

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.

Illinois

The Children

- 318,042 children under age 18 live in homes where the householders are grandparents or other relatives (10.2% of the children in the state.) (U.S. 2010 Census)
 - Of these, 236,424 live with grandparents who are the householders (7.6% of the children in the state) and 81,618 live with other relatives who are the householders (2.6% of the children in the state). (U.S. 2010 Census)
- 109,939 children live in homes with grandparent householders where grandparents are responsible for them.*
 - Of these children, 35,583 have no parents present in the home.*

The Grandparents*

- 99,783 grandparents are the householders and are responsible for their grandchildren living with them. Of these:
 - 44% of the grandparents are White and not Hispanic, 35% are Black/African American, 2% are Asian, and 17% are Hispanic/Latino, and may be of any race.
 - 31% have no parents of the children present in the home.
 - 68% are under age 60.
 - 20% live in poverty.**
- 31,686 grandparents in Chicago city and 1,290 in Rockford 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 Illinois

Area Agency on Aging – Suburban Cook County – AgeOptions

Contact: Sarah Stein
Phone: 708-383-0258
Email: sarah.stein@ageoptions.org
Web: www.ageoptions.org
Service area: Suburban Cook County area
Description: Coordinates network of 10 community-based agencies to provide information, resources, referrals, support groups, counseling, education, and legal assistance.

Area Agency on Aging – Lincolnland

Contact: Debbie Deopere
Phone: 217-787-9234
Email: DDeopere@aginglinc.org
Service area: Cass, Christian, Greene, Jersey, Logan, Macoupin, Mason, Menard, Montgomery, Morgan, Sangamon, and Scott counties
Description: Provides respite, outreach, education, and training.

Area Agency on Aging – Central Illinois

Contact: Mitch Forrest-Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program or Betty Duncan-Relatives as Parents Program
Phone: 309-674-2071
Email: mforrest@ciaoa.com
Service area: Fulton, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell and Woodford counties
Description: Offers support groups, outreach, training, and respite

Area Agency on Aging – East Central Illinois

Contact: Susan Real
Phone: 309-829-2065 x218
Email: sreal@eciaaa.org
Service area: Champaign, Clark, Coles, Cumberland, DeWitt, Douglas, Edgar, Ford, Iroquois, Livingston, Macon, McLean, Moultrie, Piatt, Shelby, and Vermillion counties
Description: Offers consultation, training, advocacy, and support groups

Chicago Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program – Department of Family and Support Services – Senior Services/Area Agency on Aging

Contact: Jaime Hersh-White
Phone: 312-746-6867
Website: www.cityofchicago.org/fss
Service area: Chicago
Description: Provides information, resources, referrals, advocacy, counseling, respite, support groups, and legal assistance

Area Agency on Aging – Egyptian

Contact: John M. Smith, Executive Director
Phone: 618-985-8311
Email: egyptianaaa@midamer.net
Web: www.egyptianaaa.org
Service area: Alexander, Franklin, Gallatin, Hardin, Jackson, Johnson, Massac, Perry, Pope, Pulaski, Saline, Union and Williamson counties
Description: Provides information, resources, referrals, advocacy, annual workshops, and Medicare counseling

Area Agency on Aging – Northeastern Illinois

Contact: Donna Copeland Hill
Phone: 630-293-5990, Extension 106
Email: dhcaregiving@ageguide.org
Web: www.ageguide.org
Service area: DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will counties
Description: Provides information, referral, support groups, counseling, training, and legal assistance

Area Agency on Aging – Northwestern Illinois

Contact: Martha Logemann
Phone: 815-226-4901
Email: mlogemann@nwilaaa.org
Web: www.nwilaaa.org
Service area: Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, JoDaviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside and Winnebago counties
Description: Offers support groups, educational programs, referrals, and respite

Area Agency on Aging – Southeastern Illinois

Contact: Megan Higgins
Phone: 618-262-2306
Email: seiaoa_megan@frontier.com
Web: www.seiaoa.com
Service area: Crawford, Edwards, Hamilton, Jasper, Lawrence, Richland, Wabash, Wayne and White counties
Description: Provides resources to fill gaps and respite

Caregiver Support Services – Family Service Senior Resource Center

Contact: Roxanna Webb, Caregiver Advisor
Phone: 217-352-5100
Email: rwebb@familyservicecc.org
Service area: Champaign and Piatt Counties
Description: Provides information, resources, referrals, and advocacy

Children’s Home and Aid Society of Illinois

Contact: Diana Hunt
Phone: 618-452-8900, Extension 112
Email: dhunt@childrenshomeandaid.org
Service area: Bond, Clinton, Madison, Monroe, Randolph, St. Clair and Washington counties
Description: Provides case management, respite care, emergency resources to fill gaps, and support groups in Belleville and Alton

Family Matters Program – Center for Law and Social Work

Contact: Maria Nanos, LCSW
Phone: 773-728-7800
Email: clsw@clsw.org
Service area: Cook County
Description: Provides free and low cost legal assistance to caregivers

GRANDFamilies Program of Chicago: Generations Creating a LegacySM

Contact: Linette Kinchen
Phone: 1-888-GRAND-03
Email: linette@grandfamilieschicago.org
Website: www.grandfamilieschicago.org
Service Area: Chicago Area
Description: Information/referral, support, and other services

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program – Illinois State Dept. on Aging

Contact: Barb Schwartz, Project Director
Phone: 217-524-5327 or Senior Help Line 1-800-252-8966 (toll-free)
Email: barb.schwartz@illinois.gov
Website: www.state.il.us/aging
Service area: Statewide
Description: Provides information, resources, referrals, advocacy, training, funding.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group – Evanston/Skokie Valley Senior Services

Contact: Jessica Hoffman or Jori Elisco
Phone: 847-864-3721
Service area: Evanston/Skokie Valley
Description: Provides information, resources, referrals, recreational activities, and monthly support group

**Guardianship Assistance Desk for Minors – Circuit Court of Cook County;
Chicago Volunteer Legal Foundation**

Contact: Rose Hale, Circuit Court of Cook County
Phone: 312-603-0135
Service area: Cook County
Description: Provides help in filing for guardianship, information, and referral

Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago

Contact: Rich Cozzola
Phone: 312-341-1070
Email: rcozzola@lafchicago.org
Service area: Cook County
Description: Provides legal assistance

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

Contact: Elaine L. Evans, Visits Coordinator
Phone: 773-783-9516, Extension 18
Email: elaine.evans@lssi.org
Service area: Chicago area
Description: Provides transportation for visits by children and caregivers to mothers in prison. Offers support groups, resources, and referrals.

Marion County Senior Services – Effingham County Committee on Aging

Contact: Melanie Cortelloni
Phone: 618-533-4300
Email: mcortelloni@eccoa.info
Service area: Marion and surrounding counties
Description: Provides information, resources, referrals, advocacy, Medicare counseling, and homemaker services

Mid-Illinois Senior Services

Contact: Kim Adamson
Phone: 217-728-8521
Email: kadamson@cebridge.net
Service area: Douglas, Moultrie and Shelby counties
Description: Provides support groups, advocacy, referrals, resources to fill gaps, and legal assistance

Sankofa Safe Child Initiative

Contact: Silvia Arroyo
Phone: 773-542-9900 or 24-hour Helpline 1-877-838-9377 (toll-free)
Email: wsafechild@sbcglobal.net
Service area: Cook County
Description: Provides information, referral, home visits, support groups, case Management.

Senior Services Associates, Inc. – Northeastern Illinois Area Agency on Aging

Contact: Roxanne Walston or Kathy Nelson
Phone: 847-741-0404
Email: admin@seniorservicesassoc.org
Web: www.seniorservicesassoc.org
Service area: Kane, Kendall, and McHenry Counties
Description: Provides information, referral, respite funds, emergency support, education, and other services

The Parent Place

Contact: Pieretta Patterson
Phone: 217-753-8730
Email: grandmapeedy@sbcglobal.net
Web: www.tppos.org/services.html
Service area: Springfield Area
Description: Provides information/referral, support groups, advocacy, respite, resources to fill gaps, and Guardianship Advocacy Program

Area Agency on Aging of Southwestern Illinois

Contact: Joy Paeth
Phone: 618-222-2561
Email: ask@answersonaging.com
Web: www.answersonaging.com
Service area: Bond, Clinton, Madison, Monroe, St. Clair, Randolph, and Washington
Description: Provides information and referrals, respite, and benefits assistance

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 2010 in Illinois:

- 15,540 children in substitute care under supervision of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).
- Of these children, 6,371 were in kinship foster care.

Placement Policies

- Placements should be consistent with the best interest, safety and special needs of a child. This may include placement with relatives.
- There is no separate licensing program for kinship foster parents. Relatives must meet the same licensing standards and receive the same foster care payment rate as non-kin foster parents. A relative can be a non-licensed foster parent if certain safety standards are met and can receive 100% of the “standard of need” payment. The “standard of need” payment is more than a TANF child-only grant, but is lower than a foster care board payment.

- Extended Family Support Program (EFSP) provides services to kinship care families through collaboration with the probate court, the Department of Public Aid, the State Central Register and the public schools. The focus of the program is short-term, home stabilization to help relatives provide quality care. The program provides a small cash allowance and assists families in obtaining guardianship, getting public aid and enrolling in school.

Subsidized Guardianship

- Illinois is implementing the Federal Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP). GAP provides guardianship subsidies for eligible children who have been living with relatives in foster care and cannot return to their parents, and for whom adoption has been ruled out. Children receiving guardianship subsidies are in permanent placement with relatives and are no longer in foster care.
- In Illinois, the guardianship subsidy rate is the same as the state's foster care and adoption subsidy rates.
- Additional eligibility requirements include children who are living with licensed kin for at least 6 months and the home has been licensed for at least the same 6 months. Other criteria may limit eligibility so it is important that this option be discussed with the child's caseworker.
- Post-guardianship program is also available to provide resources and referrals as needed.

Illinois Foster Care and Relative/Kinship Care Contacts

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

- **Foster Care Program**
John Egan, Coordinator
312-814-1878
Email: John.J.Egan@illinois.gov
- **Subsidized Guardianship**
June Dorn, Project Director
312-814-6800
Email: June.Dorn@illinois.gov
- **Division of Communications**
Kendall Marlowe
312-814-6847
www.state.il.us/dcfs/index.shtml

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.

Illinois Temporary Assistance to Needy Families

Department of Human Services

1-800-843-6154 (toll-free)

[Illinois DHS Office Locator](#)

www.dhs.state.il.us/officelocator

Child Care Subsidy

If a relative caregiver is working and the child in their care receives the TANF financial assistance, the caregiver is eligible for child care subsidy.

Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies

1-877-202-4453 (toll-free)

www.ilchildcare.org

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.

Illinois Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Department of Human Services

1-800-843-6154 (toll-free)

www.dhs.state.il.us

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.

Illinois' All Kids Program
1-866-255-5437 (toll-free)
www.allkidscovered.com

Illinois Medicaid
1-800-843-6154
www.hfs.illinois.gov/medical/apply.html

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.
Illinois State Board of Education
1-866-262-6663 (toll-free)
www.isbe.state.il.us

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:

- **Illinois Special Education Services**
Illinois State Board of Education
866-262-6663
www.isbe.state.il.us/spec-ed/default.htm
- **Illinois Child Find Project**
1-800-323-4769 (toll-free)
www.isbe.state.il.us/spec-ed/html/sped_early_child.htm
- **Illinois Early Intervention Program**, Illinois Dept. of Human Services
1-800-447-6404 (toll-free Voice/TTY) or 1-800-323-GROW (4769) (toll-free automated)
www.dhs.state.il.us
- **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

State Laws

Grandfamilies State Law and Policy Resource Center

Provides an up-to-date online listing of state laws, policies and legislation that affect grandfamilies. A collaboration between [Casey Family Programs](#), the [American Bar Association's Center on Children and the Law](#) and [Generations United](#), the website includes a searchable database of current laws and pending legislation by state, including:

- Adoption
- Care and Custody
- Education
- Financial Assistance
- Housing
- Kinship Navigator Programs
- Medical
- National Family Caregivers Support Programs
- Relative Foster Care
- Subsidized Guardianship
- Notification of Relatives

Online Directory – To find your state's laws affecting grandfamilies.
www.grandfamilies.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.

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