the children of relatives, their situations, needs, and achievements. To accomplish these goals, the group publishes a monthly newsletter, serves on numerous planning committees, and participates in community forums, workshops, and discussion groups. In addition, monthly activities are planned for the families, including special events around holidays and seasonal celebrations. *Contact:* Sandy Weiss at (888) 594-KIDS, (530) 756-0183 or weissbk@cs.com.



- ***Grandparents & Relatives as Second Parents (GRP)*** began providing supportive services to Northern California, East Bay relative caregivers in 1988 with a Warm Line. It now offers two support groups in Oakland that offer intergenerational activities, peer support and counseling, and education and health workshops. *Contact:* Julienne Brown, MSW, Executive Director, at (510) 567-1163 or gaspoaklnd@aol.com. The Warm Line number is (510) 568-7786.
- ***Kinship Care Unit of the City of Los Angeles Department of Aging*** provides kinship care services and resources. *Contact:* Jane Stumbo, MSG, MPA, Acting Director, Program Development Division at (213) 252-4034 or jstumbo@mailbox.lacity.org. Kinship care directories and legal guides can be obtained by calling (213) 252-4032.
- ***Advocacy Organizations:*** California recognized early the need to educate the public, public officials/agencies and private non-profit agencies about the concerns and issues that kinship care families face. Organizations such as AARP California and the California Welfare Directors' Association (CWDA) work to address kinship family needs through advocacy initiatives, education of members and county/regional activities. Legislative lobbying on behalf of kinship families has been a focus of California Partnership for Children (CPC) (a Sacramento-based organization) since the early 1990's. CPC took an early leadership role in developing and lobbying for legislation supporting the needs of kinship families. *Contacts:* Kimberly Smith, AARP Associate State Director, at (626) 585-2603 or kmsmith@aarp.org; Frank Mecca, Executive Director, CWDA at (916) 443-1749 or fmecca@cwda.org.

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 California, the Department of Social Services (DSS) reports:

Number of children in kinship care: As of January 2003, there were 94,544 children in out-of-home placements. Of these children, 32,717 (34.6%) were placed with kin. As of June 2003, 15,676 children in kin homes have left the foster care system via the KinGAP program (described below).

Preferences for kinship care: State law and regulation require that when a child is placed in foster care by a county, a county social worker and court must give preferential consideration to certain relatives including grandparents, aunts, uncles, and siblings.

Kinship care licensing: A relative's home is exempt from foster home licensure but must be assessed by standards equivalent to licensure and approved by a county social worker. Social workers and courts must consider specific factors when assessing a relative to decide whether to place the child.

Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment (Kin-GAP) Program: California's Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment (Kin-GAP) Program is a subsidized guardianship program for children in foster care who have lived with relatives for at least 12 months. KinGAP payments are equal to the basic foster care rate. The program is administered at the county level with the State providing policy oversight and training. *Contact:* Lou Del Gaudio, MSW, Manager, Kincare Policy & Support Unit, California Department of Social Services, at (916) 657-1858 or lgaudio@dss.ca.gov.

State kinship care contact: Questions about kinship care should be directed to Lou Del Gaudio, MSW, Manager, Kinship Care Policy & Support Unit, California Department of Social Services, at (916) 657-1858 or lgaudio@dss.ca.gov.

Training and support for kinship foster parents: Lilliput Children's Services is a KinNet site in Sacramento that provides a monthly support group for relatives raising children under the care of the foster care system and an interactive children's group during the support group meeting. Other services provided include: resource referrals, a reference library, and information on permanency options. Training for child welfare professionals is also available. *Contact:* Karen Alvord, at (916) 830-7722 or kalvord@lilliput.com.

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 California’s Cal Works 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) 952-5253 or log on to www.dss.cahwnet.gov/cdssweb/California_169.htm.

Food Stamps: Kinship families may also be eligible for food stamps to help meet their children’s food and nutrition needs. For more information, call (800) 852-5253 or log on to www.dss.cahwnet.gov/foodstamps/.

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 Medi-Cal or Healthy Families programs. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free coverage under Medi-Cal. For more information about how to apply for these programs, call 1-800-880-5305 or log on to www.healthyfamilies.ca.gov. For a free guide on Medi-Cal and Healthy Families for kinship care families, call the California office of the Children’s Defense Fund at (510) 663-3224.

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 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.

State Laws

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

Kinship Adoption [(CAL. WELF. & INST. CODE, §§ 309(a), (d), 319, 355(a), 358.1(b), (e), 361(b), 361.3, 361.5(a), (b)(13), 366(c), 366.21(e), (f), (g), 366.22(a), 366.23(e), 387(a), 366.3(f), 16501.1(f)(4), (7), (9), 16501.1(i); Family Code §§8714.5, 8714.7, 8715; Education Code § 1228.1) (1997)] : This law creates a new permanency option for relatives. It establishes standards to guide social service agencies and the courts in determining when it is in the best interests of the child to place her/him with a relative caregiver.

Bridge Funding to Continue Foster Care Payments to Adopting Relatives (CAL. WELF. & INST. CODE § 11404.2) (1995) : This law provides that, when a child qualified for foster care is living with a relative caregiver, that relative is eligible for payments for the period between relinquishment of parental rights until the adoption by the relative is finalized.

Medical Consent (CAL. FAM. CODE, §§ 6550 & 6552): This law creates a “caregiver’s authorization affidavit” that gives the relative caregiver authority to request treatment by health care providers.

Educational Consent (CAL. FAM. CODE, §§ 6550 & 6552; Education Code § 48204): See “Medical Consent” above. Same affidavit gives the relative caregiver authority to enroll child(ren) in school and to authorize school-related medical care.

Standby Guardianship (CAL. PROB. CODE, § 2105): This law provides for successor guardianships where the current

relative caregiver is either elderly or in ill health. It allows the caregiver to identify a preferred guardian to care for her/his child(ren) upon her/his death or incapacity.

Probate Guardianship (CAL. PROB. CODE, § 1514): This law is used to create formal guardianship status for relative caregivers whose children are not in the state dependency system.

Welfare-to-Work Exemption (CAL. WELF. & INST. CODE, § 11320.3 (b) (4)): A relative caregiver for a Kin-GAP child, a foster child or a child “at-risk” of entering foster care can continue to receive welfare benefits without meeting work requirements or using up the 60 month time limit (as long as caring for the child inhibits the caregiver from working or the caregiver is over 65).

Child Support Cooperation (MPP § 82-510.5): A Kin-GAP, foster care or child-only welfare grant cannot be reduced if a caregiver relative refuses to cooperate with the state in locating the parent for purposes of collecting child support.

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
Adoption Information Clearinghouse	(888) 251-0075	http://naic.acf.hhs.gov/
The Brookdale Foundation Group	(212) 308 -7355	www.brookdalefoundation.org
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
GrandsPlace	860) 763-5789	www.grandsplace.com
KINship Information Network	(772) 501-0502	www.kinsupport.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
The Urban Institute	(202) 833-7200	www.urban.org

Fact sheets are updated quarterly. 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.