

GrandFacts

A State Fact Sheet for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children

Alaska
October 2007

The AARP Foundation, The Brookdale Foundation Group, Children's Defense Fund, Casey Family Programs, Child Welfare League of America, 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. Fact sheets are updated annually. Updates can be sent to gic@aarp.org. This and other state fact sheets can be viewed and printed from <http://www.grandfactsheets.org>.

In Alaska....

- 8,188 children live in grandparent-headed households (4.3% of all the children in the state). There are another 2,620 children living in households headed by other relatives (1.4% of all the children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Alaska, 5,110 are living there without either parent present.
- 5,419 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them (1,719 in Anchorage): 4% of these grandparents are African American; 2% are Hispanic/Latino; 43% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; 4% are Asian; 2% are Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and 41% are White. 34% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present. 67.4% are under the age of 60; 11.5% 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>.

Programs That Can Help

Alaska Center for Resource Families/Alaska Adoption Support Center

Sponsoring Organization Alaska Office of Children's Services
Phone: 907-479-7307 1-800-478-7307
Website: <http://www.acrf.org>
Service Area: Statewide - offices in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Mat-su/Palmer, Juneau

Services Offered:

- Resources and training for prospective foster families
- Newsletter
- Support group and family activities
- Support/training by phone for rural families



Grandfamilies Network Project

Sponsoring Organization Volunteers of America
Contact: Christina Lowther
Phone: 888-522-9866 or 907-522-9866 (Anchorage)
Email: grands@voaak.org
Website: www.voaak.org
Service Area: Statewide

Services Offered:

- Respite care for grandparents 55 and over
- Winter and summer camps for children
- Support group meetings monthly in Anchorage, Mat-Su Valley; more locations expected
- Assistance in establishing local support groups
- Counseling in person in Anchorage, by phone statewide
- Free books/cold weather gear for children
- Kinship Caregiver Resource Guide
- Powerful Families – Casey Family courses in financial literacy and advocacy

Children in Foster Care

State child welfare agencies sometimes place children in foster care with grandparents or other relatives. Most state agencies call these placements “kinship care.”

Numbers

- 1,874 children in out-of-home placements under the supervision of the Alaska Office of Children’s Services (OCS) as of January 2006.
- 588 of these children were placed with relatives.
- 159 children were on trial home visits with 10 children in pre-adoptive homes with relatives.

Preferences

- Alaska law requires that kinship care be considered first when an out-of-home placement is sought for an abused or neglected child.

Kinship care licensing

- No separate licensing for kinship foster parents.
- Same licensing standards and training requirements as non-kin foster parents.
- Same foster care payment rate.
- Some training opportunities for non-licensed relative caregivers.
- Contact:
 - Tracy Spartz-Campbell
 - Phone/email: 907-465-3209 Tracy_Spartz-Campbell@health.state.ak.us

Subsidized guardianship

- Alaska program provides subsidies to kin and non-kin guardians of children who are in state custody at the time guardianship plan is written.
- Subsidy may be awarded if recommended by the OCS Permanency Planning Conference Team, family has approved guardianship study and child meets other criteria.
- Contact Alaska Center for Resource Families/Alaska Adoption Support Center (see above).
- Information about state government services at <http://hss.state.ak.us/ocs/Adoptions/aboutGuardianship.html>

Public Benefits

Children are often eligible for state and federal benefits even if their caregivers do not have legal guardianship or custody.

Financial Assistance

- Cash assistance may be available to children and their relative caregivers through the Alaska Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP).
 - Contact: 907-465-3347
 - Web: www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/atap/

Food Stamps

- Kinship care families may be eligible for food stamps.
 - Contact: 907-465-3347
 - Web: www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/fstamps

Health Insurance

- Relative caregivers may apply for free or low-cost health insurance through Denali KidCare
 - Contact: 888-804-6330 or 907-269-6529 (Anchorage)
 - Web: <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/dkc/>

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
 - Contact: 202-662-3568
 - Web: www.childrensdefense.org (Kinship Care Resource Kit)
- National Council on Aging – Benefits CheckUp www.benefitscheckup.org

State Laws

Alaska currently does not have any state laws specifically directed at kinship care families.

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