



WASHINGTON

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 Washington, there are 61,905 children living in grandparent-headed households (4.1% of all children in the state). There are another 24,086 children living in households headed by other relatives (1.6% of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Washington, 35,761 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 Washington, 35,341 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [2,180 in Seattle and 1,856 in Tacoma]: 6% of these grandparents are African American; 10% are Hispanic/Latino; 5% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; 6% are Asian; and 70% are White. 39% of these grandparents live in household without the children's parents present.

Additional Information

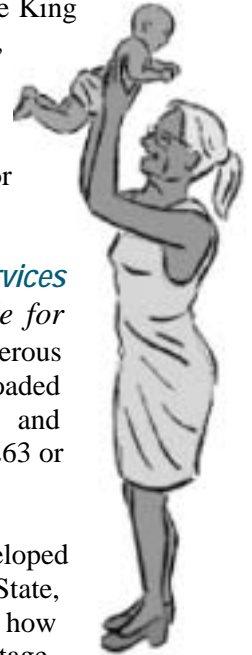
- United States Census data on grandparents who are responsible for meeting the basic needs of their grandchildren can also be broken down by county, congressional district, and other categories. Log on to <http://factfinder.census.gov>. Additional data on grandparents and grandchildren are available 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 Cooperative Extension-Washington State University, Aging and Disability Services Administration*, and the State Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP) Coalition developed a Relatives as Parents website in 2001. This site contains information on the 40+ grandparent and relative support groups in Washington, legal resources, legislative reports, kinship media coverage links to other related websites, a video lending library, articles on how to start and maintain support groups, and access to new resource guides. Visit this site at <http://parenting.wsu.edu/relative/index.htm>.
- *Columbia Legal Services and the Northwest Justice Project* are statewide programs that provide legal assistance to kinship caregivers. The Northwest Justice Project serves all of Washington except King County, which is served by Columbia Legal Services. Kinship caregivers in the King County region may receive assistance in the areas of family law, benefits, housing, education, and at-risk youth through Columbia Legal Services after a case assessment and determination that the office has the resources to represent the caregiver. Kinship caregivers in the King County region may also go to the Northwest Justice Project website, www.nwjusticeproject.org, and look under the King County Legal Resources site for further information on legal resources available to them. Kinship caregivers in the remaining counties in Washington state may call the Northwest Justice Project CLEAR Line at 1-888-201-1014 to have their case assessed and receive information and referrals. *Contact:* Columbia Legal Services at (206) 464-5911 or www.washingtonlawhelp.org.
- *The Aging and Disability Services Administration of the Department of Social and Health Services* along with the State RAPP Coalition has compiled *Relatives as Parents: A Resource Guide for Relatives Raising Children* (publication number DSHS 22-996[x]). This guide provides numerous community, state, and federal resources to help relatives who are raising children. It can be downloaded from www.adsa.dshs.wa.gov/topics/caregiving/RAPP.htm. *Contact:* Hilari Hauptman, Aging and Disability Services Administration, P.O. Box 45600, Olympia, WA 9 8504-5600, call (800) 422-3263 or e-mail: hauptp@dshs.wa.gov.
- *Mediation for Kinship Caregivers: An Alternative to the Courtroom* is a ten minute video, developed by the State RAPP Coalition in partnership with the Dispute Resolution Centers of Washington State, that educates viewers (e.g. relatives, support group leaders, mediators, and parents of children) on how mediation can work to resolve family conflicts. It is available for purchase at \$25.00 plus postage. *Contact:* Aging and Disability Services Administration, P.O. Box 45600, Olympia, WA 98504-5 600, Attention: Hilari Hauptman or call (360) 725-2556 or: hauptp@dshs.wa.gov.
- *The National Family Care giver Support Program (FCSP)* offers support groups, parenting classes, information about available services, respite care, and a family counseling service to relative caregivers over age 60 who are caring for children under age 19. The programs are offered in many areas around the state and can be accessed through local Area Agencies on Aging. Certain eligibility rules apply, and services vary by geographic area. Additionally, for family or other unpaid caregivers caring for someone 19 years of age and over, additional services are available throughout the state through the FCSP. To find out more, log on to www.aasa.dshs.wa.gov and click on “caregiving.”
- *Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP) Coalition:* A coalition of roughly 40 public and private organizations, kinship advocates and caregivers meet to address issues facing kinship caregivers across the state, as well as develop information and public awareness. A Brookdale Foundation grant provided the initial funding for this Statewide RAPP Coalition. In 2003, in conjunction with Washington State’s tenth annual Kinship Caregiver Day and the Governor’s Proclamation, the RAPP Coalition developed the Statewide Kinship Care Awards to present to both kinship caregivers and advocates. In addition, the Brookdale Foundation funded the Washington State Native Kinship Care Initiative in 2003. Six tribes are participating in a Native American Kinship Care Needs Assessment, regional native kinship conferences, development of native kinship support groups, and the sharing of Native kinship legal and resource materials. *Contact:* Hilari Hauptman, Department of Social and Disability Services (DSHS), Aging and Adult Services, at (360) 725-2556 or hauptp@dshs.wa.gov.



- ***The Northwest Washington Area Agency on Aging*** has a Tribal Outreach Coordinator who is heading up a Grandparents Raising Grandchildren project. A new support group is underway for kinship caregivers located on the Lummi Reservation. The Nooksack Indian Tribe is also implementing a similar support group. In addition, an information and resource guide entitled, *Grandparents Raising Grandchildren*, was completed. This guide includes a summary of the Indian Child Welfare Act, self-care tips, information on children, and grief and chemical dependency in the family. The guide is being distributed to the six tribes in the three county area. Assistance with locating accessible legal assistance is also available. *Contact:* Sharon Wolf, Northwest Regional Council, at (360) 676-6749 or wolfs1@dshs.wa.gov.
- ***The East County Senior Center*** runs a Grandparents Support Group for kinship caregivers and their families in eastern Snohomish County. The program provides support group meetings twice a month with child care, respite activities for children and grandparents, and education opportunities for caregivers within the community. A free dinner is provided at 6:00 for everyone. At 7:00, the children go to the Boys' & Girls' Club while the caregivers have a support group meeting. The Center also provides speakers at support meetings to address the needs and concerns of the caregivers. *Contact:* Krysta Gibson at (360) 794-6359 or ecsdirector@earthlink.net.
- ***The Casey Family Grandparents Reparenting Group*** meets at the Casey Family Program Seattle Division every Wednesday from 12:30 -2:00. The group meets weekly for a series of meetings and then skips two weeks before beginning a new series (thus caregivers should call before attending to ensure that there is a meeting scheduled for that week). This support group is very well-established and welcomes new members. Childcare is offered during the support group upon request. Expert speakers are invited from time to time to address various issues. *Contact:* Abbey Moon at 206-731-2557 or abbey.moon@metrokc.gov, or Casey Family Programs at 206-322-6711.
- ***The Family Support Center in Olympia*** offers a variety of supportive services to relative caregivers and the children they are raising, including the following:
 - The Kinship Support Group is an on-going support group for grandparents and relatives raising children. This weekly group provides emotional support, peer support, and focuses on issues such as grandparent advocacy, preparing children for school, after-school and summer activities, etc. This group is free with childcare available for children up to 12 years of age. The group is held every Thursday, 6:30 - 8:00 pm. Potluck dinners are held, in addition, on the last Thursday of each month.
 - Kinship Comfort is a monthly respite service that is FREE for relative caregivers. As part of a partnership between the Family Support Center and the Hands On Children's Museum, relative caregivers can bring their children to the museum on the second Saturday of the month, at no charge, from 5:30 to 9:00 pm. The caregivers can drop the children off and come back to pick them up, taking a needed break in between. Caregivers must pre-register for Comfort Nights by calling the Children's Hands On Museum at 956-0818.
 - Kinship Navigator Services provide individual support and referrals to kinship families including, when needed, accompanying relative caregivers to community service agencies, legislative hearings, and other community events and forums. The Kinship Navigator program also conducts "Parenting A Second Time Around" education to Kinship providers, distributes a quarterly Kinship Connections newsletter, and holds community conferences.

Contact: Marianne Lambert, Executive Director at (360) 754-2629 or Patty Gregory, Kinship Navigator at (360) 754-2629 *2.
- ***The Pierce County Relatives Raising Children*** program provides support, education, and advocacy to relative caregivers living in Pierce County. Partnering with community service providers, schools, faith community, and Pierce County Aging and Long Term Care has strengthened the program and has resulted in unique program offerings. PCRRC is the only countywide, staffed program in the state of Washington. *Contact:* Edith Owen, Coordinator, PCRRC at (253) 565-4484, Ext. 104 or edith@cfgcpc.org.
- ***Parents Again: Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Relative Children*** organizes support groups and provides monthly newsletters, information and referrals, and a library of kinship care materials. It coordinates children's therapy groups and provides advocacy services to relative caregivers in Clark County. It also has contact with groups in

adjoining Cowlitz County and has some respite care services. *Contact:* Viola Hansel, Program Coordinator, at (360) 695-1325, or violah@chs-wa.org.

- **Casey Family Programs Yakama Division Office** has partnered with the Yakama Nation to support kinship caregivers through case management, funding for home-based services such as housing, food, and clothing, providing emotional support to caregivers, and by offering both long-term and short-term services. This program works with caregivers to help them take advantage of available services in their community. It utilizes a culturally-integrated curriculum designed by tribes in South Dakota for its monthly support meetings and for the development of educational materials. A community-based advisory committee provides feedback to the program to help improve services and supports and to identify additional needs. The program also provides youth group programs for topics ranging from anger management to cooking and car maintenance. *Contact:* Jenece Yeahpau-Howe, Casey Family Programs, at (509) 865-1895 or jhowe@casey.org or Nila Whiteshirt-Sears, Casey Family Programs, at (509) 865-1876 or nwhiteshirt-sears@casey.org.
- **The Relatives Raising Relatives** program at the Children’s Home Society in Spokane is a nine-year-old program that provides twice-monthly support groups, counseling services, and information and referral services. With a grant from the Brookdale Foundation Group’s Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP), services have been expanded to include speakers on a variety of topics affecting kin caregivers, respite care, activity days, activities and social events for relative caregiver families, and a full-day kinship care conference. *Contact:* Betsy Blake at (509) 747-4174 or betsyb@chs-wa.org.
- **Washington’s Kinship Caregivers Support Program (KCSP)** is for kinship caregivers who are not involved with the formal child welfare system. The program is designed to help grandparents and other relatives (of any age) who are raising children with financial help for items like clothes, food, car seats, etc. The program also helps to link these caregivers with other sources of financial support such as TANF child only, utility discounts, etc. To find out the local county point of contact for the KCSP, call the Aging and Disability Services Administration at (800) 422-3263 or go to <http://www.adsa.dshs.wa.gov/topics/caregiving/caregiving.htm>.
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- **The Kinship Care Solutions Project** is a program of the King County Bar Association. The project screens cases for referral to volunteer attorneys to represent the petitioner in Nonparental Custody cases. Clients must be income eligible and either reside in King County or have a case pending in King County Superior Court. *Contact:* Judy Lin, King County Bar Association, (206) 267-7023.
- **A new video, Legal Options for Grandparents and Relatives Raising Children in Washington State**, showcases a presentation by Rebecca Morrow, former Kinship Legal Fellow with Columbia Legal Services in Seattle. The video lasts one hour 25 minutes and explains the various legal options including third party custody, guardianship, adoption, etc. available to relatives in Washington state. Copies of the video, along with handouts, can be obtained by contacting the Relatives as Parents Program at (800) 422-3263 ((360) 725-2556 in Olympia), or by emailing hauptp@dshs.wa.gov.



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 Washington, the Department of Social and Health Services, Children’s Administration reports:

Number of children in kinship care: In FY 2004, there were approximately 15,000 children in out-of-home placements in Washington State. Of these children, 5,542 were placed with kin.

Preferences for kinship care: Washington law and policy requires that when an out-of-home placement is necessary, the preference of the Department is to place the child with relatives, as long as safety concerns and the best interest of the child are primary considerations.

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. The Resource Family Training Institute also offers training opportunities to relative and kinship caregivers as well as 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. Washington does not have a subsidized guardianship program.

State kinship care contact: Questions about kin foster care placements should be directed to Barbara Bofinger, MSW, Foster Care & Kinship Care Program Manager, at (360) 902-7986 or boba300@dshs.wa.gov.

Resource guide for kinship foster caregivers: The Children’s Administration of the Washington Department of Social and Health Services has developed *A Relative’s Guide to Child Welfare Services* (publication number DSHS 22-492X, 5/01). This guide was developed to help extended family members meet the needs of children when their parents are unable to care for them. It is focused on those relative caregivers who are working with Child Protective Services or Child Welfare Services on behalf of a child in their family. **Contact:** The Department of Printing, fax is (360) 586-8831 or jenn@prt.wa.gov. Provide the publication number, quantity wanted, your mailing address, and phone number.

Training and support for kinship foster parents: The Foster Parent Association of Washington State (FPAWS) provides programs and supports to foster parents, including kinship foster parents. A goal of FPAWS is to work collaboratively with individuals and organizations on issues relating to kinship or foster placement. **Contact:** (800) 391-2273 or info@fpaws.org.

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 Washington’s TANF 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) 737-0617 or log on to www1.dshs.wa.gov.

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 (800) 737-0617 or log on to www1.dshs.wa.gov.

Health Insurance: Children who receive a TANF grant automatically receive medical coverage. Children who are not eligible for or do not apply for a TANF grant can receive free or low cost medical coverage from Children’s Medical Programs. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free coverage. For more information about how to apply, call Healthy Kids Now at (877) 543-7669 or log on to <http://fortress.wa.gov/dshs/maa/index.html>.

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 2001 Washington State Legislature directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to study the prevalence and needs of families who are raising related children. The study was to compare services and policies of Washington State with the other states that have a high rate of kinship care placements in lieu of other foster care placements. The study was also to identify possible changes in services and policies that are likely to increase appropriate kinship care placements. The report, *Kinship Care in Washington State: Prevalence, Policy, and Needs* is now available from the Washington State Institute of Public Policy at www.wsipp.wa.gov/childfamily/FosterCare.html or (360) 586-2677. The 2002 Legislature unanimously passed legislation that required the Department of Social & Health Services to develop a work group outlining relevant kinship care issues and to propose policy options for addressing these issues. The Kinship Care Workgroup’s report developed and prioritized 23 recommendations related to financial needs, legal issues, social services and system change. The report is available at www.aasa.dshs.wa.gov/topics/caregiving/documents/kinshipcare.pdf.

The Kinship Care bill, Substitute House Bill 1233 was passed during the 2003 legislative session. The law requires:

- ◆ The Department of Social & Health Services (DSHS) to develop a standardized statewide protocol for relative search activities and develop a policy for conducting active outreach efforts to identify and locate relatives during initial and ongoing searches.
- ◆ DSHS to collaborate with one or more nonprofit community-based agencies to develop a grant proposal to establish a minimum of two kinship care navigator pilot projects to assist caregivers with understanding and navigating the system of services for children in out-of-home care.
- ◆ DSHS to establish an oversight committee to monitor, guide, and report on kinship care recommendations and implementation activities as well as be responsible for implementing a public awareness campaign.

For a copy of the bill, log on to http://parenting.wsu.edu/Relative/1233-s_sl.pdf.

The Kinship Care Oversight Committee was established in the Fall of 2003 and has provided guidance in finding, supporting, and strengthening kinship care families. The Kinship Oversight Committee is a collaboration of kinship caregivers, child advocates, legislative staff, foster parents, and representatives of state agencies, non-profit service providers, tribes, and the legal community.

Washington’s Kinship Navigator Program was created by a subcommittee of the Washington State Kinship Oversight Committee. Casey Family Programs funded two pilot programs for one year – one Navigator program in Yakima and the other in Seattle. The Navigator programs provide an array of services to kinship families and assist in navigating the system of services for children in out-of-home care including information and referral, advocacy, and support. For more information about the Kinship Navigator Program, contact Hilari Hauptman at haupthp@dshs.wa.gov or (800) 422-3263.

To access the 2004 Washington State Kinship Care Oversight Committee Report to the Legislature, go to www1.dshs.wa.gov and under “Quick Links,” click on “Legislative,” then “Reports to the Legislature,” then “Foster Care” and scroll down until you see the Kinship Care Oversight Committee Report, dated December 2004 and click on it.

Washington’s Kinship Care Medical Care, Substitute House Bill 1281 (Chapter 440, Laws of 2005) was unanimously passed on July 24, 2005. It allows relative caregivers to access appropriate medical care on behalf of the children in their care, by permitting them to give informed consent to medical care for those children.

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.