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A State Factsheet for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children

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AARP FOUNDATION

The Brookdale Foundation

Children's Defense Fund

casey family programs

CWLA CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

generations united

UTAH

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 Utah, there are 31,099 children living in grandparent-headed households (4.3% of all children in the state). There are another 10,817 children living in households headed by other relatives (1.5% of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Utah, 13,756 are living there without either parent present.

The Grandparents

- Nationally, 2.4 million grandparents report they are responsible for their grand-children 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 Utah, 15,989 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [1,300 in Salt Lake City and 1,278 in West Valley City]: 1% of these grandparents are African American; 14% are Hispanic/Latino; 4% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; 2% are Asian; and 76% are White. 28% of these grand-parents live in households without the children's parents present. 72% are under the age of 60; 9% 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

- *The Utah Department of Human Services, Division of Family Services* in partnership with the Division of Aging and Adult Services is in the process of developing a number of support groups for grandparents and other relatives raising children across the state to provide services to families and build partnerships with local service providers and area agencies on aging throughout the state. *Contact:* Judy Hull, Department of Human Services, at (801) 538-4372 or judymiller@utah.gov.

- *The Children's Society of Utah* in Salt Lake City provides a comprehensive program for kinship parenting families called Grandfamilies. Services are available for caregivers and children and include nine-week information and support classes held three times each year. The classes cover such subjects as legal rights, dealing with dynamics unique to kinship families, preventing substance abuse, and parenting wounded children. The Society also provides a bi-monthly support group called Friend 2 Friend, quarterly family building activities, parenting classes, a monthly newsletter, community advocacy, and counseling for children and adults. *Contact:* Jacci Graham, Grandfamilies and Heartworks Program Director, at (801) 326-4409 or Jacci@cssutah.org or grandfamilies@cssutah.org.

- *Utah Grandparents' Supporting Grandparents Everywhere* is a non-profit organization in Bountiful, Utah that provides support and encouragement for grandparents and other relatives raising children across the state. The organization's mission is to become an active voice in community and state issues related to the well-being of children and to inform and educate the public on these issues. *Contact:* (801) 644-1166 or info@utgrandparents.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 Utah, the Department of Human Services, Division of Child and Family Services reports:

Number of children in kinship care: In the calendar year 2006, there were 1,075 kinship foster care cases served and 1,142 home-based kinship cases.

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 also have subsidized guardianship programs. Utah has a state-funded subsidized guardianship program that provides an ongoing permanency assistance payment to eligible kin and non-kin guardians who cannot qualify for a relative grant through TANF. The maximum monthly payment is only allowed up to the specialized foster care rate. *Contact:* Tanya Albornoz, Permanency Program Manager, Division of Child and Family Services, at (801) 538-4316 or talborno@utah.gov.

State kinship care contact: Questions about kinship foster care placements should be directed to Judy Hull, Kinship Program Manager, Division of Child and Family Services, at (801) 538-4372 or judymiller@utah.gov.

Training and support for kinship foster parents: The Utah Foster Care Foundation offers information/training and referrals to Utah kinship caregivers raising children in the foster care system. Caregivers have access to training on child development, grief and loss issues, and strategies for meeting a child's special needs. In addition, the Foundation also engages in policy advocacy on behalf of kinship care families and other foster families. *Contact* Judy Hull, Kinship Program Manager, Division of Child and Family Services, at (801) 538-4372 or judymiller@utah.gov.

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 the Family Employment Program (FEP).

- 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 (801) 526-9675 or log on to http://jobs.utah.gov/services/ and click on "financial services" and then on "family empowerment program."

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 (801) 526-9675 or log on to http://jobs.utah.gov/services/ and click on "food stamps."

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 Utah Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free coverage under Medicaid. For more information about Medicaid or CHIP, call (800) 662-9651 (Medicaid) or log on to http://health.utah.gov/medicaid or call 1-877-KIDS-NOW or log on to http://health.utah.gov/chip (CHIP).

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 laws may be helpful to grandparents and other relatives raising children[1:]

Medical Consent (Utah CodeAnn. § 78-14-5): This law allows a qualified adult acting in loco parentis, formally or informally, to consent to any medical care not prohibited by law, on behalf of the minor child.

Educational Enrollment (Utah CodeAnn. § 53A-2-201(3)(A)): This law defines a child's school district of residence to be where custodial parent or legal guardian resides, or the school district where the child resides, if the child resides with a "responsible adult." A responsible adult must be a resident of the district and "the noncustodial parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, or aunt" of the child. The district, however, may require the person with whom the child lives to be formally designated as the child's custodian through a power of attorney.

[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.