

Impact of Substance Use on Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children

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Generations United

- ▶ **Generations United's** mission is to improve the lives of children, youth, and older adults through intergenerational collaboration, public policies and programs
- ▶ Since 1998, Generations United's National Center on Grandfamilies:
 - ▶ Is guided by GRAND Voices – a network of caregiver advocates
 - ▶ Leads an advisory group of organizations, caregivers and youth that sets the national agenda
 - ▶ Educates policymakers on adopting supportive public policies and programs
 - ▶ Provides technical assistance and training to states and other providers
 - ▶ Raises awareness through media outreach, weekly communications and events
 - ▶ Provides information and resources at www.gu.org and www.grandfamilies.org

GRAND Voices Network

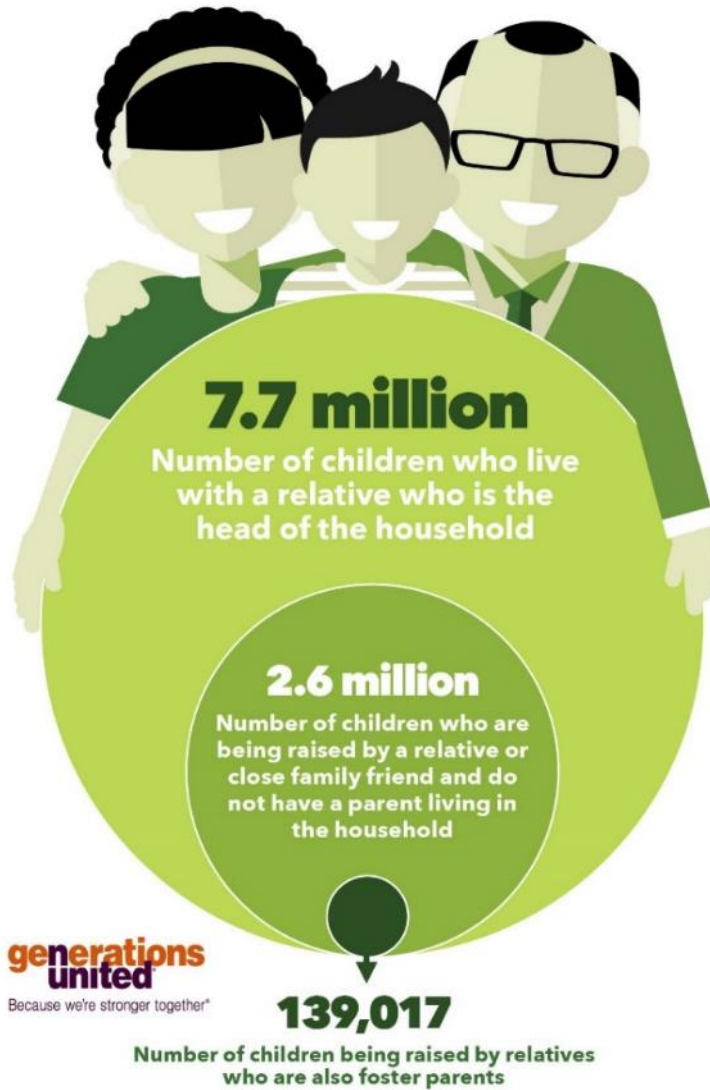
- ▶ Select group of caregiver advocates from 45 states, 11 tribes
- ▶ GRAND aims to have kinship caregiver voices front and center
- ▶ Initial support from Casey Family Programs, enhanced by W.K. Kellogg Foundation racial equity initiative
- ▶ Federal government in August 2019 ([IM ACYF-CB-IM-19-03](#)) emphasizes importance of “integrating family and youth voices into all aspects of child welfare system design and operation”



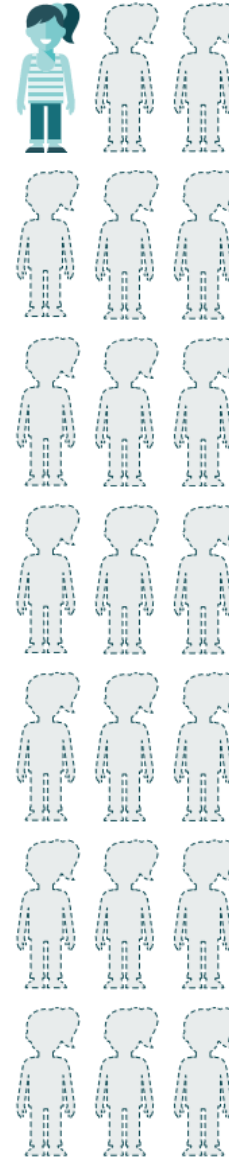
Grandfamilies Data

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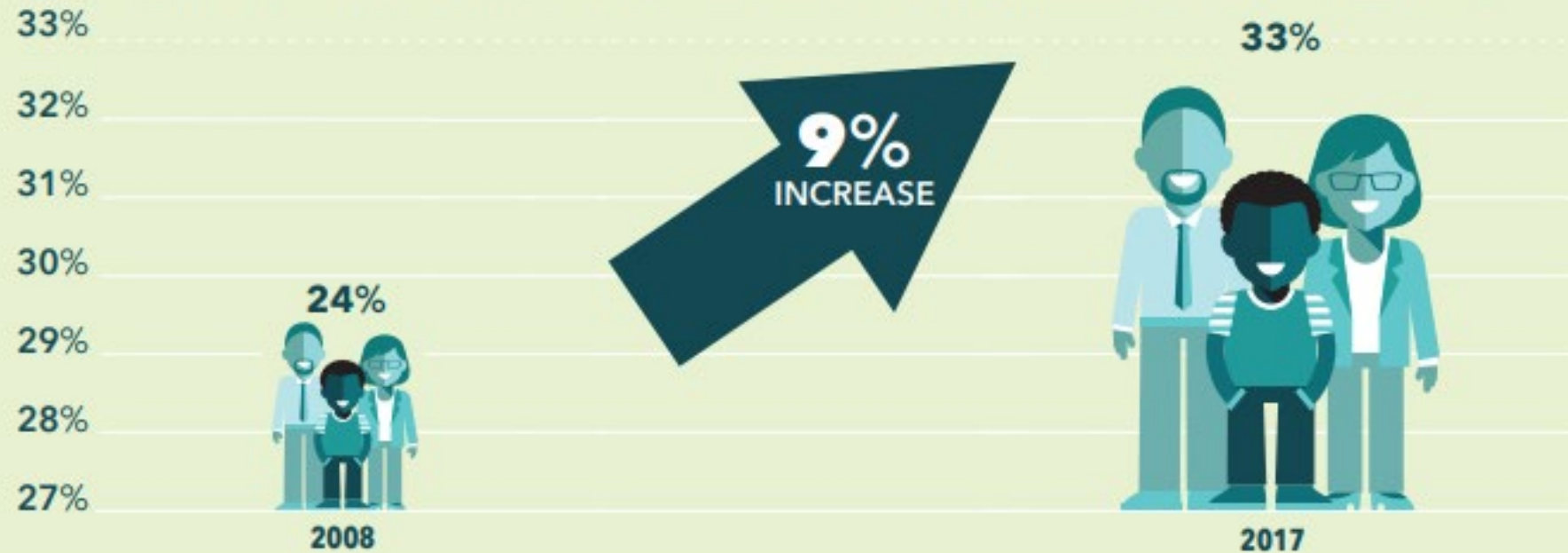


For every **1** child in foster care with relatives there are **19** children being raised by grand-parents or other relatives outside of the foster care system.⁷⁴



Children in Grandfamilies

Percent of Children in Foster Care Being Raised by Relatives⁵⁵



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Data is not publicly available on the percentage of these children who are with licensed relatives

Wisconsin Specific Data

- ▶ In 2017, 40% of children in foster care were raised in grandfamilies or kinship care.
- ▶ From 2016-2018, 26,000 children lived in kinship care.
- ▶ Over 26,000 grandparent head of households are responsible for their grandchildren who live with them.
 - ▶ 35.5% do not have parents present in the home
 - ▶ 68.8% are under age 60
 - ▶ Nearly 64% are in the workforce
 - ▶ 18% live in poverty
 - ▶ Over 24% have a disability

GRANDFACTS

STATE FACT SHEETS FOR GRANDFAMILIES



The GrandFacts state fact sheets for grandfamilies include state-specific data and programs as well as information about public benefits, educational assistance, legal relationship options and state laws. Visit www.grandfamilies.org to find this and all GrandFacts state fact sheets.

Wisconsin

The Children

- 28,000 (2%) children live with a relative with no parent present.
- 74,457 (5.7%) children under 18 live in homes where householders are grandparents or other relatives.
 - 57,476 (4.4%) of these children live with grandparents.
 - 16,981 (1.3%) of these children live with other relatives.

The Grandparents

- 26,895 grandparents are householders responsible for their grandchildren who live with them. Of these:
 - 9,543 (35.5%) do not have parents present.
 - 18,495 (68.8%) are under age 60.
 - 17,186 (63.9%) are in the workforce.
 - 4,868 (18.1%) are in poverty.
 - 6,509 (24.2%) have a disability.
 - 8,418 (31.3%) are unmarried.
 - Race/Ethnicity:
 - 17,831 (66.3%) are white (not Hispanic or Latino)
 - 4,814 (17.9%) are black or African American
 - 2,421 (9.0%) are Hispanic or Latino origin
 - 430 (1.6%) are Asian
 - 1,076 (4.0%) are American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 (0.0%) are Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - 377 (1.4%) are multiracial
 - 968 (3.6%) are some other race

Wisconsin State Fact Sheet

<http://www.grandfamilies.org/Portals/0/State%20Fact%20Sheets/Grandfamilies-Fact-Sheet-Wisconsin.pdf>

State of Grandfamilies Report - Opioid Epidemic

- ▶ Opioids and other substance use is the primary reason grandfamilies come together
- ▶ Because of the opioid epidemic, the number of children in foster care began increasing in 2012 after years of decline
- ▶ Children placed in family foster care because of a parental drug or alcohol use are more likely to be placed with relatives than non-relatives

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2018 UPDATE

RAISING THE CHILDREN OF THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC:

SOLUTIONS AND SUPPORT FOR GRANDFAMILIES

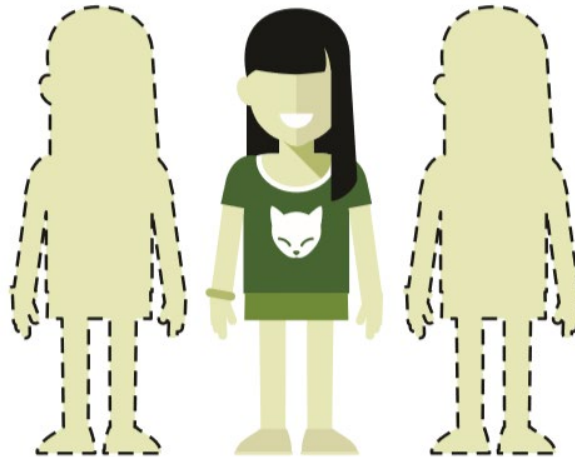


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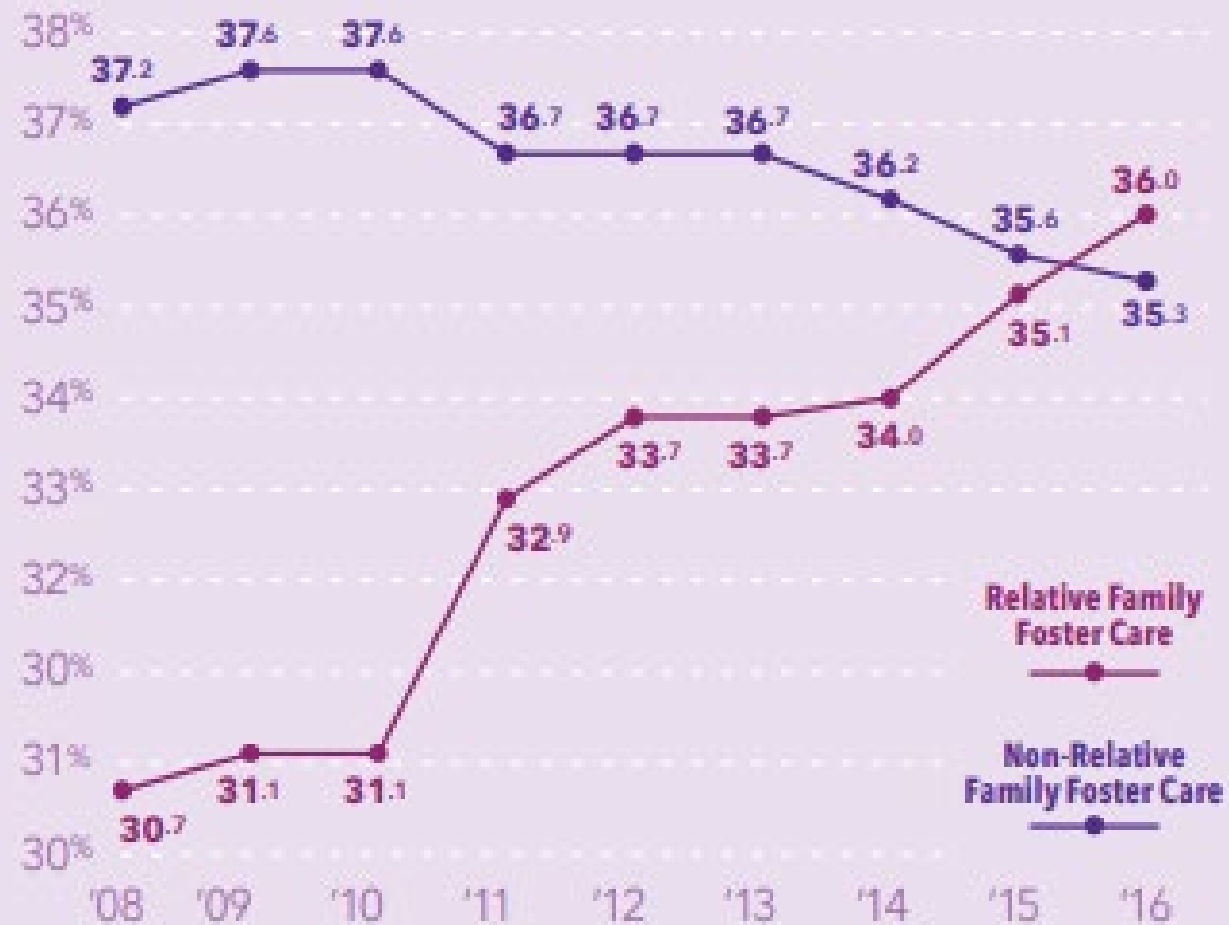
Between 2015 and 2016 there was a **29% increase in overdose death rate** among adults of childbearing age.⁷¹

More than **1/3** of all children placed in foster care because of parental substance use are placed **with relatives.**



Parental Substance Use

Percentage of Foster Children in Out of Home Care Due to Alcohol or Drugs ³³



Opioids Impact on Urban African American Families

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- Not just a rural, white issue, sharp increase in overdose deaths among African Americans in urban counties (41% increase in 2016)



Grandfamilies: Strengths and Challenges

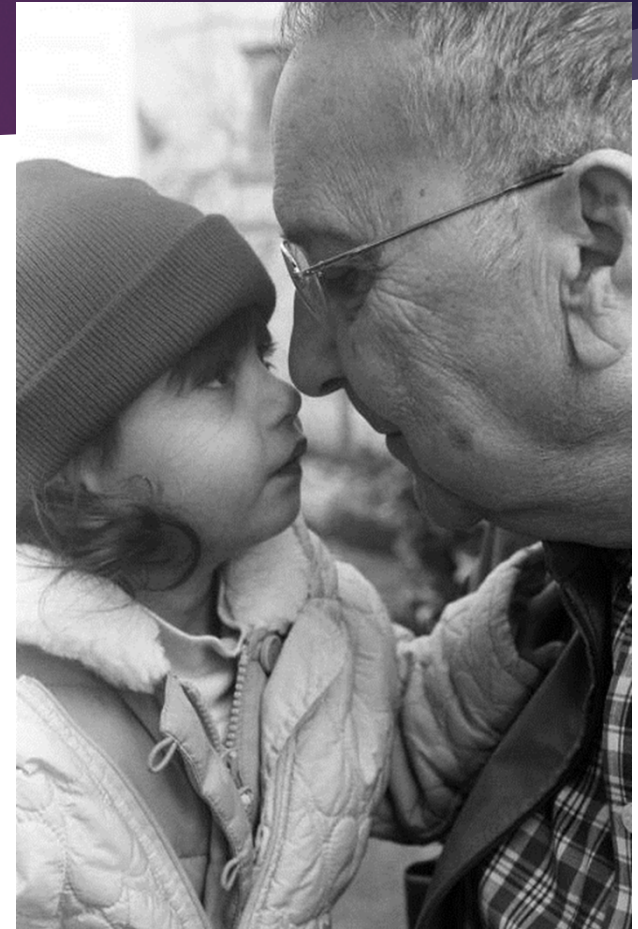
Grandfamilies Strengths: Children Thrive



* See Children Thrive in Grandfamilies fact sheet, available at www.grandfamilies.org and www.gu.org

Chad Dingle

"...most people go to grandma's house and get spoiled but for me it was the only safe place I had...getting to live with grandma was like 'going to grandma's house' all the time. I had more love there than anywhere else in my life."



Grandfamilies Challenges



LEGAL



FINANCIAL



HEALTH



HOUSING



EDUCATION

Mental Health and Social Issues

Caregivers

- ▶ Social Isolation
- ▶ Grief and Loss
- ▶ Changing Family Dynamics
- ▶ Feelings of Shame, Embarrassment
- ▶ Dual Loyalties
- ▶ Stress on Marriage and Other Family Relationships
- ▶ Rock of the Family

Children

- ▶ Trauma
- ▶ Attachment/Abandonment
- ▶ Stigma/Feeling Different
- ▶ Loss/Separation from Friends
- ▶ Special needs
- ▶ Fear about Caregiver's Health
- ▶ Responsibility/Fear/Guilt about other Family Members
- ▶ Multiple Loyalties



Impact of COVID -19

Grandfamilies & COVID-19

Food and Supplies

- Fear of leaving home to shop
- Waiting in long lines for food from multiple pick up sites
- No-touch pick-up and delivery of health care supplies, food and other necessities

Financial Assistance

- Lost jobs and retirement savings are plummeting
- Need help to meet the basic needs of the children
- Ensuring access to full stimulus check \$

Technology and Virtual Support

- Learning, health care, social outlets are all virtual
- Access needed to the internet and technology for tele-health needs, children's distance learning, and to connect with others to reduce social isolation

Child Welfare System Issues

- Home visits
- Challenges with licensing
- Delayed or waived training leaving them without key information
- Need access to flexible training options and help with licensing

Alternative Care Plans

- Legal help is expensive and hard to find
- Plans are needed for the children in the event of the caregiver's disability or death

Grandfamilies & COVID-19

Supporting Children's Needs

- Complex distance learning systems
- Helping with classwork
- Children's special needs
- Help with healthy children's activities at home
- Tutors/virtual learning support

Behavioral Challenges

- Histories of trauma – escalating behavior
- Older children disregarding stay at home orders
- Need general resources and individualized help with managing behavior

Social Isolation

- Loss of support group “lifelines” during more difficult time
- Need Virtual Support Groups
- Check ins

Information

- Exposed to misinformation
- Don't know where to go for help
- Need accurate information about the virus
- Need “kinship navigation” - where to go for supports and services

Relationships with Birth Parents

- Safely complying with visitation orders with parents and other family members
- Birth parents experiencing early release from prison and seeking to live with them
- Need clear guidance and help connecting with legal systems to answer questions

Grandfamily Caregiver Health

- ▶ More likely to be exposed to the virus because of their own caregiving role
- ▶ Underlying health issues place at greater risk if exposed
- ▶ Stress



Grandfamilies and Substance Use

You're not alone

Help is out there

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
Administration (SAMHSA) National Helpline
1(800) 662 HELP (4357)**

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-treatment>

- ▶ Tips, practical information and resources to help grandfamilies inside and outside the foster care system impacted by opioids or other substance use.
- ▶ Topics include:
 - *Practicing Self-Care*
 - *Addressing Childhood Trauma*
 - *Preventing Harmful Drug Use by Children*
 - *Engaging with Birth Parents*
 - *Talking with a Child about their Birth Parent*
- ▶ Available at:
www.grandfamilies.org/Portals/0/Documents/Grandfamilies-Report-GRANDResource-Opioids.pdf



Practicing Self-Care

- ▶ Self-care is identifying your needs and taking steps to meet them.
- ▶ You cannot take care of others unless you take care of yourself first.
- ▶ Self-care isn't selfish or one-size-fits-all.
- ▶ Self-care doesn't have to be expensive or time consuming.

▶ Examples of Self-Care

- ▶ Say no to things you cannot or do not want to do
- ▶ Taking time off without feeling guilty
- ▶ Stretching
- ▶ Going for a walk
- ▶ Taking a nap
- ▶ Journaling

Addressing Childhood Trauma

- ▶ Trauma is an emotional shock that follows a stressful event or physical injury which can lead to long-term mental health issues.
- ▶ More than two-thirds of children experience at least one traumatic event by age 16.
- ▶ Children impacted by parental substance use have often experienced trauma.

Trauma looks like:

- | ▶ Preschool-aged child | ▶ Elementary School Child | ▶ Middle and High School Child |
|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ▶ Scared of being separated from their caregiver | ▶ Easily become anxious or fearful | ▶ Feel depressed or alone |
| ▶ Excessive crying and/ screaming | ▶ Hard time concentrating | ▶ Eating disorders |
| ▶ Poor eating habits | ▶ Difficulties with sleep | ▶ Self-harm |
| ▶ Loss of appetite or weight | ▶ Feel guilt or shame | ▶ Misuse alcohol or other drugs |
| ▶ Nightmares | | ▶ Engage in risky sexual behaviors |

Preventing Harmful Drug Use by Children

- ▶ Although having a parent with a substance use disorder puts children at an increased risk of developing a substance use disorder, the overwhelming majority will not develop one.
- ▶ Educate yourself about these topics and then determine what is appropriate to share with the child based on their age and maturity.
- ▶ Recognize that children will hear about these topics in other ways.
- ▶ You should talk to the child about alcohol and other drugs frequently in normal conversations.
- ▶ Let them know they can come to you at any time for help and that you will not judge them.

Engaging with Birth Parents

- ▶ **Learn** about impact of substance use disorder on brain
- ▶ **Model** healthy relationship- for both child and parent
- ▶ **Set Boundaries**
- ▶ Preparing for visits-
 - ▶ **Be aware of emotions** of each family member
 - ▶ **Input of child** on visit
 - ▶ Provide **emotional support** before and after visit
- ▶ Concerns about parents actively using drugs-
 - ▶ Consider arrangements for **drugs tests and guidelines** for positive results
 - ▶ **Establish in advance right to end visit** if child's safety at risk
- ▶ Canceled visits-
 - ▶ **Reassure isn't child's fault**
 - ▶ **Don't talk negatively** about parent
 - ▶ Ask if child wants to **talk about feelings**
 - ▶ **Do planned activity** if possible
- ▶ Child's behavioral changes around visits-
 - ▶ Be aware can happen **before, during or after**
 - ▶ Provide **extra emotional support**
 - ▶ Plan special **time/space to process** child's feelings after
- ▶ Safety concerns-
 - ▶ Consider a **professionally-supervised** location or service
 - ▶ Keep a **recent photo** of child
 - ▶ **Help child memorize** your legal name, phone, address
 - ▶ Have **password**

Talking with a Child about their Birth Parents

- ▶ Remember **child still loves their parent**
- ▶ **Non-judgmental**, avoid being disrespectful
- ▶ Focus on the **positive**- “Your dad loves you so much”
- ▶ **Honest, age-appropriate**
- ▶ **Avoid secrecy**- impacts **trust**
- ▶ Explain **parent is sick, not a bad person**
“Mommy is sick and trying to get better.”
- ▶ **Separate conversation** about child's own use
- ▶ Emphasize **diversity of families**
- ▶ **Be aware of own feelings** and **find support for yourself**
- ▶ Okay to **share own feelings- with love and respect** “I am upset with how Mommy acted. It makes me feel sad, angry and confused, but she is still my daughter. I love her just like I will always love you.”

Policy and Program Recommendations

Some Policy and Program Responses

- ▶ **National Family Caregiver Support Program** federally funds Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to provide supportive services to grandfamilies - services can include legal assistance
- ▶ **The Family First Prevention Services Act** provides federal funds for mental health and other services for children who are at imminent risk of foster care entry, along with their kinship caregivers and parents
- ▶ **Affordable grandfamilies housing with services** on site exist in various communities around the country
- ▶ **State educational and health care consent laws** allow caregivers without legal custody of the children to access health care and educational services on their behalf - about 17 states have educational consent laws and about half have health care consent laws

Some Policy and Program Responses

- ▶ **Kinship Navigator Funds 2018, 2019 & 2020** funds to states, tribes, and territories to develop, enhance, or evaluate kinship navigator programs.
- ▶ **Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act** creates federal advisory council administered through ACL on grandparents and other relatives to identify best practices gaps in services and write a report to Congress. Requires a process for public input.
- ▶ **COVID-19 Response:** Include investments in Kinship Navigators and TANF to help states and tribes response to the impact of COVID-19 on grandfamilies. Relevant federal bills include: Child Welfare Emergency Assistance Act (S. 4172), Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act (H.R. 7947), the Pandemic TANF Assistance Act (S. 3672).

Selected Resources

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www.grandfamilies.org



A collaboration of the ABA Center on Children and the Law,
Generations United, and Casey Family Programs

State Fact Sheets

- ▶ All 50 States and the District of Columbia
- ▶ Includes information on state specific
 - Data
 - Programs
 - Public Benefits
 - Education
 - Legal
- ▶ Available at www.grandfamilies.org

GRANDFACTS

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Adoption vs Guardianship

BRIEF Adoption and Guardianship for Children in Kinship Foster Care



Throughout the United States, the foster care system's reliance on grandparents and other extended family members to care for children is increasing each year. When children cannot live safely with their parents and must enter the custody of the state or tribe, child welfare law and policy prioritize placement with relatives. These placements are known as kinship foster care, whether or not the relatives are licensed as foster parents.



Research shows that kinship foster care is generally better for children than non-related foster care. Children in kinship foster care experience fewer placement changes, more stability, better behavioral and mental health outcomes, and are more likely to report that they "always feel loved."¹ Children raised by kinship foster parents keep their connections to brothers, sisters, extended family and community, and their cultural identities.² Due in part to this research, a higher percentage of children are cared for by relatives in foster care than ever before. In 2017, 32 percent of all children in foster care in the United States (140,675 children) were with relatives, which represents more than a 9-percent point increase over the last decade.³



Children in kinship foster care are more likely to find a permanent home than children in nonrelated foster care.⁴ In 2017, about 35 percent of all children adopted from foster care were adopted by relatives and 10 percent of children who exited foster care, exited into guardianships.⁵

This brief focuses on adoption and guardianship for children in kinship foster care, so that these children can exit foster care into permanent families. The laws dictating how adoption and guardianship are granted, by which court, and what those options entail are developed at the state and tribal levels, so the intricacies for obtaining these legal relationships differ. This brief provides general information about the two options, how they differ, and trends in state law as they impact these options. It is important that caseworkers, relative caregivers, older children and their birth parents understand the two options and determine, based on all the information, what is best for their particular child and family.

CHART Adoption and Guardianship for Children in Kinship Foster Care: National Comparison Chart

This chart is designed to help kinship foster parents compare adoption and guardianship as two options that you and the children in your care can pursue to exit foster care and create permanent families. It provides a broad, national overview of these legal pathways. Adoption and guardianship laws are developed and implemented at the state, tribal and local levels, so the details of these legal relationships differ in important ways. You should review those differences when deciding which option to pursue. You can get initial information about your specific state's laws at www.grandfamilies.org/SearchIL.aspx.



While this chart is directed at kinship foster parents, it is also intended as a tool to help child welfare and other case workers assist kinship foster parents. Birth parents and older children may also find it helpful to review as part of their decision-making.

Generations United welcomes jurisdictions to either share the chart as is or tailor it to your own specific laws and policies. A related brief on *Adoption and Guardianship for Children in Kinship Foster Care* is available at www.grandfamilies.org.

ADOPTION

GUARDIANSHIP

Rights and Responsibilities

What are my legal rights and responsibilities for the child?	You will become the parent in the eyes of the law forever. You have all rights and responsibilities for the child.	You will have most of the rights and responsibilities that come with caring for a child until the child reaches adulthood or the guardianship is ended.
What are the birth parents' rights and responsibilities for the child?	The birth parents' rights are terminated.	Birth parents keep the rights to visit the child and to consent to adoption and/or name change. Birth parents keep the obligation to financially support the child and pay child support.
Do I have authority to access services for the child?	As an adoptive parent, access to services for the child is the same as for any birth parent.	Guardians access to services for the child is typically the same as for any birth parent.

Fact Sheet for Grandparent and Relative Caregivers to Help Access Support through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program

<https://www.gu.org/app/uploads/2018/08/TANF-Caregiver-Factsheet.pdf>

FACT SHEET

Grand Resources:

A Fact Sheet for Grandparent and Relative Caregivers to Help Access Support through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program

Introduction

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is often the only financial support available for grandfamilies like yours—families in which children are being raised by extended family members, like grandparents, and close family friends.

TANF may provide you and your grandfamily with support in several ways:

- Monthly cash to help meet the needs of your grandfamily or to meet the needs of just the children you're raising
- Short-term help to meet a need like buying a crib or paying a utility bill
- A pathway to access other important supports, like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), food stamps and Medicaid

TANF is a federal program, so it's available in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam. However, it varies dramatically from state to state. States have a lot of flexibility to decide who is eligible and how much support to provide. States can even call TANF by different names. For these reasons, this fact sheet answers questions from caregivers like you in general terms that apply no matter where you live. This fact sheet also has a chart that has contact information so you can get information about the specific TANF program in your state.

Questions and Answers That Apply No Matter Where You Live

(1) I hear there are two types of TANF grants. What are they?

The two types of TANF grants are known as "child-only" and "family" grants. They may be called different things where you live.

Child-only grants

Child-only grants were designed to consider only the needs and income of the child. A child's income might include child



Photo by Padra R.

support payments or a public benefit like Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Because most children have limited income, most relative caregivers can receive a child-only grant on behalf of the children in their care.

Child-only grants are usually smaller than family grants. Although they may not be enough to meet all the needs of the children you're raising, they can be a big help. The average grant is about \$8 per day for one child. This is the national average, so some states pay more and some pay less. All states, however, pay only slightly more for any additional children in the grandfamily.² In other words, the children you raise would not each get \$8 (on average) per day to meet their needs; only the first child would get the full amount.

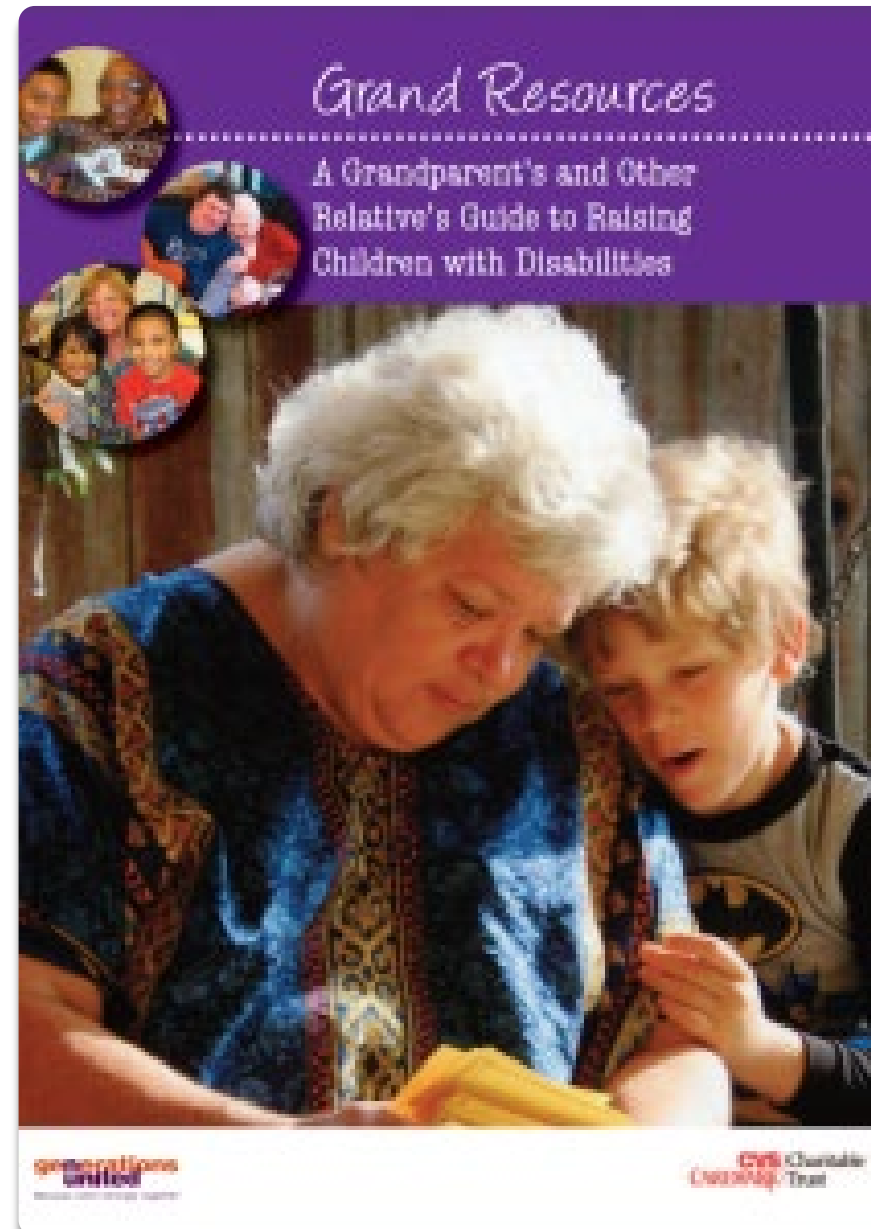
Family grants

The second type of TANF grant you may be eligible for is a "family grant." If you meet your state's income guidelines, you can receive a grant that addresses your needs, as well as those of the children you're raising. These grants are limited under federal law to no more than 60 months and you typically have to meet requirements to work or look for work.

States can make exceptions to these work requirements and time limits. Many states make these exceptions and/or allow time extensions for caregivers who are over age 60, are needed in the home to care for an incapacitated/disabled household

Grand Resources A Grandparent's and Other Relative's Guide to Raising Children with Disabilities

<https://www.gu.org/resources/grand-resources/>



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COVID-19 Fact Sheet for Grandfamilies and Multigenerational Families

Our country and the world are facing a pandemic unlike any of us have seen before. People over the age of 60 and those with compromised immune systems are among the highest-risk populations COVID-19 is impacting. While grandparents and other older adults are being advised to isolate themselves physically from children, it is nearly impossible for older caregivers to distance themselves from the children they are raising. As a grandfamily or a multigenerational household, you are on the front line for your family every day. Today's challenges are making it much tougher to care for them. It's important to stay calm and do everything you can to stay healthy, informed and connected. Here are some suggestions and resources to help grandfamilies and multigenerational families:

Crisis Hotlines

These are unprecedented times with significant stress and changes in routines therefore we wanted to make these following crisis hotlines easily accessible in case you or your family needed them.

Disaster Distress Hotline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746

Child Sexual Abuse: Stop It Now! 1-888-PREVENT (1-888-773-8368)

Crime Victims: National Center for Victims of Crime 1-855-4VICTIM (1-855-484-2846)

Dating Abuse: Love is Respect 1-866-331-9474 TTY: 1-866-331-8453, or Text LOVEIS TO 22522

Domestic Violence: National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799- 7233), TTY: 1-800-787-3224

Missing and Abducted Children: Child Find of America, Inc. 1-800-I-AM-LOST (1-800-426-5678); OR National Center for Missing & Exploited Children 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)

Rape and Sexual Abuse: Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) 1-800-656-HOPE (1-800-656-4673)

Runaway and Homeless Youth: National Runaway Safeline 1-800-RUNAWAY (1-800- 786-2929), or Text: 66008

Suicide Prevention: National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255), TTY: 1-800-799-4889

Information about COVID-19

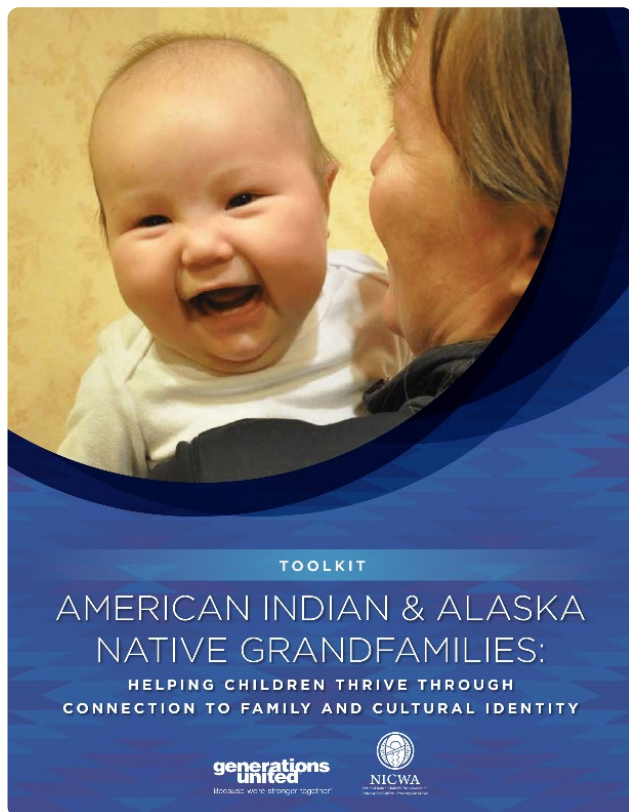
Finding Factual, Up to Date Information

There has been a lot of misinformation about the coronavirus in large part because there are still a lot of unknowns about the virus. In order to best protect yourself and your loved ones from the virus you need to find information on the virus from trusted sources including:

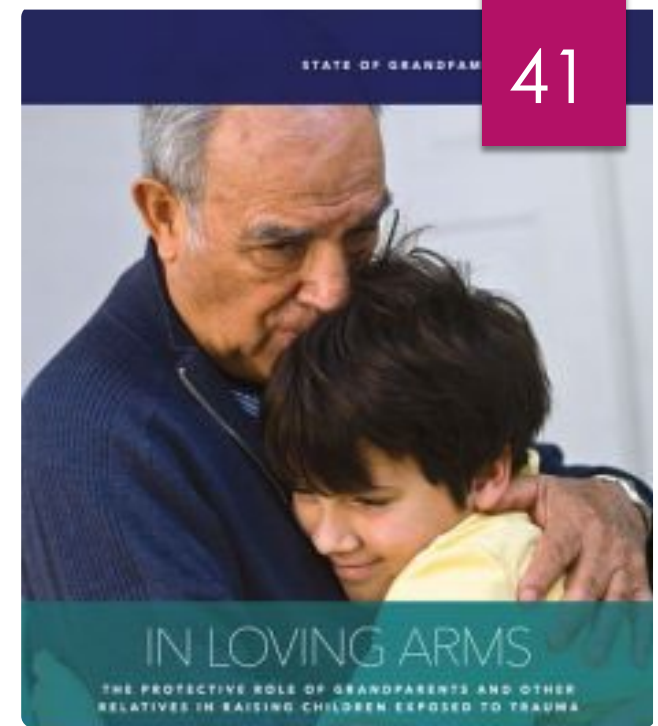
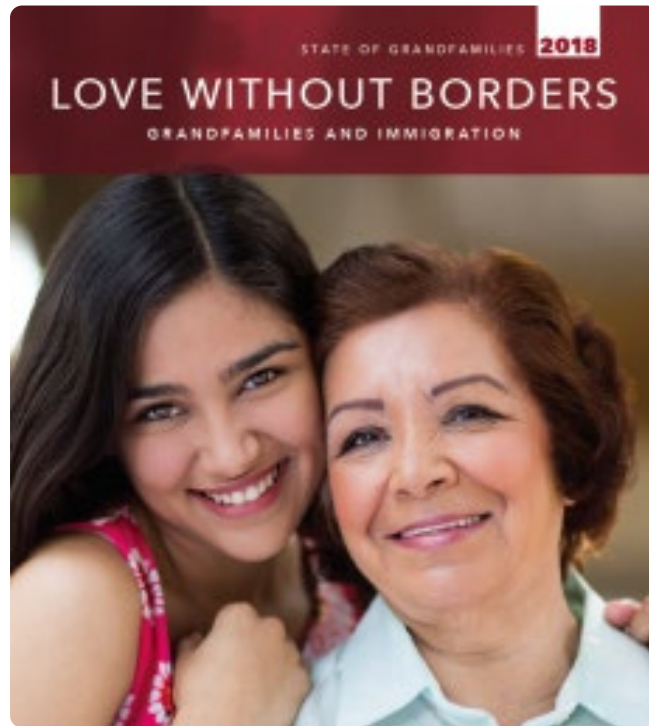
Center for Disease Control (CDC): The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has up to date, accurate information and recommendations about COVID-19.

- **General Information:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

COVID-19 Fact Sheet for Grandfamilies and Multigenerational Families



Racial Equity Toolkits



Annual State of Grandfamilies Reports

2020 Report on Grandfamilies and COVID-19

“Today, people are so disconnected that they feel they are blades of grass, but when they know who their grandparents and great-grandparents were, they become trees, they have roots, they can no longer be mowed down.”

- Maya Angelou





Because we're stronger together®

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Questions?

Generations United Contact Information

