

GrandFacts

A State Fact Sheet for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children



The Brookdale Foundation
Group
www.brookdalefoundation.org



Pennsylvania

September 2008

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. Fact sheets are updated annually. Updates can be sent directly from the website via email. Please write "State Fact Sheets" on your e-mail subject line.

In Pennsylvania...

- There are 164,354 children living in grandparent-headed households (5.6 % of all children in the state). There are another 37,499 children living in households headed by other relatives (1.3 % of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Pennsylvania, 76,356 are living there without either parent present.
- 80,423 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [21,123 in Philadelphia]: 28% of these grandparents are African American; 6% are Hispanic/Latino; 2% are Asian; and 62% are White. 35% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present. 69% are under the age of 60; 19% live in poverty.
- Additional data on grandparents raising children are available from the United States Census at <http://factfinder.census.gov> or <http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/phc-t17.html>

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

Programs That Can Help

A Second Chance Inc. (ASCI)

Sponsoring Organization: Allegheny County Children, Youth & Families
Contact: Lisa Walker, Vice President, Child and Family Services
Phone: 412-342-0600
Email: lisaw@asecondchance-kinship.com
Web: www.asecondchance-kinship.com
Service area: Allegheny County

Services offered:

- Kinship foster care, adoptive and support services
- Medical screening
- Crisis intervention and counseling
- After-school program for children

Butler County Area Agency on Aging

Contact: Jo Donaldson
Phone: 724-282-3008
Email: jdonalds@co.butler.pa.us
Service area: Butler County

Services offered:

- Information and referral
- Support group
- Financial reimbursement for costs related to caregiving

Caring Hands and Open Hearts

Contact: Rose Marie Thees, President
Phone: 484-902-8904
Email: theeslabs@aol.com
Service area: Pottstown and vicinity

Services offered:

- Support group meets first Tuesday of the month, 6:30pm at First Baptist Church, 301 King Street in Pottstown; free child care; guest speakers invited; free child care provided; all participants bring refreshments (no meetings July and August) Door prize: \$10 gift card to a local retail store. Participating families are welcome to join a special Summer Event at no cost.

Challenges, Options in Aging

Sponsoring Organization: Lawrence County Area Agency on Aging
Contact: Marjorie McKissick
Phone: 724-658-3729
Email: mmckis@ccpgh.org
Service area: Lawrence County

Services offered:

- Free monthly support group; light supper, child care provided
- Therapeutic counseling and respite for grandparents 60 and over through federally-funded Family Caregiver Support Program
- Some assistance with legal expenses
-

Family and Community Service of Delaware County

Contact: Cheryl Thomas, Supervisor
Phone: 610-566-7540
Web: <http://www.fcsdc.org/>
Service area: Delaware County

Services offered:

- Second Time Around Parents program – bimonthly support group meetings for relative caregivers and grandchildren
- Parenting workshops
- Individual and family counseling
- Grandparent Stop-In Center for informal peer support
- Drug and alcohol abuse prevention program for grandchildren
- Community outreach and recreational activities

- Education in advocacy
-

Family Caregiver Support Program – Jefferson County

Sponsoring Organization: Jefferson County Area Agency on Aging
Contact: Emily Slater
Phone: 1-800-852-8036
Contact: Cheryl Muders
Email: jcaaamuders@alltel.net
Service area: Jefferson County
Services offered:

- Some funds available to grandparents caring for children with disabilities (for medical supplies)
- Family may be reimbursed up to \$200/month depending on household income
-

Family Support of Central Pennsylvania

Contact: Deborah Lidle
Phone: 717-541-0828 or 1-800-984-9923
Email: deb@familysupportcentralpa.org
Service area: Perry County (Newport) and Dauphin County (Middletown)
Services offered:

- Grandparents Together – free support and education group for grandparents raising grandchildren
- Groups meet at local churches (Newport – Monday afternoons; Middletown – Wednesday evenings)
-

Franklin County Office on Aging

Phone: 717-263-2153
Service area: Franklin County
Services offered:

- Reimbursement for childcare expenses depending on household income
- Caregiver support group meets 2nd Tuesday 10am-Noon
-

GAPAC – Grams and Pops as Caregivers

Sponsoring Organization: Lycoming-Clinton Joinder Board
Contact: Judy Hawkins
Phone: 570-326-7895
Email: jhawkins@joinder.org
Service area: Williamsport area
Services offered:

- Information and referral
- Support group last Thursday of the month, 1-2:30 in the Family Place at the James V. Brown Library
-
-
-
-
-

Grand Central

Contact: Chartan Nelson, Executive Director

Phone: 215-557-1554
Email: grandcentralinc@msn.com
Service area:
Services offered:

- Information on legal, legislative, housing, physical and mental health and social services
- Individualized, peer to peer and specialized support to help with appointments, paperwork completion, etc.
- Networking partners collaborate to offer public information, develop support groups, sponsor conferences and workshops
-

Grandma's Kids – Temple University

Sponsoring Organization: Center for Intergenerational Learning at Temple University
Contact: Joy Woods-Jones, Project Coordinator
Phone: 215-204-3105
Email: joyjones@temple.edu
Contact: Shanelle Minaya
Phone: 215-204-3554
Service area: Philadelphia
Services offered:

- After school services to children in out-of-home placements (kinship, foster care, group homes, etc)
- Enhances capacity of children to resist substance abuse and violence; strengthens the family system
- Serves children ages 7 to 12
- Programs held in schools where Family Centers have offices – tutorial assistance, life skills, education, cultural and recreational activities, guest speakers, group counseling, caregiver assistance

Grandparents Raising Children of Substance-Addicted Parents

Sponsoring Organization: Volunteers of America of Pennsylvania/All of Us Care
Contact: 412-782-6855
Service area: Sharpsburg
Services offered:

- Support group meets weekly Monday at 6:30pm

Greater Erie Community Action Committee – Family Caregiver Support Program

Contact: Al Smith
Phone: 814-459-4581 x400
Email: asmith@gecac.org
Web: www.gecac.org
Service area: Erie County
Services offered:

- Family Caregiver Support Program for grandparents over age 60 raising children under 18
- Reimbursement for certain expenses related to raising children; income-based

Kinship Care Factsheets

Sponsoring Organization: Pennsylvania Department of Aging contract with Penn State Cooperative Extension, Penn State University, Generations Together at the University of Pittsburgh

Contact: Dan McGuire
Phone: 717-783-6207
Email: dmcguire@state.pa.us
Web: http://www.aging.state.pa.us/aging/lib/aging/Kinship_Care_Resources.pdf
Service area: Statewide
Services offered:

- Kinship care information factsheets available online

Lycoming County Department of Human Services Family Support Center

Contact: Judy Hawkins
Phone: 570-326-7895
Email: jhawkins@joinder.org
Service area: Lycoming County
Services offered:

- Grams and Pops as Caregivers (GAPAC) support group – last Thursday of the month from 1-2:30; group meets in the library at Williamsport; speakers on custody, adoption, financial issues, services for children, etc.

Mifflin-Juniata Area Agency on Aging

Contact: Diane McCallister
Phone: 717-242-0315
Email: dmccallister@mjaaa.com
Service area: Mifflin, Juniata Counties
Services offered:

- Financial reimbursement up to \$100 for grandparents and other relatives 60 and over – covers caregiving expenses that benefit the caregiver and/or the child, including respite, enrichment, counseling, etc.

Northeast Pennsylvania Intergenerational Coalition/Community Involvement Network

Contact: Ruth Kemmerer, Director Resource Development
Phone: 570-823-5144 x 309
Email: fsawv.ruthkemmerer@verizon.net
Contact: Joseph Clapps, Area Agency on Aging (Coalition Coordinator)
Phone: 570-823-9129
Email: josephclapps@aol.com
Web: <http://www.raisingourgrandchildren.org/>
Service area: Wilkes Barre, Hazleton – Wyoming Valley

Northeast Pennsylvania Intergenerational Coalition – cont.

Services offered:

- Support groups for grandparents and family caregivers raising grandchildren
- Wilkes Barre - 3rd Wednesday
- Hazleton – 2nd Thursday
- Scranton – 4th Thursday
- Tunkhannock – 3rd Wednesday
- Annual conference for relative caregivers, providers and legislators

Parent-Child Home Program

Contact: Shelley Panebaker
Phone: 717-633-3547
Email: panebakers@hanoverhospital.org
Service area: Greater Hanover Area

Services offered:

- Free home visiting program to help primary caregivers prepare toddlers (ages 2-4) for school through development of school readiness behavior
- Emphasis on early literacy and play using educational books and toys provided for families to keep

Penn State Extension Office – Allegheny County

Contact: Nancy Crago
Phone: 412-473-2540
Email: NXA3@psu.edu
Web: www.agexted.cas.psu.edu/fcs/mk/GRG.html
Service area: Allegheny County

Services offered:

- Publications on issues affecting kinship caregivers
- Presentations to community groups to raise awareness about kinship caregivers
- Intergenerational website (above)
- Retreat

Penn State Extension Office – Northwest Region - Lawrence

Contact: Janice Hassen
Phone: 724-654-8370
Email: Jma2@psu.edu
Service area: Lawrence, Beaver and Butler Counties

Services offered:

- Monthly support groups with speakers for caregivers and children
- Retreats
- Quarterly newsletter
- Information to help new caregivers navigate through systems
- Co-sponsored with Challenges Options in Aging

Penn State Extension – Northwest Region – Erie

Contact: Lynn Clint
Phone: 814-825-0900
Email: lbc10@psu.edu
Service area: Erie County

Services offered:

- Meetings three times a year
- Quarterly newsletter
- Retreats
- Information to help caregivers navigate through systems

Penn State Extension – Northwest Region – Venango

Contact: Bibiana Chestnut
Phone: 814-437-7607
Email: bmc7@psu.edu
Service area: Venango and Clarion Counties

Services offered:

- Monthly support group
- Quarterly newsletter
- Retreats
- Information to help caregivers navigate through systems
- Co-Sponsor Venango County Area Agency on Aging
- Co-Sponsor Clarion County Family Net

Philadelphia Office of Community Family Support

Contact: Michele Preston
Phone: 215-683-4082
Email: michele.b.preston@phila.gov
Service area: Philadelphia

Services offered:

- Funds Kids n’ Kin (see Philadelphia Society for Services to Children)
- Case management
- Kinship information and referral

Philadelphia Society for Services to Children (PSSC) – Kids n’ Kin/Kinship Institute

Contact: Carla Neal, Kids n’ Kin Team Leader
Phone: 215-875-4961
Email: cneal@pssckids.org
Contact: Karen Fisk, Director of The Kinship Institute
Phone: 215-875-4977
Email: karen@pssckids.org
Web: www.pssckids.org/programs_kids.html
Service area: Philadelphia

PSSC – cont.

Services offered:

- Direct services to kinship families who are not part of the foster care system and do not have an open case with DHS
- Family therapy
- Workshops and caregiver support groups
- Legal support through Support Center for Child Advocates
- Therapeutically supported trips to Muncy State Correctional Facility
- Support groups for children with incarcerated parents
- Kinship Institute complements direct services by promoting policies and programs that benefit kinship caregivers; provides technical assistance for program development
 - Web: <http://www.pssckids.org/KinshipInst.htm>
- Kinship Care Resource Guide
 - Web <http://www.pssckids.org/documents/FinalCopyoftheResourceGuide.pdf>
- Monthly networking meetings for kinship care service providers

SeniorLAW Center

Contact: Karen C. Buck, Executive Director

Phone: 215-988-1244

Email: kbuck@seniorlawcenter.org

Web: www.seniorlawcenter.org

Service area: Statewide

Services offered:

- Advocacy and legal representation
- Philadelphia - Walk-in services without appointment Monday-Wednesday 9am-1pm; 6 community legal clinics
- Statewide SeniorLAW HelpLine 1-877-PA SR LAW (toll free Monday-Friday 9am – 1pm)
- Services for older caregivers in housing, consumer protection, domestic violence, financial exploitation, advance planning
- Community education and training for grandparents/relatives/professionals
- Multi-lingual staff

Southwestern Pennsylvania Area Agency on Aging

Contact: Ashley Charwood, Family Caregiver Support Program

Phone: 724-489-8082 X 4436 OR 1-888-300-2704

Email: acharwood@swpa-aaa.org

Service area: Southwestern Pennsylvania (Charleroi, PA)

Services offered:

- Relatives as Parents and Grandparenting programs
- Benefits counseling
- Information and referral
- Case management
- Support groups
- Limited financial reimbursement for emergency supplies

Supportive Older Women’s Network – SOWN – Philadelphia

Contact: Carolyn Schneider
Phone: 215-487-3000
Email: info@sown.org
Web: www.sown.org
Service area: Philadelphia
Services offered:

- SOWN Grandparent Caregiver Program
- Legislative advocacy

Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging

Contact: Toni McGovern
Phone: 724-830-4444
Email: tmcgover@co.westmoreland.pa.us
Service area: Westmoreland County
Services offered:

- Family Caregiver Support Program/Grandparenting Program
- Services (respite care, supplies, medical equipment) offered on a cost-sharing basis depending on income and eligibility
- Assessment of caregiver and child needs
- Referral for training/counseling

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.”

Numbers – September 2007

- There were 20,262 children in out-of-home supervised by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Office of Children, Youth, and Families Of these children, 4,580 children were placed in licensed kinship homes.

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.
- State policy requires that kin be considered first when an out-of-home placement is sought.
- There is no separate approval policy for kinship foster parents.
- Kin must meet the same approval standards and receive the same foster care payment as non-kin foster parents in their county.
- Anyone seeking to become a foster parent, including kinship caregivers, must participate annually in six hours of agency-approved training.
- Contact: Grace E. Gross, Program Specialist, Office of Children, Youth and Families
 - Phone: 717-705-2908
 - Email: ggross@state.pa.us

Subsidized guardianship programs

- Subsidized Permanent Legal Custodianship (SPLC) Program provides financial assistance to eligible children living with family members and other kin who obtain permanent custody of the children
- Adoption and reunification with the parents must be ruled out as a permanency goal before children are eligible for the program
- Contact: TaWonda Jones-Williams, Fiscal Policy and Support Unit
 - Phone: 717-787-5199
 - Email: tjoneswill@state.pa.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 the Pennsylvania Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program.
 - Phone: 1-800-692-7462
 - Web: <http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/ServicesPrograms/>

Food Stamps

- Kinship care families may also be eligible for food stamps to help meet their children's food and nutrition needs.
 - Phone: 1-800-692-7462
 - Web: <http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/ServicesPrograms/>

Health Insurance

- Free or low-cost insurance may be available through the Pennsylvania Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
 - Medicaid Phone: 1-800-692-7462
 - Web: <http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/ServicesPrograms/>
 - CHIP Phone: 1-800-986-KIDS
 - Web: <http://www.chipcoverspakids.com/>

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

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 (Kinship Care Resource Kit)

- National Council on Aging – Benefits CheckUp www.benefitscheckup.org

State Laws

The following state laws may be helpful to grandparents and other relatives raising children.¹

Medical Consent

11 PA Cons. Stat. §§ 2511-2513

- Allows a child’s legal guardian/custodian to permit a relative or family friend to consent to medical, surgical, dental, developmental, mental health or other treatment for the child.

Standby Guardianship

23 PA Cons. Stat. §§ 5601-5612

- Allows a parent or legal guardian to authorize a co-guardian to assume the care of the person or property for a child upon the parent’s incapacity, debilitation, or consent.
- Custodial parent or legal guardian may designate a standby guardian by means of written consent unless the child has another parent or adoptive parent: (1) whose parental rights have NOT been terminated or relinquished; (2) whose whereabouts are known; and (3) who is willing and able to carry out the day-to-day child-care decisions concerning the child.

Background Checks

23 PA Cons. Stat §§ 6344a

- Requires families wishing to become approved resource or adoptive families for kin to include all individuals in the household ages 14 and up in the background clearance requirements

¹Laws change and are subject to different interpretations. These general descriptions are not intended as legal advice in any particular situation.

Disclaimer:

None of the sponsoring organizations whose logos appear on this fact sheet (AARP Foundation, Brookdale Foundation Group, Casey Family Programs, Child Welfare League of America, Children’s Defense Fund, or Generations United) recommends or endorses any of the groups, agencies or services listed within the fact sheet. Neither the sponsoring organizations nor any of their employees make any warranty, expressed or implied, or assume any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information. None of the sponsoring organizations shall have liability to any fact sheet user or to any third party for any loss expense, or damage, including consequential, incidental, special or punitive damages. A user’s sole and exclusive remedy for dissatisfaction with this fact sheet is to cease using the fact sheet. Please be advised that there may be other similar services available that are not listed on this fact sheet. The sponsoring organizations are not obligated to include any specific groups, agencies or services and may choose not to include some that submit their information. The sponsoring organizations are not responsible for consumer interactions with groups, agencies or services listed on these fact sheets.