

GrandFacts

State fact sheets for grandparents and other relatives raising children

AARP, The Brookdale Foundation Group, Casey Family Programs, Child Welfare League of America, Children's Defense Fund, and Generations United have partnered to produce state and national **GrandFacts** fact sheets for grandparents and other relatives raising children. The state fact sheets include state-specific data and programs as well as information about foster care, public benefits, educational assistance and state laws. Visit www.grandfactsheets.org to find this and all **GrandFacts** state fact sheets.

Florida

The Children

- 476,474 children under age 18 live in homes where the householders are grandparents or other relatives (12% of all the children in the state.) (*U.S. 2010 Census*)
 - Of these, 354,716 live with grandparents who are the householders (8.9% of the children in the state) and 121,758 live with other relatives who are the householders (3.1% of the children in the state). (*U.S. 2010 Census*)
- 161,689 children live in homes with grandparent householders where grandparents are responsible for them.*
 - Of these children, 59,356 have no parents present in the home.*

The Grandparents*

- 150,391 grandparents are the householders and are responsible for their grandchildren living with them. Of these:
 - 47% of the grandparents are White and not Hispanic, 31% are Black/African American, 19% are Hispanic/Latino and may be of any race, and 2% are Asian.
 - 38% have no parents of the children present in the home.
 - 64% are under age 60.
 - 18% live in poverty.**
- 7,586 grandparents in Jacksonville city and 3,205 in Miami city are the householders and are responsible for their grandchildren living with them.

*Comparable data are not currently available for homes where other relatives are the householders.

**100% of poverty level.

Data not specifically cited are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Detailed Table B09006 and Subject Tables S1001 and S1002. Additional data on related topics and sub-state areas can be found on the Census Bureau website at <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Programs That Can Help

Local programs that provide support, resources and assistance to grandfamilies can often be found by contacting your local school, area agency on aging, community center, faith-based organization or children's services office.

The AARP GrandCare Support Locator is a free online service where programs can self-list their services and resources. Search by your city, state or zip code. www.giclocalsupport.org

Key Programs in Florida

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Sun Coast

Contact: Joy Mahler, CEO
Phone: 941-488-4009
Email: jmahler@bbbssun.org
Website: www.bbbssun.org
Service area: Sarasota, Manatee, Desoto, Highland, Hardee and Charlotte Counties
Description: Provides one-to-one mentoring for children

Easter Seals South Florida, Inc.

Contact: Angela Aracena
Phone: 305-547-4721
Email: aaracena@SFL.easterseals.com
Website: www.southflorida.easterseals.com
Service area: Miami
Description: Provides sitter services in the home and on-site child care

Florida Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Website: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FloridaGRG/>
Service area: Statewide
Description: Online resource center addressing health, child care, etc.

Florida Kinship Center – University of South Florida School of Social Work

Phone: 813-974-1328
Warmline: 1-800-640-6444 (toll-free)
Email: kinfo@flkin.org
Website: www.flkin.org
Service area: Statewide
Description: Offers support, information/referral, training, home-visiting, monthly newsletter and legal hotline

Florida Legal Services, Inc. – FLS

Phone: 850-385-7900
Website: www.floridalegal.org
Service area: Statewide
Description: Legal support center that provides technical consultation

Grandparents Parenting Again of Flagler County – Santa Maria del Mar Church

Contact: Dolores and Deacon Mike Moody
Phone: 386-447-0044
Email: dmjmoody3@cfl.rr.com
Service area: Flagler County
Description: Offers information, legal advice, support groups, and resources

Intergenerational Community Assistance Network – I-CAN – Informed Families/Florida Family Partnership

Contact: Christine Stilwell
Phone: 321-231-0587
Email: cstilwell@informedfamilies.org
Website: www.informedfamilies.org
Service area: Central Florida
Description: Offers support groups, workshops, home visits, and family activities

Kinship Care Family Resources – Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc. and Florida Department of Elder Affairs

Contact: Adriana Soto
Phone: 727-550-4250
Email: asoto@family-resources.org
Website: www.family-resources.org/asp/programs_kinship.asp
Service area: Pinellas and Pasco Counties
Description: Offers support groups, permanency planning, workshops, transportation, respite, home visits, and legal assistance. Spanish speaking staff available

Kinship Services Network (KSN) of Pinellas – Children’s Home Inc., Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Pinellas County, Catholic Charities Diocese of St. Petersburg

Contact: Larry Cooper, LCSW, The Children’s Home
Phone: 813-901-3423
Intake phone: 727-785-2762 (to apply for services)
Email: lcooper@tampachi.org
Website: www.childrenshome.org
Service area: Pinellas County
Description: Offers information/referral, case management, mentoring, support groups, and educational workshops

Relatives as Parents Program – Marion County – Marion County Public Library

Contact: Karen Jensen, Library Community Liaison
Phone: 352-368-4507
Email: Karen.jensen@marioncountyfl.org
Service area: Marion County
Description: Offers support groups and educational workshops

Relatives as Parents Program – Ocala – Kids Central, Inc.

Contact: Debra Wise, Client Rights/Ombudsman
Email: debra.wise@kidscentralinc.org
Phone: 352-873-6332 x 3419
Service area: Ocala
Description: Offers monthly support groups, case management, mentoring, free legal service, home visits, events, and annual conference

Broward Meals on Wheels

Contact: Peggy Miller
Phone: 954-731-8770
Website: www.bmow.org
Service area: Broward
Description: Provides nutrition services for Broward's 60 years and older population

Relatives as Parents Program of Jacksonville (RAPPJAX) – Urban Jacksonville, Inc

Contact: Nikki Tubig
Phone: 904-807-1203
Email: ntubig@urbanjax.com
Website: www.urbanjacksonville.com
Service area: Duval County
Description: Provides support groups, education/training activities, information and referral, and newsletter

Children in Foster Care

- Sometimes state child welfare agencies place children in foster care with grandparents or other relatives. This is often called "kinship care."
- Federal law requires states to notify all known relatives within 30 days of children's removal from their parents.

In January 2011 in Florida:

- 18,240 children/youth spent some time in out-of-home care
- 9,523 of these children/youth were placed in relative care
- 19,070 children were placed in the Relative Caregivers Program (see below)

Placement Policies

- State policy requires that kinship care be considered first when an out-of-home placement is sought for a child under the Department's care
- Relatives licensed as foster parents in Florida must meet the same requirements and standards for licensure and will receive the same foster care subsidies as non relatives

Relative Caregiver Program

Monthly financial support to relatives who have custody of a child under age 18 placed in their home by the Department of Children and Families. The monthly payment is more than the Temporary Cash Assistance for one child, but less than the amount paid for a foster care child. Payments are based on the child's age and any countable income. Monthly payments for children with no countable income are as follows:

- Age 0 through 5 - \$242 per child
 - Age 6 through 12 - \$249 per child
 - Age 13 through 17 - \$298 per child
- www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access/tca.shtml

Florida Foster Care and Relative/Kinship Care Contacts

Department of Children and Families

Office of Child Safety

Linda D. Johns, 850-414-9982, Linda_D_Johns@dcf.state.fl.us

www.dcf.state.fl.us

Public Benefits

Federal and state public benefits programs can help with income, food, healthcare, home energy, telephone and other needs for those who are eligible. Eligibility requirements vary with each public benefit and sometimes are different from state to state. Some benefits are for the family and others are for children or older adults individually. Children are often eligible for public benefits even if their caregivers do not have legal guardianship or custody. Grandparents may become eligible for benefits programs when their household size increases.

Help with Public Benefits

AARP Foundation's **Benefits QuickLINK**

A free and private way to find out if relatives or the children they are raising qualify for programs that pay for food, increase income and cover home and healthcare costs (listed below). It gives quick results, application forms and the address and phone number of the closest office.

www.aarp.org/quicklink

Public Benefits for Older Americans:*

- Medicare Savings Programs
- Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage
- Medicare Rx Extra Help
- State Pharmaceutical Assistance programs (SPAP)
- Medicaid for Aged, Blind, and Disabled
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)
- State Property Tax Relief/Rebates
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Telephone Assistance (Link-Up and Lifeline)

Public Benefits for Families Raising Children*

- Medicaid for Children
- State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)
- TANF-Child Only Grants
- Supplemental Security Income for Children

*Some of these programs may have age and income restrictions.

Eldercare Locator

The National Eldercare Locator service helps you find your local area agency on aging and other state and local resources that can help with public benefits, local programs and other services for older adults.

1-800-677-1116 (toll-free)

www.eldercare.gov

Key Public Benefits

Income

Each state administers federal funds that provide cash assistance to families in need. Some states also offer other forms of financial assistance.

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

Cash assistance may be available to eligible children and their relative caregivers.

**Florida Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) Relative Caregiver Program
ACCESS – Florida Food Medical Assistance and Cash Application System**

1-866-762-2237 (toll-free)

www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access/tca.shtml

Social Security

A multigenerational program, Social Security provides income benefits to adults, older adults and children. In addition to [Retirement](#) and [Disability](#) benefits, [Survivor's Benefits](#) are based on a child's parent's earnings and may help if a child's parents die. The [Supplemental Security Income](#) (SSI) program pays benefits to disabled [adults](#) and [children](#) who have limited income and resources. SSI benefits are also payable to people 65 and older without disabilities who meet the financial limits.

Online Directory – To find your local Social Security Administration office.

1-800-772-1213 (toll-free)

www.socialsecurity.gov/locator/

Nutrition

Relative caregivers and their families may be eligible for assistance with groceries, meals, infant formula and nutrition education. These are some of the key nutrition benefits programs and resources.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

SNAP is the new name for the federal Food Stamp Program. It helps low-income individuals and families buy the food they need for good health. Although SNAP is the national name, your state may use a different name.

Florida Food Assistance Program

and SUNCAP (for individuals who receive Supplemental Security Income – SSI)

1-866-762-2237 (toll-free)

www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access/foodstamps.shtml

Food and Nutrition Services of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

- **Child Nutrition Program** - The schools, early childhood education programs, child care centers, afterschool programs or other programs that children attend may offer free or reduced meals through the federal Child Nutrition Program, which provides breakfast, lunch, snacks, summer meals and milk. Contact the school or program to ask if they participate in any of the child nutrition programs and ask how to apply. Relative caregivers should inform the program that they are raising the child and whether or not they are doing so through a court order.

Online State Directory - To find your state office that manages the Child Nutrition program.

www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm

- **Women, Infant and Children (WIC)** - States administer federal funds for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.

Online State Directory - To find your state office that manages the WIC program.
www.fns.usda.gov/wic/contacts/statealpha.htm

Foodbanks - Organizations that provide free food and sometimes other items, such as diapers to families in need. Feeding America is an organization that fights hunger and has a food bank locator.

Online State Directory - To find local food banks.
1-800-771-2303 (toll-free)
www.feedingamerica.org/foodbank-results.aspx

Health Care

Relative caregivers and the children they are raising may be eligible for health insurance and help with prescription drugs. **Benefits QuickLINK** can help you find these benefits.

Health Insurance for Children

Relative caregivers may apply for free or low-cost health and dental insurance for the children they are raising through the federal Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Although CHIP is the national name, your state may use a different name.

Florida's KidCare program
1-888-540-KIDS (5437) (toll-free)
www.floridakidcare.org

Education

- **U.S. Department of Education** - Offers a **Parent Site** that has a wide range of helpful information for parents *and* caregivers regarding children's education from early childhood through college, special needs, disabilities, language challenges and gifted students.
1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327 – toll-free)
www.ed.gov/parents
- **State Department of Education** - Relative caregivers may find helpful information about the education of children they are raising
Florida Department of Education
850-245-0505
Email: commissioner@fldoe.org
www.fldoe.org

Educational Enrollment

Relative caregivers can contact their local school district's administrative office or their local school to find out how to register the child and what paperwork is needed. Caregivers may need birth records, health records or previous school records. Some states have laws that allow relative caregivers to enroll children they are raising in school. These laws are often called "education consent" laws, but may be called something else in your state.

Grandfamilies State Law and Policy Resource Center
Online Directory - To find out if your state has an education consent law.
www.grandfamilies.org/

Early Intervention, Special Education and Related Services

What you need to know:

- **The Federal Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)** - From birth to age 21, children who have learning disabilities, physical disabilities or other special needs may be able to get special early intervention, preschool and special education services in school through the federal IDEA. Services may include speech, physical, and occupational therapies.
- **Child Find** – A part of the IDEA that requires states to identify, locate and evaluate children in the areas of cognitive and physical functioning, hearing and vision, speech and language and social and emotional development as early as possible. Once the Child Find evaluation team, which includes a child's caregivers, has decided if a child is eligible for early intervention or preschool special education services, an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP; birth to three years of age) or an Individual Education Plan (IEP; three to five years of age) is developed and services begin shortly at no cost.

Where to find help for children with special needs:

- **Child Find Services of the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System**
386-329-3811
Email: childfind@nefec.org
<http://www.nefec.org/fdlrs/childfind>
- **Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services**
850-245-0475
Statewide Contacts: Carole West and Cathy Bishop, 850-245-0478
Email: carole.west@fldoe.org and cathy.bishop@fldoe.org
www.fldoe.org/eae
- **The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities** guides caregivers to organizations and resources in each state and offers both English and Spanish language information.
 - **Online State Directory** – To find state and other disability organizations in your state.
1-800-695-0285 (toll-free)
www.nichcy.org/pages/statespecificinfo.aspx
- **Parent Centers** across the country provide information to help parents *and* caregivers with children who have special education needs and disabilities.
 - **Online State Directory** – To find Parent Centers in your state.
National Parent Technical Assistance Center 1-888-248-0822 (toll-free)
www.parentcenternetwork.org/parentcenterlisting

Early Childhood Education

- **Head Start and Early Head Start** – Early education programs for eligible children.
 - **Online Directory** – To find Head Start or Early Head Start centers in your state.
1-866-763-6481 (toll-free)
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/HeadStartOffices>
- **The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA)** - Information, resources and connection to local Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies (CCR&R) that help you find local child care through the Child Care Aware program.
 - **Online Directory** – To find your local Child Care Resource & Referral Agency.
1-800-424-2246 (toll-free)
www.childcareaware.org/parents-and-guardians

Educational Activities

Verizon Thinkfinity - Support a child's success in school with fun learning activities and interactive games you can do together using this free online resource.

www.thinkfinity.org

GrandFacts Updates

If you have an update or a resource to be included in this or any of the other GrandFacts fact sheets, please visit www.grandfactsheets.org to submit updates or email grandfacts@aarp.org. Fact sheets are updated regularly.

GrandFacts State Fact Sheets for Grandparents and other Relatives Raising Children are funded in part by the [AARP Foundation](#) and [Verizon Thinkfinity](#).

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