



*The Grandparent's  
and Other Relative  
Caregiver's Guide to  
Child Care and Early  
Childhood Education  
Programs*

**WHAT YOU NEED  
TO KNOW TO  
GIVE THE CHILD  
YOU ARE RAISING  
A HEAD START**

## Join the Movement to Leave No Child Behind®!

**M**aking sure that all children have access to quality child care and early childhood education experiences is an important first step in giving them a head start in life and the tools they need to grow into healthy and productive adults. Understandably, early childhood education experiences are not enough. Children also need quality health care, a good education, safe places to live and play, and income supports to help their families stay out of poverty. Some children may also need help to take care of their special needs.

The mission of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) is to *Leave No Child Behind*® and to ensure every child a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start*, and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. Over the months and years ahead, CDF will be calling upon committed parents, grandparents, and other relative caregivers like you to help make this vision a reality for all American children. To get involved with other concerned individuals, children's advocacy organizations, and community and faith-based groups in the national *Movement to Leave No Child Behind*®, contact the Children's Defense Fund, 25 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001 or check CDF's Web site at [www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org)

*CDF encourages you to copy and share this brochure with others.*

November 2002

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## All Children Deserve a Head Start in Life

**A**re you a grandparent or other relative raising another family member's children? You are not alone. Relatives are raising more than 2 million children whose parents cannot care for them.

Many relatives need to work to raise their grandchildren. You want them to be in a safe place when you are away. You want your grandchildren to get early learning experiences so that they start school ready to succeed. Your school-age grandchildren may also need safe and age-appropriate activities after school.

Child care and after-school activities help shape the way children think, learn, and behave for the rest of their lives. Every child deserves the quality child care and early childhood education experiences that he or she needs to get a head start in life. Like many relative caregivers, you may worry about finding the right programs for children you are raising. You are not alone in your search for quality programs. Most families face the same problem. Every day, three out of five preschoolers are in child care and early childhood education programs. Millions of older children need after-school activities.

This guide tells you about different types of child care and early childhood education programs. It tells you how to look for them and for before- or after-school programs for your older grandchildren. It also describes how you may get help paying for this care. Child care and early childhood education programs are different in each state or county. You must do some homework to find the right caregiver or program for your grandchildren.

Some of the information sources in this guide are on the Internet. The Internet can help you get information quickly and easily. If you do not have a computer at home, go to your local public library. Most libraries have computers that are easy to use and someone to help you use them. It is often faster to get your questions answered from an organization's Web site than by calling a toll-free telephone number.

Remember that you must be persistent when looking for a child care or early childhood education program for your grandchildren. This guide describes different choices you may have. But things do not always work the way they should. You may sometimes find a difference between what a policy is supposed to be and what actually happens. Be prepared to ask a lot of questions. Be patient, but be persistent.

In this guide, we use the word "grandchildren" to refer to the children you are raising in your home. The information is the same if you are caring for other related children such as nieces or nephews.

The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) also has three other guides for kinship caregivers that you may find helpful. One has information about how to get health insurance for your grandchildren through Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program in your state. The other guides describe federal food and nutrition programs for children and services for children with disabilities. See pages 54-55 to learn more about how to get these CDF guides for kinship caregivers.

## What Are Some of the Basics I Need to Know about Getting Child Care and Early Childhood Education for My Grandchild?

*Before I look for child care, I want to make sure I remember what children should be able to do at different ages. Where can I get information about child development?*

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Maternal and Child Health Bureau has national guidelines that can help you. *Bright Futures: Pocket Guide* describes normal activities for children of all ages. You can get it on the Internet at [www.brightfutures.org](http://www.brightfutures.org). You can also get a free copy by calling the toll-free number for the Maternal and Child Health Bureau at 1-888-275-4772.

*What are the different types of child care?*

There are several types of child care. They are not all available in all communities and they have different costs. Check what is available in your area so you can choose what works best for your family.

- **In-home care.** In this type of child care, someone comes to your home to care for your grandchildren. Having the caregiver in your own home gives you more control over where your grandchildren are. It also keeps your grandchildren in a familiar setting. If someone watches your grandchildren in your home, be sure to have a back-up plan if that person gets sick or cannot work on some days.

It can be difficult to find qualified in-home caregivers. Those who have a lot of training cost more than other types of child care. You may want to pay your neighbor or friend to watch your grandchildren while you work. Be sure this person really wants to care for your grandchildren and is not just doing you a favor. You also should make sure the person has experience caring for children. Even if you know the person or trust whoever recommended the caregiver, there are still questions you should ask. We talk more about these questions on pages 14-16.

When you use in-home care on a regular basis, you become an employer. This means you have to pay at least minimum wage, Unemployment Insurance, and Social Security taxes. In many states, you also have to pay workers' compensation and state unemployment insurance. To learn more about the tax issues involved when you hire someone to care for your grandchildren in your home on a regular basis, see pages 16-17.

- **Family child care.** In this type of child care, your grandchildren are cared for in a small home-like setting, usually in the child care provider's own home. Most family child care providers work alone, so you should have a back-up if they are sick or cannot work some days. Some communities have a network of family child care providers. Later in the guide (see pages 10-11) we suggest

you contact your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency to learn about child care resources in your area. They should also be able to tell you if there is a family care network in your community.

Make sure you find a caregiver who is licensed or registered in your state and, if possible, one who is accredited. You can read more about this on pages 18-19.

- **Group or center care.** Child care centers are usually licensed by the state and required to meet standards for cleanliness, safety, health conditions, staffing, and program activities. They offer different ranges of activities for children of different ages.

Nonprofit neighborhood or faith-based groups often run child care programs. In your area, public schools and government agencies may also run programs. Some individuals or business chains run programs to make money. No matter who operates the program, always look for one where the staff members have child development training.

Make sure you find a center that is licensed or registered in your state and, if possible, one that is accredited. You can read more about this on pages 18-19.

- **Early childhood education.** Early childhood education programs usually refer to center-based programs that offer a range of activities to help children develop physically, socially, emotionally, and mentally. Activities are based on the children's age and change as children get older. The programs have more structured learning experiences for older children than what younger children usually get.

People call early childhood education programs by many different names. They may say child care center, nursery school, preschool or prekindergarten, or child development center. Sometimes they just say Head Start, which is a popular early childhood program for lower income families (see pages 28-31). Most early childhood education programs are licensed by the state. This means they meet certain standards for cleanliness, safety, health conditions, staffing, and program activities.

Nonprofit neighborhood or faith-based groups often run early childhood education programs. In your area, public schools and government agencies may also run programs. Some individuals or business chains run programs to make money. No matter who operates the program, always look for one where the staff members have child development training.

Make sure you find an early childhood education program that is licensed or registered in your state and, if possible, one that is accredited. You can read more about this on pages 17-19.

*Can I ask a friend, neighbor, or relative to watch my grandchildren while I go to work?*

Yes. Many friends, neighbors, and relatives care for children while their grandparent caregivers work. People call this “informal” child care. It is different from what is called “formal” child care, which usually includes child care centers or family child care homes.

You may prefer to have a friend, neighbor, or relative take care of your grandchildren. You may want a caregiver who shares your values and already knows your grandchildren. This type of care is generally the most flexible and works well for people who do not work standard day time hours. It also may be what you can afford.

Find out if your state requires any background or criminal record checks for informal child care providers. Your state may require other kinds of screening as well, especially if the state helps pay for your child care. Read more about this on page 17. In addition, we suggest you ask the caregiver questions like those we list on pages 14-16. This will help ensure that your grandchildren get good care in a safe place.



*I am raising grandchildren of different ages. Do they need different child care or early childhood education programs?*

Yes. It is important to find child care or early childhood education programs that provide age-appropriate activities for each grandchild. When your grandchildren are very young, you want a child care person or program that can give them a lot of individual attention. As they get older, your grandchildren need activities to help them learn how to play and share with others. They also need basic lessons to prepare them for school and to learn how to read. If you have school-age grandchildren, you may also need before- or after-school programs if you work or cannot be with them during those times of the day.

*Can I use more than one kind of child care for my grandchildren?*

Yes. Sometimes that is what you must do to make sure you have child care when you need it. This is especially true if you work at odd hours, at night, or on the weekend. You may use a child care center or family child care home most of the time. But you may also need a friend, neighbor, or relative to help you when the child care center or family home is not open. Or it may cost too much to use the program all the hours that you need help, especially if it charges extra for a longer day or weekends.

Some early childhood education programs only have half-day programs. This means you have to combine them with other child care arrangements. It is very common

for families to use more than one kind of child care for their preschool children. Although making extra plans takes time, it is helpful because then you have back-ups if one caregiver is not available or you have an emergency.

*My son or daughter is active duty military. Are there special child care arrangements that my grandchild may be eligible for?*

Maybe. If your grandchild's parent is a member of the military and on active duty or a civilian employee of the Department of Defense, the child may be eligible for child care services sponsored by the military services. Each of the military services has child care programs. To find out what your grandchild may be eligible for, check the Military Children and Youth Web site at <http://military-childrenandyouth.calib.com/network.htm> or contact the National Clearinghouse Military Child Development Program at 703-602-4964.

*Can I get child care help for my three young grandchildren a few hours a day even if I don't work?*

You may want to think about part-day preschool programs or nursery schools. These programs often offer group child care for less than a full day. They usually serve children who are 2 to 5 years old. A part-day program can give you a break. It also is an important time for your grand children to play with other children.

Different groups run part-day programs. Many Head Start and prekindergarten programs are part-day. Local public schools, child care or community centers, or places of worship may house these part-day programs. States often have different licensing rules for part-day programs. These programs usually follow the school-year calendar so you need to plan around school vacations and holidays. For example, you may need a part-time summer program for your grandchildren. Call the National Child Care Information Center at 1-800-616-2242 or Child Care Aware 1-800-424-2246 and ask about part-day programs in your area.

If you have trouble finding a part-day program, call your local library and ask if your community has a family resource center. These centers are often found in public schools, early childhood programs, or community colleges. The resource center may have a part-time program or staff that can help you find one.

*How do I begin looking for child care? Is there a place I can call for information about my state or community?*

You should call your community Child Care Resource and Referral Agency. The staff can tell you about local child care programs for children of all ages. Each resource and referral agency has up-to-date lists of licensed or registered child care programs. The lists include information about where space is available, the ages of children served, hours of operation, fees, and types of programs. They also have a checklist to help you evaluate child care providers that you are considering.

To find your local resource and referral agency, call Child Care Aware at 1-800-424-2246. You can also use their Web site at <http://childcareaware.org>. If you use the Web site, enter your zip code and you will get the telephone number for your local referral agency. See page 43.

*Are there any special resources for grandparent caregivers that I can ask about child care?*

Yes. The Older Americans Act funds the National Family Caregiver Support Program. It serves grandparents and other relatives who are age 60 or older and caring for children under 18 years old. A few states also help relative caregivers who are younger than 60 years old. States that participate must give priority to grandparents or other relatives who are caring for children or others with mental retardation or related developmental disabilities.

The National Family Caregiver Support Program may provide the following support services:

- information about available services
- help getting services for the caregivers' families
- counseling, support groups, or training
- respite care

They may also provide additional services such as legal help with questions relating to custody, guardianship, or public benefits. Each state offers different support services to eligible caregivers, so check what is available in your area.

States are not required to offer these support services to grandparents or older relatives, but many do. The Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) provide the services. Most states have one or more AAA. Look for it in the city or county government section of the telephone directory under “Aging” or “Social Services.” When you call the AAA office, ask about the National Family Caregiver Support Program in your state. You can also get the telephone number for your local AAA through the Eldercare Locator hotline at 1-800-677-1116.

You can also learn about your state’s Caregiver Support Program, by calling your State Unit on Aging. You can find the number in the state government section of the telephone directory under “Aging” or “Social Services.” If you have a computer, you can get the number for your State Unit on Aging at <http://www.aoa.gov/aoa/pages/state.html>. You can also get it from the Eldercare Locator hotline at 1-800-677-1116.

## How Do I Choose the Right Child Care or Early Childhood Education Program?

*What is the difference between regular child care and early childhood education programs?*

Some people use the two phrases to describe the same kinds of programs. It is most important to find out if the program gives attention to the social, emotional, physical, developmental, and learning needs of young children.

Research shows that participation in programs that give quality attention to the emotional, developmental, and learning needs of young children make a really big difference in children's lives, both now and later. Children learn skills in early childhood programs that help them enter school ready to learn and succeed. Research also shows that children who attend comprehensive early childhood programs tend to stay out of trouble and avoid becoming involved in crime. Also, more graduate from high school rather than dropping out.

*What should I look for when choosing a program?*

It is important to check out each provider or program that you consider. You should visit each place, speak with the staff, and talk with other families who use the program or provider.

When you visit, pay attention to how the home or center looks and feels to you. Watch how the staff speak and act

with the children. Watch how the children play with each other. Ask the staff questions. Here are some things to look for:

- Is it clean? Is it in good repair? Are there railings on all staircases? Are the bathrooms clean?
- Do staff supervise the children at all times? How many adults are there compared to the number of children? Does staff have any child development training? Do they have previous child care experience? Do they seem to enjoy the children? Does the provider or program do criminal background checks on its staff?
- How do the children spend their time? Are there enough books and toys for them? Are there different activities for children of different ages?
- Is the program licensed or accredited?
- Is there a safe place for the children to play outside? Does it have a fence? Does it have a gate that locks so the children cannot run into the street and outsiders cannot get in without being invited?
- Is it childproof? Are medicines and cleaning supplies out of reach? Are the electrical outlets covered or out of reach?
- Does it have a plan to get everyone out if there is a fire? What will they do if there is an accident or another kind of emergency?
- Do staff have good health habits? Do they wash their hands before giving the children food? Do they wash their hands after changing diapers?
- What are the rules for disciplining children?

- Do you feel the home or center is safe? Would you feel comfortable leaving your grandchild there?

After you visit, think about these questions and what you saw. Ask for names of other families whose children attend the program. Call and ask if they think it is safe and if their children like it before you decide. The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies has a free checklist to help you evaluate the quality of family day care or child care centers. Contact Child Care Aware at 1-800-424-2246 or <http://childcareaware.org>.

*What should I think about before asking a neighbor, friend, or other relative to watch my grandchildren?*

You may want to have a friend, neighbor, or relative take care of your grandchildren. This is often referred to as an “informal” child care arrangement. You may prefer a caregiver who shares your values and knows your grandchildren. This may be especially important if one of your grandchildren is very young. This type of care may work best for you because of your work schedule or because it is what you can afford.

You should first ask, “Does this person really want to care for my grandchildren?” Sometimes people may offer to do this just to help you, but they may not know how to provide good child care. Next you should ask some of the following questions as well as many of the same questions on page 14.



- How will the person protect your grandchildren from injuries and other problems? What will the person do if there is an accident or emergency?
- Will the person watch other children at the same time? If so, how many and what ages?
- Will the person have other adults to help care for the children? Who are they?
- What activities will the person plan for the children?

Even though you know the caregiver, talk to her about her work with children. The person may have no formal training, but may have lots of experience caring for children. If you are not comfortable with the person's answers, think about whether this is the right thing to do.

You may feel better using a licensed family child care home or center, even if it costs more. See pages 20-23 to learn more about getting help paying for child care. While you are at work, you do not want to worry about your grandchildren and their safety.

Some states have rules for "informal" child care. Check on state or local rules before you ask someone to provide child care in your home or send your grandchildren to someone's house. You can call Child Care Aware at 1-800-424-2246 to ask about your state's rules. If you have a computer, go to <http://childcareaware.org> and enter your zip code to get contact information for your local area.

There are also tax issues to consider when using "informal" child care. Check with the state Department of Revenue about state tax issues. There also are federal tax issues. To

learn more about them, see Tax Topic 756, “Employment Taxes for Household Employees,” and Publication 926, “Household Employer’s Tax Guide.” You can get these from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) at its Web site, <http://www.irs.treas.gov>. Use the “Search” key to find each item by its number. You can also order the items by calling 1-800-829-3676 or talk to someone at the IRS about your situation at 1-800-TAX-1040.

*Does the government set standards for child care and early childhood education programs?*

State and local governments set minimum health and safety standards for most programs, sometimes as a condition for federal funding. States have different rules about which child care homes or centers must be licensed or registered to operate. Generally, informal child care providers only need to meet certain requirements. Programs that accept government subsidies usually have to meet state standards.

You should ask the state office that regulates child care if a program you like is licensed or registered. You can get this office number from the National Child Care Information Center at 1-800-616-2242. You can also get it from its Web site at <http://nccic.org/statepro.html> where all your state agency information about child care is posted. You can get your state child care office’s telephone number on the Internet at <http://childcareaware.org/en/licensing>.

*Do any private groups set standards for child care and early childhood education programs beyond those set by local and state governments?*

Yes. National child care groups set accreditation standards that some centers and homes meet. To get approved, these programs must meet guidelines that go beyond basic licensing requirements. Accredited programs often provide the extra care, attention, and activities that you probably want your grandchildren to get. Many caregivers in accredited programs have special training in child development. This helps them better understand the needs of children at different ages and plan the right activities for them.

You can use the Internet to find accredited family child care providers and child care centers in your area. Among the groups that accredit different kinds of child care programs are the following:

- Some **child care centers** meet standards set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. You can find these accredited programs by entering your zip code under “Accredited Program Search” at <http://www.naeyc.org>.
- Some **family child care homes** meet standards set by the National Association for Family Child Care. You can find these accredited programs by entering your zip code at <http://www.nafcc.org>.
- Some **after-school programs** meet accreditation standards set by the National School-Age Care Alliance. You can find a state-by-state list of these

programs by going to <http://www.nsaca.org> and clicking on “Accreditation.”

*What can I do if I cannot find the child care I want for my grandchildren?*

Finding good child care is a problem that many families face. It is always a good idea to check with everyone you know. Word-of-mouth recommendations are often the best way to find a good child care provider.

If you don't find child care that you like right away, you should keep calling your Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (see pages 10-11). You might also need to look for child care in a different location. For example, is there a center near your workplace rather than near your home? Is there a center that is easy to reach by bus? Could you get to a child care program that you like if you took a different route to work?

You should talk with your friends and neighbors. Ask people at your place of worship where they send their children. Check with the local community center about child care centers that families use and like. If you work, ask your co-workers about what they do about child care.

You may have to make temporary arrangements before you find a center that you really like. This can give you time to get on waiting lists for the programs you prefer. Centers may have slots open even if they are full when you first call. Your community Child Care Resource and Referral Agency can help you find temporary child care while you look for something permanent.

## **Can I Get Help to Pay for Child Care for My Grandchildren?**

*Can the government help me pay for child care or early childhood education programs for my grandchildren?*

It depends. The federal government gives money to states to help some low-income families pay for child care and early childhood education programs. Whether you may receive help depends on your family income and the age of your child. Each state decides what children they will help. States also may choose to help families with child care for children who have special needs or who receive child welfare services up to age 19. “Special needs” children may or may not include children with disabilities.

The help you get from the government may be called a “subsidy.” It will probably not be cash, but a voucher you can use to pay for the child care you choose. Some states pay for child care for eligible families through special contracts with child care providers. Even if you are receiving help, your state may require you to pay some of the cost of care for your child. The amount you pay will be based on your income and the type of care you choose.

To find out if you qualify for help paying for child care, contact your state child care subsidy agency. The National Child Care Information Center can give you the telephone number for your state agency. You can call the National Child Care Information Center at 1-800-616-2242. You can also use its Web site at <http://nccic.org>. If you

use the Web site, click on “State Profiles” to find information for your state. Then click on “Contacts” to find your child care subsidy agency. See page 47.

You can also check with your local child care resource and referral agency. This agency can give you information about getting help to pay for child care and choosing a quality child care program in your community. To find the agency in your area, call Child Care Aware at 1-800-424-2246. You can also check its Web site at <http://childcareaware.org>. If you use the Web site, enter your zip code and information for your local referral agency will appear.

*Can I qualify for any tax assistance if I pay for my grandchildren’s child care while I go to work?*

It depends. If you work, you may qualify for different types of tax assistance to help you pay for child care. Families who pay for the care of a child under age 13 so they can work may qualify for the federal Child and Dependent Care Credit. The federal credit is worth up to \$1,440. The size of the credit depends on your income, the number of children in your care, and what you pay for their care. To learn more about it, go to <http://www.irs.treas.gov> and type in “Child and Dependent Care Credit” in the “Search IRS site” blank. If you would like to view the entire publication, enter “17” in the blank for “Forms and Publications.” You can also order Publication No. 17 by calling 1-800-829-3676. If you call 1-800-TAX-1040, you can talk to someone at the Internal Revenue Service about the credit.

Twenty-seven states also have state child care tax credits. In 10 states, the credits are “refundable.” This means that qualifying families can get a refund in the amount of the credit even if they do not owe any income tax. To learn more about state tax credits, contact your state Department of Revenue. Look for the number in the government section of your telephone book. The National Women’s Law Center also has information about both federal and state child care tax credits on its Web site at [www.nwlc.org](http://www.nwlc.org). Click on “Child Care” to read the “Frequently Asked Questions.”

*Can I get help to pay someone to care for my grandchildren in my home while I work?*

It depends. Not all states pay for child care provided by a caregiver in your home, even if you are otherwise eligible for assistance. However, if you decide to take your child to the home of a neighbor, friend, or relative, and you are eligible for a subsidy, a state must allow you to use it for that “informal” provider. Generally, these “informal” providers are considered unlicensed but legally operating providers.

*Can I get help to pay for child care if my grandchild gets welfare?*

It depends. The federal government gives money to states to run welfare programs. Federal cash assistance to states for low-income families is now called Temporary Assistance to Needy Families or TANF. Each state designs its own TANF program (which some give a different name) and

decides which children and TANF families can get child care help. Your ability to get child care help depends on rules your state has in certain areas.

Contact the child care subsidy agency to learn more about your state's child care rules for families eligible for TANF. Call the National Child Care Information Center at 1-800-616-2242 to find out how to contact your child care subsidy agency. If you have a computer, go to <http://nccic.org> and click on "State Profiles" to find your state. Then click on "Contacts" to get the telephone number for the state child care subsidy agency.

*If I qualify for help to pay for the child care I need, can I choose the provider?*

Yes. If you get help paying for your grandchildren's child care, the law says you can choose the provider you want. But this is not always easy. You can choose a provider you want, but they must have space for your grandchildren and be willing to take the amount of money that you get to pay for child care.

You may also choose someone to come to your house. But, many states limit this option because they are reluctant to pay for a provider just to watch one child. If you have additional children in the house, it may be easier to get help with this choice. You can also decide to send your grandchildren to someone else's house for child care. If you want to do this and you qualify for child care help, the provider's home must meet basic health and safety standards.



## **Are There Special Issues I Need to Consider Because I Am a Grandparent?**

*Is my income counted to determine my grandchild's eligibility for child care or early childhood education programs?*

Probably. Eligibility for programs funded by federal, state, or local governments is usually based on family income. This means that any income you have from a job, a pension, or your Social Security benefits will generally count whether or not you have legal custody or guardianship of the child. Some prekindergarten and early childhood education programs are free for low-income families with incomes below a certain level. Others may charge a fee based on family income. States set their own income limits so you need to ask your state child care subsidy agency to find out about the rules in your state. Some private programs also allow lower income families to pay less.

*Do I need legal custody to enroll my grandchild in child care or an early childhood education program?*

It depends. You are supposed to have legal custody or guardianship to qualify for a federal child care subsidy. Head Start, which is described on pages 28-31, also requires that the person enrolling the child have legal custody or guardianship.

*How do I get legal custody of my grandchild?*

You must go to the local courthouse and file a special form asking for legal custody or guardianship of your grandchild. Legal custody or guardianship means that you have the legal right to make certain medical and other specified decisions for the child in your care.

A judge must approve any application for legal custody or guardianship. Although you can make the request without a lawyer, it can get complicated. Call the local bar association and ask if you can get legal help to apply for custody. Sometimes free legal help is available. Sometimes you are charged based on your income. There also may be a legal clinic in your area that can help you.

*Will the child care provider call me if my grandchildren get sick or there is an emergency?*

You should explain to the center or family child care provider that you are raising your grandchildren and that you are the person to call in an emergency. You should also give them the name and telephone number of someone you pick as your back-up contact if there is an emergency and you cannot pick up your grandchildren. This can help ensure that the center does not let your grandchildren leave with any other adults.

Sometimes family situations may make you nervous about your grandchildren's parent(s) coming to get the children without your permission. If you face this situation, you

should go to court to become the legal custodian or guardian for your grandchildren. Also make sure that the custody order clearly states what rules will apply for parental visitation, including visits to the child care center.

Without this legal status, there is little you can do to prevent a mother or father from taking their children. If you have legal custody or guardianship, share copies of your court papers with the child care center.

If you feel that having custody is not enough protection, you may want to get a protective order. This is something you get in court from a judge when someone is abused or faces a threat from someone else. It allows a judge to order a parent to stay away from your grandchildren or to permit visits by a parent only when you are present. You can usually get a temporary order for a short period when a child faces an immediate threat. After a court hearing, a judge may order a permanent protective order that will last for a specific amount of time.

Be sure to tell your grandchild's child care program if there is a protective order and give them a copy, if possible. Explain that if your grandchild's parent shows up, the center must immediately call the local police. The police have all court orders on file so they can arrest a parent for not obeying one.

*Do I have to worry about the immigration status of my grandchild or myself when I enroll him in a child care or early childhood education program?*

It depends. Some programs will not ask about your grandchild's immigration status when you enroll him, but others may. Even if the program asks, they may still allow undocumented children to enroll. If your grandchild is undocumented, you should talk to someone at your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency. Ask if a specific program you are interested in uses a child's immigration status to decide eligibility.

If you are undocumented, there is really no need for you to provide this information to the child care or early childhood education program. Eligibility for these programs is generally based on the child's immigration status, not your status. If a program pushes you to give this information, then you should get legal help.

Enrolling your grandchild in a child care or early education program will not affect his or your ability to apply later for citizenship.

Head Start programs do not use your immigration status or your grandchild's to decide eligibility. We talk more about Head Start programs in the next section.

## What about Head Start?

*Everyone always talks about Head Start. What is it?*

Head Start is a federal program for preschool children from low-income families. Most children in Head Start are between ages 3 to 5. But, in some communities, infants and toddlers are served through Early Head Start. You can read more about Early Head Start on page 29.

Local nonprofit groups run Head Start programs in almost every county in the United States. The goal of Head Start is to help all children succeed. It provides activities for children to help them grow physically, socially, emotionally, and mentally. Children who attend Head Start get a number of educational activities. They also get free medical and dental care and healthy meals and snacks. Children and families with special needs get mental health and other services. Head Start programs must reserve at least 10 percent of their slots for children with disabilities.

Head Start helps the whole family. It offers support services based on what a family needs. It offers training about health or nutrition, help in learning English, or information about how to get a job. Head Start staff members are supposed to refer families to whatever kind of help they need and follow up to make sure they get it. Federal rules require Head Start programs to provide certain education, health, parent involvement, and social services. The government checks Head Start programs to make sure that they provide the required services.

*A neighbor said that my 2-year-old grandchild is too young for Head Start. Is that right?*

Although Head Start generally serves children ages 3 to 5, some communities also have Early Head Start programs. These serve low-income children under age 3 and their families. The program is free for eligible families. Early Head Start has special services to help the youngest children grow physically, socially, emotionally, and mentally. Eligible children get child care, early education, health and mental health services, and nutrition. Help for eligible families is provided through home visits, parent education, and support groups.

*How do I enroll my grandchild in Head Start?  
What about Early Head Start?*

Head Start programs decide whom they will serve based on the needs of families in their local communities. Head Start is free for eligible low-income families. Your grandchild is probably eligible if he receives Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (sometimes called “welfare”) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. You may find there are waiting lists because programs often do not have enough money to serve all the eligible children in an area.

If you need to find a local Head Start program, call the Head Start Information and Publications Center at 1-866-763-6481 (toll-free). You also can use the Internet to find a Head Start program near you. Go to <http://www2.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb/grantees/search/search.asp>.

If you find a program in your area, call and ask if your grandchild qualifies and how to enroll him.

Each Early Head Start program sets its own eligibility rules based on the needs of the local area. The program will consider your family income and the needs of your grandchild. Programs must reserve at least 10 percent of their slots for children with disabilities.

Find out if your community has an Early Head Start program by calling the Head Start Information and Publications Center at 1-866-763-6481 (toll-free). See page 45. If you have a computer, you can also check the Early Head Start National Resource Center's Web site at <http://www.ehsnrc.org>. Click on "Locate an EHS" program to see if there is a local program in your area. If you find a local program, call and ask if your grandchild qualifies and how to enroll him.

*If I do not have legal custody or guardianship, can I enroll my grandchild in Head Start? Can I participate in the program?*

Head Start requires that the person enrolling the child have legal custody or guardianship. Head Start staff know that many grandparents are raising grandchildren and welcome their participation. Head Start programs encourage families to work with the staff to set goals for their child's development. All children have an individualized plan to help reach goals for them and their family. Parents and grandparents help make program decisions

through Head Start Policy Councils. Grandparents are encouraged to share ideas and opinions, to visit programs, and participate in the Parent Committee and other group activities. Grandparents can attend classes and workshops to learn about parenting, nutrition, safety practices, preparing for jobs, and many other topics. Many parents and grandparents serve as volunteers or aides to Head Start teachers and staff. Some programs hire family members.

### **What about Prekindergarten Programs?**

*I hear a lot on the radio about a new prekindergarten program in my state. Is it worth checking on it for my grandchild?*

Yes. Most states now offer prekindergarten programs. They do this because early childhood education helps prepare children for school. Research shows that early childhood education programs help children learn while they are very young so they can succeed in school.

Prekindergarten programs are early childhood education programs that generally serve children ages 3 and 4. A smaller number of states also serve 5-year-olds. Most states provide prekindergarten programs for free, often through the public schools. Some states may charge a fee based on family income. Prekindergarten is usually a part-day program.

Unfortunately, more families need these programs than there are programs available. Call your local school district to ask about prekindergarten programs and if they have



room for your grandchild. Also call Child Care Aware at 1-800-424-2246 to ask about other part-day programs in your area.

## **How Do I Find Before- and After-school Care for My School-age Grandchild?**

*Where can I find out more about before- and after-school programs for my grandchildren?*

You may have a choice of programs for before- and after-school care in your community. Child care programs; recreation centers; and youth, community, or faith-based groups may run such programs. Check your telephone book for the local YMCA or YWCA and Boys or Girls Clubs. Call and ask what before- or after-school programs they have near you.

Many schools also offer before- and after-school care. For example, the federal government funds some through its 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program. These programs offer activities for school-aged children in a safe, drug-free, and supervised environment. They help schools stay open longer; provide a safe place to do homework; and have recreational, music, and arts activities.

You can use the Internet to see if there is a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers funded program in your area. Go to <http://www.ed.gov/21stcclc/grantees.html> to find out what program is in your area, the grade levels it serves, and its hours.

Also check with your grandchildren's school. Ask the school principal or PTA members. Your local child care resource and referral agency can also help you find before- and after-school care. Call Child Care Aware at 1-800-424-2246 for the resource and referral agency number.

When you call local before- and after-school programs, be sure to ask if they have any rules about who can attend and whether they charge a fee.

*Can I get help paying for before- or after-school care?*

If you get the federal child care assistance described on pages 20-23, you may use it for all kinds of care for children up to age 13. Around the country, some schools also have before- or after-school programs that are generally free or cost very little money. Some are funded by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program. But it is hard to find low-cost quality programs for these hours of the day.

*Are there programs for my school-age grandchildren during their school vacations and over the summer?*

Yes. Many communities have programs for school-age children during school vacations. Some may also have programs for preschool children. The programs may have arts and crafts, swimming, or sports. Check with your local parks and recreation department or the local community center. Other community or faith-based groups also have programs. Look up the YMCA or YWCA,

Boys and Girls Clubs, and Camp Fire USA in your local telephone book. Call to ask what programs they have and if they charge a fee.

You can also check with your grandchildren's school. Ask the school principal or PTA. The local child care resource and referral agency may also have suggestions. You can get their telephone number from Child Care Aware at 1-800-424-2246. See page 43.

### **How Can I Find Good Child Care and Early Childhood Education Programs for Children with Disabilities or Other Special Needs?**

*What is the difference between a child with a disability and a child with special needs?*

Some federal and state programs use the words “children with disabilities” to mean all children who have a physical or mental health problem. “Children with special needs” includes children with disabilities as well as children who do not have a diagnosed physical or mental health problem, but who may develop disabilities if they do not get services they need. Even if a child does not have a diagnosed disability, there are programs that can give her extra help because of her other special needs.

*Can I get child care help for my young grandchild whose disability requires constant attention?*

It depends. As you interview programs, be sure to ask about the support they can give to children with disabilities. Your grandchildren may qualify for early intervention services or Head Start programs in your area that have special resources for children with disabilities.

If your grandchild is under age 3, she may qualify for early intervention services. These services help children with special needs before their problems become more serious. Each state's early intervention program has different eligibility rules. Some states serve infants and toddlers who have disabilities. Others serve children who have development delays or those who are "at risk" for developmental delay.

Some people call the early intervention program "Part C" because it is in that section of the federal education law for children with disabilities. To find out about early intervention services in your county, contact your state early intervention coordinator. You can get this name by calling the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities at 1-800-695-0285.

Your grandchild may also qualify for a local Early Head Start or Head Start program. The law requires each program to reserve at least 10 percent of their slots for children with disabilities. Some programs serve even more children with disabilities. If your grandchild is under age 3, see pages 29-30 for information about Early Head Start

in your community. If your grandchild is between ages 3 to 5, call local Head Start programs that are found across the country. See pages 29-30, and 37 for information to find a program near you.

You may also want “respite care” that can give you a break from the daily demands of caring for your grandchild. Respite care provides temporary care for children with disabilities or chronic or terminal illnesses. Some communities offer respite services that can be provided outside or inside your own home, but other communities do not have any. You may qualify for respite services for a couple of hours a day, week, or month. Your family’s needs and community resources affect where and for how long your grandchild can get respite care. To find local services, call the National Respite Locator Service at 1-800-773-5433. If you have a computer, you can find local programs by going to <http://www.chtop.com/locator.htm> and clicking on your state. You must call each agency listed to get more information about their services.

To learn more about help for children with disabilities, see CDF’s guide for kinship caregivers on raising children with disabilities described on pages 54-55.

*Is my grandchild still eligible for Head Start or Early Head Start if she has a disability?*

Yes. Federal law requires each Head Start and Early Head Start program to serve at least some children who have disabilities. Across the country, more than 10 percent of Head Start and Early Head Start children have disabilities

and are included in all program activities. Children with disabilities who apply for Head Start or Early Head Start do not have to meet the same income rules as other children, but most do.

Head Start and Early Head Start staff get special training to work with children with disabilities. They also work closely with community agencies and programs for children with disabilities to make sure that the children get the special care they need.

If you need to find a local Head Start or Early Head Start program, call the Head Start Information and Publications Center at 1-866-763-6481 (toll-free). You can also use the Internet to find a Head Start or Early Head Start program near you. Go to <http://www2.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb/grantees/search/search.asp> for Head Start programs. For Early Head Start Programs, go to the Early Head Start National Resource Center's Web site at <http://www.ehsnrc.org>, and click on "EHS Program Locator." Once you get a program name, call to ask if your grandchild qualifies and how to enroll her.

*My grandchild is HIV positive. What should I think about when looking for a child care or early childhood education program for him?*

You should tell your grandchild's child care or early childhood education provider about his condition. You want to know that they will welcome your grandchild into the program and will not discriminate against him because of his condition. This includes any kind of child

care or early childhood education program or provider that your grandchild uses. It also includes a provider who comes to your home. You can ask the program or provider to share this information only with staff members who need to know about it to care appropriately for your grandchild.

Child care and early childhood education programs cannot exclude your grandchild only because he has HIV or AIDS. Research has shown that children with HIV or AIDS can generally participate safely in all activities of a child care program.

You will want to ask that staff follow basic health and safety rules in caring for your grandchild and other children. These rules should apply when the staff have contact with any child's blood or body fluids, regardless of whether the child has HIV or AIDS.

- Do the staff members wear latex gloves when cleaning or bandaging wounds?
- Do they wear gloves when changing dirty diapers? Are dirty diapers thrown away in appropriate places?
- Do staff clean up blood and body fluid spills immediately and disinfect the area where it spilled?

You want to know if the staff members follow such rules to make sure infections do not spread.

For more information about caring for your grandchild who is HIV positive or has AIDS, contact the National

Pediatric and Family HIV Resource Center at 1-800-362-0071 or its Web site for families at [www.fxbcenter.org](http://www.fxbcenter.org).

*Are there laws that can help me get my grandchildren who have disabilities into child care and early childhood education programs?*

Yes. Two federal civil rights laws should protect the rights of your grandchildren with disabilities to attend child care and early childhood education programs. These laws protect people from discrimination based on their disability.

One federal civil rights law is called Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. It forbids discrimination on the basis of disability in programs and activities that get federal funds. The law protects children with disabilities in child care programs, schools, mental health centers, hospitals and other programs that get federal funds to operate. If the child care center gets federal funds and excludes your grandchild because of her disability, then you can file a complaint. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has an Office for Civil Rights that can help you. To learn how to contact the Office for Civil Rights, see page 50.

A second law also protects children with disabilities. It is called the Americans with Disabilities Act (often called “ADA”). It applies to almost all child care centers except those run by religious groups. However, if non-religious child care centers use space or a building owned by a religious group, then they must follow the ADA.



The law requires child care programs to give all people with disabilities, both children and their parents, an equal opportunity to participate in the center's programs and services. They must make reasonable modifications in their programs to include children with disabilities. They must provide ways to communicate with children with disabilities, as long as it is not an undue burden. They also must generally make their facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. Generally these programs must include children with disabilities in their programs with only two exceptions. They may exclude children with disabilities if the children are a "substantial risk" of causing serious harm to the health or safety of others in the center. They may also exclude the children if serving them requires a "fundamental change" in the program beyond reasonable modifications.

The U.S. Department of Justice has an ADA Information Line where trained staff can answer questions about access to programs for children who have disabilities. You can reach them at 1-800-514-0301 (1-800-514-0383, TDD). If you have a computer, go to <http://www.usdoj.gov> and click on "Disabilities" where you can read more about the ADA and child care.

Your local Office of Human Rights or the State Attorney General's Office will also know about state or local anti-discrimination laws that can protect your grandchildren. To read more about help for children with disabilities, see CDF's guide for kinship caregivers on raising children with disabilities described on pages 54-55.

## **What If I Am Raising a Grandchild Who Is in Foster Care?**

*If I am getting foster care payments for my grandchild, is she entitled to child care?*

It depends. Ask your social worker about what benefits your grandchild is eligible to receive. Some states give child care subsidies to children in foster care. Your social worker can check the child care subsidy rules in your state or explain how you can check them.

Another place that may have information is the local child care resource and referral agency. To find your local referral agency, call Child Care Aware at 1-800-424-2246. If you have a computer, you can go to its Web site at <http://childcareaware.org> and enter your zip code. This will give you the telephone number for your local referral agency.

Sometimes those caring for children in foster care also can get respite care services. Contact your social worker to see whether you will be eligible for respite or other special services.

*Can I continue to receive help with child care if I adopt my grandchild who has been living with me in foster care?*

Maybe. Your continued eligibility for child care, once you've legally adopted your grandchild, will depend in large part on your income. However, if your grandchild, has a disability or other special needs and he is eligible for adoption

assistance payments, you can take steps to ensure that continued help with child care is part of the adoption assistance agreement you negotiate with the adoption agency in your city or state. For more information about adoption assistance, contact the social worker you have been talking to about adoption.

The National Adoption Information Clearinghouse also has information if you want to adopt or have adopted a child. If you have a computer, go to <http://www.calib.com/naic> and click on “Parents” and then “Introduction to Adoption.” You can also learn about adoption assistance in the states through the National Adoption Assistance Training Resource and Information Network at 1-800-470-6665, or from the Web site of the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) at <http://www.nacac.org>. Click on “Adoption Subsidy” for a summary of financial assistance. You may then click on “State Profiles” to learn more about your individual state’s adoption assistance program. NACAC’s phone number is 651-644-3036.

## **Helpful Resources on Child Care and Early Childhood Education Programs for Grandparents and Other Relative Caregivers**

The groups listed below provide information or services that should be helpful for grandparents and other family members raising young children.

### **Area Agencies on Aging**

Eldercare Locator Hotline: 1-800-677-1116 (Call weekdays 9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time. There is voice mail to leave a message.)

Many Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) provide support services through the National Family Caregiver Support Program to grandparents or older relatives. You can call the Eldercare Locator Hotline to get the telephone number for a local AAA. They may be able to link you to child care and early childhood education programs.

### **Child Care Aware**

1-800-424-2246 (Call weekdays 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Central Time.)  
<http://childcareaware.org>

Child Care Aware has telephone numbers for child care resource and referral agencies across the country. They can find one nearest to you so you can get information about what financial assistance and child care providers are available. They also have a free checklist to help you evaluate the quality of family child care homes or child care centers that you are considering.

**Children's Defense Fund (CDF)**

25 E Street NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
202-662-3568  
202-662-3550 (Fax)  
<http://www.childrensdefense.org>

CDF provides information and resources on issues facing grandparents and other relative caregivers, including information on federal and state legislation that helps kinship care families. CDF has a series of guides for kinship caregivers on three other areas: health insurance, nutrition and food programs, and children with disabilities. For more about these guides and other CDF resources, see pages 54-56.

CDF also works extensively to promote quality child care and early childhood education for children and families who need these programs.

**Early Head Start National Resource Center**

Zero to Three  
2000 M Street NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-638-1144  
202-638-0851 (Fax)  
<http://www.ehsnrc.org>

The Early Head Start National Resource Center provides information to parents and providers about the program. Check the Web site to find out if there are Early Head Start programs in your area.

**Easter Seals**

230 West Monroe Street, Suite 1800

Chicago, IL 60606

312-726-6200

312-726-4258 (TTY)

312-726-1494 (Fax)

1-800-221-6827 (Call weekdays 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Central Time. There is voice mail to leave a message.)

E-mail: [info@easterseals.org](mailto:info@easterseals.org)

<http://www.easter-seals.org/index.asp>

Easter Seals provides services to children with physical and mental disabilities and other special needs. To find out about services near you, call their national toll-free telephone number or go to the Web site and click on “Services.” Services include early intervention, physical and occupational therapy, and speech and hearing therapy. They also operate child care centers around the country serving children with disabilities.

**Head Start Information and Publication Center**

1133 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 450

Washington, DC 20005

1-866-763-6481

202-737-1151 (Fax)

<http://www.headstartinfo.org>

The Head Start Information and Publication Center has guides about child development and the Head Start program. Some are available in both English and Spanish. You can get them by clicking on “Recruitment and Awareness” on the Web site. The center also can tell you if there are Head Start or Early Head Start programs in your area.

**National Association for Family Child Care**

5202 Pinemont Drive  
Salt Lake City, UT 84123  
801-269-9338  
801-268-9507 (Fax)  
E-mail: [nafcc@nafcc.org](mailto:nafcc@nafcc.org)  
<http://www.nafcc.org>

The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) is a national membership organization that works with more than 400 state and local family child care provider associations across the country. These groups represent more than 1 million family child care providers. It helps to promote quality and professionalism through a Family Child Care Accreditation. You can find its accredited family child care homes by entering your zip code at its Web site.

**National Association for the Education of Young Children**

1509 16<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036-1426  
1-800-424-2460 (Call weekdays 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
Eastern Time.)  
202-328-1846 (Fax)  
E-mail: [naeyc@naeyc.org](mailto:naeyc@naeyc.org)  
<http://www.naeyc.org>

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is a national organization of early childhood educators and others who work to improve the quality of programs for children from birth through third grade. NAEYC has an accreditation process for

group programs for young children. You can find the accredited programs by entering your zip code under “Accredited Program Search” on its Web site.

**National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC)**

243 Church Street NW, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Vienna, VA 22180

1-800-616-2242 (Call weekdays 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Eastern Time and on Wednesdays until 8:00 p.m.

There is voice mail to leave a message.)

1-800-716-2242 (Fax)

1-800-516-2242 (TTY)

E-mail: [info@nccic.org](mailto:info@nccic.org)

<http://www.nccic.org>

The National Child Care Information Center provides information about child care to families, providers, states, and the general public. Its Web site has state contact information for different state agencies involved in child care and information about child care topics. Check the Web site or ask the center for a list of groups that have written checklists to help families pick the right child care.

**National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System (NECTAS)**

137 East Franklin Street, Suite 500

Chapel Hill, NC 27514-3628

919-962-2001

877-574-3194 (TDD)

919-966-7463 (Fax)

E-mail: [nectas@unc.edu](mailto:nectas@unc.edu)

<http://www.nectas.unc.edu>



NECTAS provides information about the early intervention and preschool grant programs funded by the federal government. To get a list of state Part C (early intervention) coordinators on the Web site, click on “Programs for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities.” To get a list of state Section 619 (preschool) coordinators, click on “Preschool Grants Program.”

**National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities**

P. O. Box 1492  
Washington, DC 20013  
1-800-695-0285 (Voice/TTY) (Call weekdays  
9:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m. Eastern Time. There is voice  
mail to leave a message.)  
E-mail: [nichcy@aed.org](mailto:nichcy@aed.org)  
[www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)

The National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) serves as an information and referral center about disabilities for families and professionals. It can help you with issues affecting children and youths from birth to age 22. NICHCY has information specialists who can answer specific questions from parents and grandparents. The Web site has “State Resource Sheets” that list groups and agencies that can help you find information and services for your child.

**National Maternal and Child Health Clearinghouse**

Bright Futures Project  
2000 15<sup>th</sup> Street North, Suite 701  
Arlington, VA 22201-2617  
703-524-7802

703-524-9335 (Fax)  
E-mail: [brightfutures@ncemch.org](mailto:brightfutures@ncemch.org)  
[www.brightfutures.org](http://www.brightfutures.org)

The National Maternal and Child Health Clearinghouse can send you a free copy of *Bright Futures: Pocket Guide* that provides an excellent overview about child development by describing activities that are normal for children of all ages.

### **National Respite Locator Service**

1-800-773-5433 (Call weekdays 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. There is voice mail to leave a message.)  
[www.respitelocator.com](http://www.respitelocator.com)

The National Respite Locator Service helps caregivers find respite services in their area. If you use the Web site, click on your state to see what is available. The locator service has limited staff so it is generally faster to check the Web site than to call. You will then have to check with each agency listed to learn more about their services.

### **National School-Age Care Alliance**

1137 Washington Street  
Boston, MA 02124  
617-298-5012  
617-298-5022 (Fax)  
E-mail: [staff@nsaca.org](mailto:staff@nsaca.org)  
<http://www.nsaca.org>

The National School-Age Care Alliance is the only national membership organization representing public, private, and community-based after-school program providers. It has

over 8,000 members and 36 affiliated state organizations. It promotes national standards of quality school-age care for children and youths ages 5 to 14 and grants accreditation to programs meeting the standards. You can find its accredited programs by clicking on “Accreditation” on its Web site.

**National Women’s Law Center**

11 Dupont Circle, Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-588-5180  
202-588-5185 (Fax)  
E-mail: [info@nwlc.org](mailto:info@nwlc.org)  
<http://www.nwlc.org>

The National Women’s Law Center works on family economic security, child care, health, employment, and education issues. Its Web site has information about the Child and Dependent Care Credit.

**Office for Civil Rights,  
U.S. Department for Health and Human Services**

1-800-368-1019 (TDD: 1-800-537-7697)  
E-mail: [OCRMAIL@hhs.gov](mailto:OCRMAIL@hhs.gov)  
<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr>

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces federal laws that prohibit discrimination by health care and human service providers that receive funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). If you believe you have been discriminated against because of your race, color, national origin, disability, age, and in some cases sex or religion, by those who receive funds

from HHS, you may file a complaint with OCR. You may call 202-619-0403 or go to the OCR Web site to learn how to file a complaint.

**U.S. Department of Justice  
ADA Information Line**

1-800-514-0301  
1-800-514-0383 (TDD)  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>

The Information Line has trained staff who can answer general and technical questions during business hours on the weekdays. The Information Line also provides a 24-hour automated service to order materials about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

**Zero to Three**

National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families  
2000 M Street NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-638-1144  
202-638-0851 (FAX)  
[www.zerotothree.org/parent\\_main.html](http://www.zerotothree.org/parent_main.html)

Zero to Three provides a range of information for parents, early childhood professionals, and others about children's development from birth to age three. It has a specific section of its Web site dedicated to information for parents. The staff do not have the resources to answer questions about an individual child's development. Zero to Three also operates the Early Head Start National Resource Center listed on page 44.

## **Additional Contacts for Grandparents and Other Relative Caregivers**

The following organizations may be useful to grandparents and other relative caregivers looking for additional information to help the children they are raising:

### **AARP – Grandparent Information Center**

601 E Street NW  
Washington, DC 20049  
(202) 434-2296  
(202) 434-6466 Fax  
<http://www.aarp.org/confacts/programs/gic.html>

Provides an extensive range of services including a listing of local support groups for grandparents and other relatives, newsletters, and other useful publications.

### **Casey Family Programs National Center for Resource Family Support**

1808 Eye Street NW, Fifth Floor  
Washington, DC 20006  
(202) 467-4441 or 1-888-295-6727  
(202) 467-4499 Fax  
<http://www.casey.org/cnc>

Provides comprehensive information about policies, programs, and practices for retaining, recruiting, and supporting foster, adoptive, and kinship care families.

**Children's Defense Fund**

25 E Street NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 628-8787  
(202) 662-3550 Fax  
<http://www.childrensdefense.org>

Provides information and resources on issues facing kinship care providers inside and outside of the child welfare system, including information on federal legislation that helps kinship care families.

**Child Welfare League of America**

440 First Street NW, Third Floor  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 638-2952  
(202) 638-4004 Fax  
<http://www.cwla.org>

Offers resources and information on issues affecting grandparents and other caregivers raising children inside and outside of the child welfare system and sponsors an excellent national biennial conference on kinship care.

**Generations United**

122 C Street, NW, Suite 820  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 638-1263  
(202) 638-7555 Fax  
<http://www.gu.org>

Offers information and advocacy materials for grandparents and other relative caregivers, including information on state and federal legislation, educational enrollment issues, subsidized guardianship, and support groups.

**Children's Defense Fund's Publications for Grandparents and Other Relative Caregivers**

For a copy of these publications, call the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) at 1-202-662-3568, fax 1-202-662-3550, write to CDF, Child Welfare and Mental Health Division, 25 E Street NW, Washington, DC 20001, or log on to <http://www.childrensdefense.org>.

***The Grandparent's and Other Relative Caregiver's Guides***

CDF has created four helpful guides, written specifically for kinship caregivers, to answer their questions about important issues affecting the children in their care. The guides offer useful information on federal programs, eligibility requirements, and how to enroll the children they are raising. The four guides include:

- *The Grandparent's and Other Relative Caregiver's Guide to Child Care and Early Childhood Education*
- *The Grandparent's and Other Relative Caregiver's Guide to Food and Nutrition Programs for Children*
- *The Grandparent's and Other Relative Caregiver's Guide to Health Insurance for Children*
- *The Grandparent's and Other Relative Caregiver's Guide to Raising Children with Disabilities*

### ***Kinship Caregiver Leadership Training: A Guide to Advocacy for Children***

This training tool provides a curriculum for teaching kinship caregivers advanced advocacy methods to help them bring about change in their communities. The guide includes information on how to set goals; how to use the media and data to support a cause; how to build support at different levels, such as engaging the community and faith-based organizations; and fundraising basics.

### ***Kinship Care State Fact Sheets***

Many kinship caregivers are not aware of the services that their states may offer to them. CDF and seven other organizations created state-specific fact sheets so kinship caregivers can learn about their state's efforts to help children and the relatives who are raising them. These fact sheets talk about states' initiatives for offering services to kinship caregivers, the number of children living with relatives and



in foster care, subsidies for legal guardians when they exist, and other laws that support kinship caregivers. Not all states offer the same services so kinship caregivers can look at what is provided in their own state as well as what may be available in other states.

***Resources to Help You Leave No Child Behind®***

***The State of Children in America's Union:***

***A 2002 Action Guide to Leave No Child Behind®***

Learn how our nation can make more just choices to truly Leave No Child Behind® and to hold society accountable for protecting children. The guide includes state tables and how states rank with other states in protecting children.

***Hold My Hand: Prayers for Building a Movement to Leave No Child Behind®***

This is an inspiring collection of heartfelt prayers written by CDF President Marian Wright Edelman.

For other information about the Movement to Leave No Child Behind®, visit CDF's Web site at [www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org).

## About the Children's Defense Fund

**T**he mission of the Children's Defense Fund is to Leave No Child Behind® and to ensure every child a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start*, and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

CDF provides a strong, effective voice for *all* the children of America who cannot vote, lobby, or speak for themselves. We pay particular attention to the needs of poor and minority children and those with disabilities. CDF educates the nation about the needs of children and encourages preventive investments before they get sick, into trouble, drop out of school, or suffer family breakdown.

CDF began in 1973 and is a private, nonprofit organization supported by foundation and corporate grants and individual donations. We have never taken government funds.