

# GrandFacts

## A State Fact Sheet for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children



The Brookdale Foundation Group  
www.brookdalefoundation.org



## Georgia

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The AARP Foundation, The Brookdale Foundation Group, Casey Family Programs, Child Welfare League of America, Children's Defense Fund, and Generations United have partnered to produce fact sheets for grandparents and other relatives raising children that include state-specific data, programs, and public policies. This and other state fact sheets can be viewed and printed from the website at [www.grandfactsheets.org](http://www.grandfactsheets.org). Fact sheets are updated annually. Updates can be sent directly from the website via email. Please write "State Fact Sheets" on your Email subject line.

### In Georgia...

- 164,423 children live in grandparent-headed households (7.6% of all children in the state). There are another 53,785 children living in households headed by other relatives (2.5% of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Georgia, 98,773 are living there without either parent present.
- 92,265 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [5,947 grandparents in Atlanta and 2,572 in Columbus]: 52% of these grandparents are African American; 3% are Hispanic/Latino; 1% are Asian; and 24% are White. 36% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present. 74% are under the age of 60; 20% live in poverty.
- Additional national and state data on grandparents raising children is available on AARP's website at [www.aarp.org/grandparents/](http://www.aarp.org/grandparents/)

### Programs That Can Help

#### Clayton County Kinship Care Resource Center

Phone: 770-477-3417  
Service Area: Clayton County

#### Services Offered:

- Support group
- Case management
- Information/referral
- Computer classes
- Clothes closet
- Activities/celebrations

## Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Aging Services

**Sponsoring Organization:** Division of Aging Services, Georgia  
**Contact** Leslie Sessley, Kinship Care Coordinator  
**Phone:** 404-657-8787  
**Email:** [lesessley@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:lesessley@dhr.state.ga.us)  
**Website:** [www.hdr.georgia.gov/grg](http://www.hdr.georgia.gov/grg) - (Georgia Department of Human Resources Grandparents Raising Grandchildren)  
**Service Area:** Statewide through 12 Area Agencies on Aging – contact your local agency:

- 1. Atlanta Regional Commission (Atlanta Regions)**  
Mary Lou Vergara, 404-463-3524 / [mvergara@atlantaregional.com](mailto:mvergara@atlantaregional.com)
- 2. Central Savannah River (Athens Region)**  
Georgia Jopling, 706-210-2000 x147 / [gjopling@csrardc.org](mailto:gjopling@csrardc.org)
- 3. Coastal Georgia (Savannah Region)**  
Marvara Green, 912-264-7363 x 231 / [magreen@coastalgeorgiardc.org](mailto:magreen@coastalgeorgiardc.org)  
Margaret Gant (Grandparent Connection), 912-262-1885
- 4. Coosa Valley/Northwest Georgia (Rome Region)**  
Irma Garcia Rose (Grands Who Care), 706-291-8496 / [irose@sjha.org](mailto:irose@sjha.org)  
Claire Mangraviti, 706-291-8496 / [cmangraviti@sjha.org](mailto:cmangraviti@sjha.org)
- 5. Georgia Mountains (Gainesville Region)**  
Julia Jessee, 770-538-2650 / [jjessee@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:jjessee@dhr.state.ga.us)
- 6. Heart of Georgia Altamaha (Baxley Region)**  
Kerrie Sirmans, 912-367-3648 / [klsirmans@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:klsirmans@dhr.state.ga.us)
- 7. Lower Chattahoochee (Columbus Region)**  
Laura Walker, 705-256-2939 x 105 / [llwaker@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:llwaker@dhr.state.ga.us)
- 8. Middle Georgia (Macon Region)**  
Natalie Brown, 478-751-6466 / [nbrown@mgrdc.org](mailto:nbrown@mgrdc.org)
- 9. Northeast Georgia (Athens Region)**  
Michele Kelly, 706-369-5650 / [mdfarley@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:mdfarley@dhr.state.ga.us)
- 10. Southeast Georgia/South Georgia (Waycross Region)**  
Katie Flynn, 888-732-4464 or 912-285-6097 / [kflynn@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:kflynn@dhr.state.ga.us)
- 11. Southern Crescent (Franklin Region)**  
Gloria Sanford, 706-407-0021 / [gsanford@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:gsanford@dhr.state.ga.us)
- 12. Southwest Georgia (Albany Region)**  
Nancy Harper, 229-432-1124 / [neharper@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:neharper@dhr.state.ga.us)  
Doris Long, 229-443-1124 / [dhlong@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:dhlong@dhr.state.ga.us)

### Services Offered:

- Information and referral
- Support groups
- Community education
- Some Area Agencies provide camp scholarships; respite programs for grandparents; tutoring for grandparents and children; case management and counseling; material aid vouchers for clothing, food, housing materials and skills training

## Grandparent/Relative Caregiver Project

**Sponsoring Organization** Atlanta Legal Aid  
**Contact** Lindsay Verity, Director  
**Phone:** 404-614-3953  
**Email:** [lcverity@atlantalegalaid.org](mailto:lcverity@atlantalegalaid.org)  
**Service Area:** Metro Atlanta area – Fulton, DeKalb  
**Services Offered:**

- Assistance for low income families caring for relative children in adoption or custody cases

## Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Warmline/Resource Center

**Sponsoring Organization** AARP  
**Phone:** Warmline: 404-523-6305  
**Email:** [aarp.warmline@co.fulton.ga.us](mailto:aarp.warmline@co.fulton.ga.us)  
**Service Area:** Statewide  
**Services Offered:**

- Information and referral via Warm Line
- Grandparents Resource Center  
Helene S. Mills Senior Multipurpose Facility  
515 John Wesley Dobbs Ave., Atlanta

## Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Publication Series

**Sponsoring Organization** University of Georgia Cooperative Extension  
**Contact** Diana Bales, Child & Family Development Specialist  
**Phone:** 706-542-7566  
**Email:** [dbales@arches.uga.edu](mailto:dbales@arches.uga.edu)  
**Website:** <http://www.fcs.uga.edu/ext/pubs/fam/grandparents.php>  
**Services Offered:** Statewide

- Series of 14 publications addressing parenting issues facing grandparents raising grandchildren (making the transition to a new home; dealing with abuse and neglect; helping grandchildren stay in touch with their parents; dealing with the death of a parent; finding legal and community assistance; parenting infants, toddlers or teens; caring for yourself)

## Healthy Grandparents Program

**Sponsoring Organization** Medical College of Georgia School of Nursing  
**Contact** Mike Patton  
**Email:** [mpatton@mail.mcg.edu](mailto:mpatton@mail.mcg.edu)  
**Service Area:** Richmond and Columbia County  
**Services Offered:**

- Information and referral
- Support group
- Case management
- Health screening and counseling for grandparent caregivers
- Child custody information and public benefits counseling
- Safety education

## Jewish Family and Career Services

**Contact** Yael Stein, Intake Coordinator  
**Phone:** 770-677-9300  
**Email:** [info@jfcs-atlant.org](mailto:info@jfcs-atlant.org)  
**Services Offered:**

- Individual and group support/counseling

## Kinship Care Center

**Sponsoring Organization** Medical College of Georgia School of Nursing  
**Contact** Mike Patton/ Angel Little  
**Phone:** 888-284-2273 (706-721-9626 in Augusta)  
**Services Offered:**

- Support groups in Augusta
- Newsletter
- Summer respite care
- Legal child custody counseling

## Kinship Care Project

**Sponsoring Organization** Georgia Legal Services Program (GLSP)  
**Contact** Wendy Jerkins, Project Attorney, GLSP Central Office  
**Phone:** 800-498-9469 or 404-206-5175  
**Email:** [wjerkins@glsp.org](mailto:wjerkins@glsp.org)  
**Service Area / Kinship Care Offices:** GLSP provides legal services statewide, except in the Atlanta metropolitan area. Kinship Care Services provided in the following offices:  
**Augusta Office 1-800-248-6697 or (706) 721-2327**  
**Counties served:** Richmond, Burke, Columbia, Glascock, Jefferson, Jenkins, Lincoln, McDuffie, Screven, Taliaferro, Warren, Washington, and Wilkes  
**Savannah Office 1-888-220-8399 or (912) 651-2180**  
**Counties served:** Chatham, Bryan, Bulloch, Candler, Effingham, Emanuel, Evans, Liberty, Long, Tattnall, and Toombs  
**Piedmont Office 1-800-822-5391 or (404) 894-7707**  
**Counties served:** Bartow, Carroll, Coweta, Douglas, Fayette, Floyd, Gordon, Greene, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Morgan, Newton, Paulding, Polk, Rockdale, Spalding, Walton  
**Services Offered:**

- Legal representation, referral and advice on issues regarding custody, education, financial assistance, housing, education and consumer problems, as well as other legal matters for relative caregivers
- Priority is to help low-income families; no age restriction

## Kinship Families of Dahlonega

**Contact** Jocelyn Joaquim  
**Phone:** 706-864-2768  
**Email:** [JAYWOLFSISTER@aol.com](mailto:JAYWOLFSISTER@aol.com)  
**Service Area:** Dahlonega

**Services Offered:**

- Monthly support group for grandparents and other relatives raising children

## National Center on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

**Sponsoring Organization** Georgia State Univ. – College of Health and Human Sciences  
**Contact** Deborah Whitley  
**Phone:** 404-413-1074  
**Email:** [nationalcenter@gsu.edu](mailto:nationalcenter@gsu.edu)  
**Website:** <http://chhs.gsu.edu/nationalcenter/>

**Service Area:**

**Services Offered:**

- Professional education for social workers, nurses, psychologists, lawyers and others working with grandparents raising grandchildren
- Promotes replication of best practices in delivery of services to intergenerational families and
- Supports replication of best

## Project GRAND-D Grandparents Rearing and Nurturing Dependents with Disabilities

**Sponsoring Organization** Institute for the Study of Disadvantage and Disabilities  
**Contact** Janice Nodvin  
**Phone:** 678-595-4854  
**Email:** [jnodvin@aol.com](mailto:jnodvin@aol.com)  
**Service Area:** Metro Atlanta

**Services Offered:**

- Monthly group meetings
- Individual counseling and home visits

## Project Healthy Grandparents

**Sponsoring Organization** Georgia State University  
**Contact** Judy Perdue, Community Partnerships Coordinator  
**Phone:** 404-413-1118  
**Email:** [jperdue@gsu.edu](mailto:jperdue@gsu.edu)  
**Website:** <http://www.gsu.edu/phg>

**Service Area:** City of Atlanta, South Fulton and South DeKalb Counties

**Services Offered:**

- Monthly home visits by registered nurse and social worker
- Support groups
- Parent education classes
- Transportation to meetings
- Early intervention services
- Legal service referrals

## Project Kincare

**Sponsoring Organization:** Gainesville County Community Service Center  
**Contact:** Linda Kirkpatrick, Program Director  
**Phone:** 770-503-3330  
**Email:** [lkirkpatrick@gainesville.org](mailto:lkirkpatrick@gainesville.org)  
**Service Area:** Gainesville  
**Services Offered:**

- Support groups
- Educational seminars
- Recreational activities with transportation and childcare

## Relative Caregiver Program

**Contact:** Kathy Arnold, Case Manager  
**Phone:** 229-931-2238  
**Email:** [karnold@canes.gsw.edu](mailto:karnold@canes.gsw.edu)  
**Service Area:** Sumter, Schley, Macon and Dooly Counties  
**Services Offered:**

- Case management
- Home health care evaluations
- Information/referral
- Support groups
- Parent education
- Parent/child activities

## Relative Caregiver Hotline

**Sponsoring Organization:** Georgia Senior Legal Aid Hotline  
**Phone:** 888-257-9519  
**Service Area:** Statewide  
**Services Offered:**

- Legal advice on medical issues, education, public benefits, living wills
- Calls taken 9am – 3pm Monday – Friday

## Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP) – Gordon County

**Sponsoring Organization:** Family Resource Center  
**Contact:** Carol Vedrody  
**Phone:** 706-625-3311  
**Email:** [cv\\_gcccy@bellsouth.net](mailto:cv_gcccy@bellsouth.net)  
**Service Area:** Gordon County  
**Services Offered:**

- Monthly support group meetings at schools in Gordon County
- Educational programs (especially for older relative caregivers of teens)
- Social activities, group recreational activities

## Rockdale County Kinship Care Program

**Sponsoring Organization** Rockdale County Senior Services  
**Address:** 1240 Dogwood Dr., Conyers, GA  
**Contact** Claudia Cian  
**Phone:** 770-922-4633  
**Email:** Claudia.cian@rockdalecounty.org  
**Service Area:** Rockdale County  
**Services Offered:**

- Case management
- Support groups
- Information/referral
- Respite/recreation
- Parent education

## Children in Foster Care

### Numbers - December 2005

- 15,119 children in out-of-home placements under the supervision of the Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services. Of these children, 2,682 were placed with kin.

### Preferences

- State policy requires that kin be considered first when an out-of-home placement is sought for a child under the Department's care if the relative caregiver can provide safe environment for the child and meet all the state's child protection standards.

### Kinship care licensing

- No separate licensing program for kinship foster parents. Kin must meet the same licensing standards and requirements and receive the same foster care payment rate as non-kin foster parents.
- Any person applying for foster care licensing must complete 30 hours of pre-serve training; 15 hours in-service training required annually for license renewal.

### Subsidized guardianship programs

- Relative Care Subsidy Program for children transferred from state custody to the permanent custody of an approved relative caregiver and for whom the court has issued a non-reunification order. Caregivers' homes are reviewed annually by the agency and every 3 years by the court.
- Supported by Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

### Training

- GA Division of Aging Services Kinship Care Specialists have become certified foster care trainers to provide one-on-one training to grandparents. Trained grandparents receive 100% of foster care daily stipend.

## Contact – Subsidized guardianship/kinship foster care/training and support

- Renee King, Dept. of Human Resources, Division of Family and Children Services
  - Phone: 404- 657-3403
  - Email: [irking@dhr.ga.gov](mailto:irking@dhr.ga.gov)

## Public Benefits

### Financial Assistance

- Cash payments may be available to children and their grandparents and other relative caregivers through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program.
- TANF funds are available for Emergency/Crisis Intervention Services for grandparents raising grandchildren (shelter, utilities, school expenses).
- Child support services available immediately to grandparents when they physical custody of children, not just legal custody.
- Contact
  - Phone: 800-869-1150 or 404-651-6316
  - Web: [www.dhr.georgia.gov](http://www.dhr.georgia.gov)

### Food Stamps

- Based on the family’s income, kinship care families may also be eligible for food stamps to help meet food and nutrition needs.
- Contact
  - Phone: 800-869-1150 or 404-651-6316
  - Web: [www.dhr.georgia.gov](http://www.dhr.georgia.gov)

### 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 Right from the Start Medicaid and Peachcare for Kids programs. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free coverage under Medicaid.
- Medicaid
  - Phone: 800-809-7276
  - Web: <http://dch.georgia.gov> Type “Medicaid” under “Search”
- Peachcare for Kids
  - Phone: 877-GAPEACH (427-3224)
  - Web: [www.peachcare.org](http://www.peachcare.org)

### Benefits QuickLINK

- Screens you and/or the children you are raising for 15 major public benefits for older adults and families with children
  - Web: [www.aarp.org/quicklink](http://www.aarp.org/quicklink)

## Other Benefits – child care, disabilities, special education, older adult benefits, etc.

- Children’s Defense Fund benefit guides for grandparents and other relatives for information about state and federal benefits
- Phone: 202-662-3568
- Web: [www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org) (Kinship Care Resource Kit)
- National Council on Aging – Benefits CheckUp [www.benefitscheckup.org](http://www.benefitscheckup.org)

## State Laws

### Medical Consent (GA Code Ann. § 31-9-2)

- Allows a grandparent, adult aunt or uncle, adult brother or sister, or stepparent (or any person with power of attorney) to consent to medical care on behalf of a child: (1) after the treatment provider has made a reasonable attempt to contact the child’s parent or legal guardian and that person cannot be contacted; and (2) if the parent or legal guardian has not notified the provider that they oppose the treatment.

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

### Disclaimer:

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