

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.

Wisconsin

The Children

- 78,351 children under age 18 live in homes where the householders are grandparents or other relatives (5.9% of the children in the state.) (U.S. 2010 Census)
 - Of these, 59,346 live with grandparents who are the householders (4.4% of the children in the state) and 19,005 live with other relatives who are the householders (1.4% of the children in the state). (U.S. 2010 Census)
- 25,617 children live in homes with grandparent householders where grandparents are responsible for them*
 - Of these children, 10,055 have no parents present in the home.*

The Grandparents*

- 26,802 grandparents are the householders and are responsible for their grandchildren living with them. Of these:
 - 64% of the grandparents are White and not Hispanic, 21% are Black/African American, 3% are American Indian and Alaska Native, 2% are Asian, and 8% are Hispanic/Latino, and may be of any race.
 - 38% have no parents of the children present in the home.
 - 73% are under age 60.
 - 17% live in poverty.**
- 6,414 grandparents in Milwaukee 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 Wisconsin

Wisconsin Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRC)

Phone: 608-266-1865
Email: DHSwebmaster@wisconsin.gov
Website: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lcicare/adrc
Service area: Statewide- services provided by local county ADRC
Description: Local ADRCs provide information/referral and other services. Visit the website to find your county contact information.

Family Caregiver Support Program – Wisconsin

Contact: Resource Specialist – Family Caregiver Support Network of Interfaith Older Adult Programs
Phone: 1-866-843-9810 (toll-free)
Email: wisconsincaregiver@interfaithmilw.org
Websites: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/aging/caregiver.htm or www.wisconsincaregiver.org
Service area: Statewide
Description: Provides information and resources in local Wisconsin communities by telephone and on the web

Wisconsin Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Network – Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR)

Contact: Lyndsay DeKeyser, Older Americans Act Consultant
Phone: 608-228-8082
Email: lyndsay.dekeyser@gwaar.org
Websites: www.gwaar.org
Grandparenting Today:
www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/grandparent/wisconsin.cfm
Service area: Statewide
Description: Statewide advocacy network. Provides information on local services, including social, legal, public benefit

Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive Parent Association

Contact: Sherry Benson
Phone: 715-735-3879
Email: jbenson9@new.rr.com
Website: www.wfapa.org
Service Area: Statewide
Description: Offers information, quarterly newsletter and two conferences

ABC Connections

Contact: Nancy Davis, Director
Phone: 608-742-4039
Email: abconnect@jvl.net
Service area: Columbia County
Description: Workshop for caregivers offered twice a year

Adams County Aging Department

Contact: Carol J. Johnson, Director
Phone: 608-339-4251
Email: cjohnson@co.adams.wi.us
Website: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/aging/contacts/aging_offices/adams.htm
Service area: Adams County
Description: Offers two monthly support groups

Area Agency on Aging of Dane County

Contacts: Claire Culbertson, Caregiver Program Coordinator, 608-261-5679, Culbertson@countyofdane.com
Contact: Ethel Dunn, 608-238-875, sedun2@sbcglobal.net
Website: www.danecountyhumanservices.org/Aging/aaa.aspx
Newsletter: www.danecountyhumanservices.org/aging/AreaAgencyOnAging/Caregivers/caring_and_kinship_connection_newsletter.aspx
Service area: Dane County
Description: Offers monthly support group and warmline for information.

Grandparent Network of Winnebago County

Contact: Chris Kniep
Phone: 920-232-1973
Email: Christine.kniep@ces.uwex.edu
Website: www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/winnebago
Brochure: <http://winnebago.uwex.edu/files/2010/09/GRG-Brochure.pdf>
Service area: Winnebago County
Description: Offers support group, education programs, quarterly newsletter, information packet, and community outreach.

Grandparents and Other Relatives as Parents – Educational Series –The Parenting Network

Phone: 414-671-0566
Email: HelplineCounselor@theparentingnetwork.org
Website: www.theparentingnetwork.org
Service area: Milwaukee Metro Area
Description: Offers information/referral, parenting education, and support groups

Grandparents as Parents – Eau Claire

Contacts: Barbara Manzo, support group facilitator, 715-835-1944, bmanzo@clearwire.net
Rae Tipler, 715-225-0404, Delbert.tipler@sbcglobal.net
Website: www.gap-ec.org
Brochure: www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/grandparent/support/files/eauclaire_flyer.pdf
Description: Offers monthly support group and education series

Grandparents Parenting Again

Contact: Karen Bresneham, The Women's Center, Inc.
Phone: 262-547-4600
Email: karenb@twcwaukesha.org
Website: www.twcwaukesha.org
Service area: Waukesha area
Description: Offers weekly support group, individual and family counseling and crisis line at 262-542-3828 or 888-542-3828

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group – Jackson County

Contacts Luane Meyer, 715-284-4257, Erica Larsen, 715-284-4301
Service Area: Black River Falls, surrounding Jackson County communities
Description: Monthly support group from 5:30-7:30pm at the Black River Falls Methodist Church Community Room

Kids Matter Inc.

Contact: Jennifer Hastings
Phone: 414-344-1220, Extension 11
Email: jennifer.hastings@kidsmatterinc.org
Website: www.kidsmatterinc.org
Service area: Milwaukee area
Description: Provides in-home support services through Fostering Healing and Family Connections Milwaukee programs.

Parents As Teachers Home Visitation Program – Wautoma Area School District

Contact: Kelly Roth-Rosenbrook
Phone: 920-787-7112, Extension 1305 or 920-647-0632
Email: rothk@wautoma.k12.wi.us
Service area: Wautoma Area School District
Description: Parent education and support through home visits and monthly socialization. Available for families with a child prenatal - age 5.

Rock County Council on Aging – Wisconsin Family Caregiver Support Program

Phone: 608-758-8455
Email: nfcsp@co.rock.wi.us
Service area: Rock County
Description: Offers information and referral to services

Second Time Around Grandparent Support Group – Gary Dobbs Family Resource Center

Phone: 414-265-2222
Email: GLDFRC@yahoo.com
Service area: Milwaukee Metro Area
Description: Offers information, legislative advocacy, newsletter, and monthly support groups (child care provided)

Waushara County Support Group

Contact: Sue Seefeldt
Phone: [920-787-0403](tel:920-787-0403)
Email: susans.courthouse@co.waushara.wi.us
Service Area: Waushara County
Description: Offers support group, information and assistance, and access to services

Milwaukee County Support Group- Family Caregiver Support Network

Contact: Kathy Czarnecki, Resource Specialist
Phone: 414-220-8600 or 1-800-449-4481 (toll-free)
Email: kczarnecki@interfaithmilw.org
Service Area: Milwaukee County
Description: Offers support group, respite, information/referral, resource library, educational series, 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 March 2011 in Wisconsin:

- 6,407 children/youth spent some time in out-of-home care
- 7,162 children/youth were in kinship care. Of these children, 6,121 were voluntary placements and 1,041 were court-ordered.

Placement Policies

- State policy requires that relatives be considered first when an out-of-home placement is sought for a child under the Department's care.
- The licensing requirements are the same for both relative and non-relative foster parents who are eligible for Title IV-E foster care payments. IV-E eligible relative foster parents must meet the same licensing standards and training requirements and receive the same foster care payment rate as non-kin foster parents. Waivers for non-safety requirements available for relative foster parents.

Kinship Care Program

- Program offers support to children living outside their home with kin.
- Visit <http://dcf.wi.gov/children/Kinship/> for more information or call Kinship Care Contacts listed below

Subsidized Guardianship

Wisconsin is implementing the Federal Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP) effective July 2011. 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.

Foster Care and Relative/Kinship Care Contacts

Wisconsin Division of Safety and Permanence

Department of Children and Families

Holly Telfer, 608-226-6464, Holly.Telfer@wisconsin.gov

Jonelle Brom, 608-264-6933, Jonelle.Brom@wisconsin.gov

<http://dcf.wi.gov/default.htm>

Milwaukee County Kinship Care

Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare

Mary Kennedy

414-220-7035

Email: Mary.Kennedy@wisconsin.gov

http://dcf.wi.gov/bmcw/progserv/adopt_foster/kinship.htm

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.

Wisconsin Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

Department of Children and Families

608-267-0513

Email: bwf_co@wisconsin.gov

<http://dcf.wi.gov/tan>

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.

Wisconsin Food Shares Program
Department of Health Services
1-800-362-3002 (toll-free)
<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/foodshare/>
Apply at: <http://access.wi.gov>

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.

[Wisconsin BadgerCare Plus and Medicaid](#)

Department of Health Services

1-800-362-3002

Email: vedsrecipientservices@wisconsin.gov

<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/badgercareplus>

Apply at: <http://access.wi.gov>

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
[Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#)
1-800-441-4563 (toll-free)
Email: webadmin@dpi.wi.gov
<http://dpi.wi.gov>

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:

- **Wisconsin Special Education Team**, Department of Public Instruction
608-266-1781
<http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/index.html>
- **Wisconsin Early Childhood: Child Find**, Department of Public Instruction
608-267-9172
Email: Erin.arango-escalante@dpi.wi.gov
<http://dpi.wi.gov/ec/eccfpage.html>
- **Wisconsin Birth to Three Early Intervention Program**, Wisconsin Department of Health Services
608-267-3270
Wisconsin First Step Toll-free Information Line: 1-800-642-7837
<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/bdds/birthto3>
- **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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