

# GRANDFACTS

## STATE FACT SHEETS FOR GRANDFAMILIES



The GrandFacts state fact sheets for grandfamilies include state-specific data and programs as well as information about public benefits, educational assistance, legal relationship options and state laws. Visit [www.grandfamilies.org](http://www.grandfamilies.org) to find this and all GrandFacts state fact sheets.

# Illinois

## Grandfamilies Data

263,890

Children living in homes where a relative is head of household

85,000

Children being raised by kin with no parent present

7,679

Children in foster care being raised by kin

71,839

Grandparents responsible for their grandchildren in Illinois

For every **1** child raised by kin in foster care, there are **10** being raised by kin outside of foster care

The data presented in these graphics is from the [United States Census Bureau](#), the [Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center](#) and the [Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System \(AFCARS\)](#).

- To learn more about children in Illinois living in homes where relatives are head of household, click [here](#). For national data, click [here](#).
- To learn more about children in Illinois being raised by kin with no parents present, click [here](#). For national data, click [here](#).
- To learn more about children in Illinois in foster care being raised by kin, click [here](#). For national data, click [here](#).
- To learn more about grandparents in Illinois responsible for their grandchildren, click [here](#). For national data, click [here](#).

For more information on kinship care and caregivers, and for detailed instructions on accessing and interpreting this data, please visit: [www.gu.org/resources/accessing-and-interpreting-grandfamilies-data/](http://www.gu.org/resources/accessing-and-interpreting-grandfamilies-data/)

## Programs That May 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.

### Key Programs in Illinois

#### Cabrini Green Legal Aid

**Website:** [www.cgla.net/](http://www.cgla.net/)

**Phone:** 312-738-2452

**Email:** [intakes@cgla.net](mailto:intakes@cgla.net)

**Service Area:** Cook County

**Description:** Legal services to incarcerated parents, formerly incarcerated parents and caregivers of children whose parents are incarcerated and live in poverty.

#### Chicago Department of Family & Support Services- Caregiver Program, Grandparent or Older Relative Raising Children

**Website:** [www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/provdrs/senior.html](http://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/provdrs/senior.html)

**Phone:** 312-744-4016; or dial 3-1-1

**Email:** [aging@cityofchicago.org](mailto:aging@cityofchicago.org)

**Service Area:** Chicago

**Description:** Information, resources, referrals, advocacy, counseling, respite, support groups and gap-filling funds.

#### Chicago Volunteer Legal Services

**Website:** [www.cvl.org](http://www.cvl.org)

Guardianship assistance desk for minors: [www.cvl.org/article/changes-guardianship-assistance-desk-minors](http://www.cvl.org/article/changes-guardianship-assistance-desk-minors)

**Phone:** 312-332-1624

**Email:** [rebekah@cvls.org](mailto:rebekah@cvls.org)

**Service Area:** Chicago/Cook County

**Description:** Free legal services to working poor and poor. Legal representation in family law, adoption and guardianship cases. Serves as court-appointed Guardian ad Litem (GAL) for minors in contested probate guardianship cases.

#### **Cook County Guardianship Assistance Desk for Minors (GADM)**

**Address:** 69 W Washington St, Suite 1020, Chicago, IL 60602

**Phone:** 312-603-0135, 312-603-9766 (fax)

**Hours:** 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Mon-Fri (excluding court holidays). Appointments are not required, but recommended.

**Description:** Free help desk for people who do not have attorneys who wish to file for guardianship of minors in Cook County. Staff can help prepare petitions for guardianship, petitions to discharge guardianship, petitions for visitation, and other standard court documents. Can provide referrals for more complex cases. Staff are not attorneys and do not provide legal representation in court.

#### **Family Service- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren**

**Website:** [www.famservcc.org/grandparents-raising-grandchildren](http://www.famservcc.org/grandparents-raising-grandchildren)

**Phone:** 217-352-5100

**Email:** [src@familyservicecc.org](mailto:src@familyservicecc.org)

**Service Area:** Champaign and Piatt Counties

**Description:** Information, assistance in accessing services or benefits, advocacy, education and training, and support.

#### **Greenlight Family Services**

**Website:** [www.greenlightfamilyservices.org](http://www.greenlightfamilyservices.org)

**Phone:** 773-728-7800; or 1-800-572-2390 (toll-free)

**Service Area:** Statewide

**Description:** Offers information and services for caregivers considering adoption or guardianship. Offers post-adoption services to families who adopted from the foster care system. Provides low- or no-cost legal services.

#### **Illinois Department on Aging – Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children**

**Website:** [www2.illinois.gov/aging/programs/caregiver/Pages/grg.aspx](http://www2.illinois.gov/aging/programs/caregiver/Pages/grg.aspx)

**Phone:** 1-800-252-8966 (toll-free)

**Description:** The Department on Aging funds and oversees Area Agencies on Aging, which plan and coordinate services and programs for older caregivers. The Illinois Family Caregiver support program provides information, assistance in accessing service, counseling, support group, trainings, respite care and limited-basis supplemental services to complement the care provided by caregivers.

**AgeGuide Northeastern Illinois- Family Caregiver Program**

**Website:** [www.ageguide.org](http://www.ageguide.org)

**Phone:** 815-939-0727 (Kankakee); 630-293-5990 (Lombard, toll-free)

**Service Area:** DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties

**AgeOptions**

**Website:** [www.ageoptions.org](http://www.ageoptions.org)

**Phone:** 708-383-0258; or 800-699-9043

**Email:** [information@ageoptions.org](mailto:information@ageoptions.org)

**Service Area:** Suburban Cook County

**Area Agency on Aging for Lincolnland**

**Website:** [www.aginglinc.org](http://www.aginglinc.org)

**Phone:** 217-787-9234

**Service Area:** Cass, Christian, Greene, Jersey, Logan, Macoupin, Mason, Menard, Montgomery, Morgan, Sangamon, and Scott Counties

**Central Illinois Agency on Aging- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program**

**Website:** [www.ciaoa.net](http://www.ciaoa.net)

**Phone:** 309-674-2071; or 1-877-777-2422 (toll-free)

**Service Area:** Fulton, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell and Woodford Counties

**East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging**

**Website:** [www.eciaaa.org](http://www.eciaaa.org)

**Phone:** 1-800-888-4456 (toll-free)

**Email:** [aginginfo@eciaaa.org](mailto:aginginfo@eciaaa.org)

**Service Area:** Champaign, Clark, Coles, Cumberland, DeWitt, Douglas, Edgar, Ford, Iroquois, Livingston, Macon, McLean, Moultrie, Piatt, Shelby, and Vermillion Counties

**Egyptian Area Agency on Aging- Southern Illinois Grandparents Raising Grandchildren**

**Website:** [www.egyptianaaa.org](http://www.egyptianaaa.org)

**Phone:** 618-985-8311, ext. 101; or 888-895-3306 (toll-free)

**Email:** [egyptian@egyptianaaa.org](mailto:egyptian@egyptianaaa.org)

**Service Area:** Alexander, Franklin, Gallatin, Hardin, Jackson, Johnson, Massac, Perry, Pope, Pulaski, Saline, Union and Williamson Counties

**Southeastern Illinois Agency on Aging**

**Website:** [www.seiaoa.com](http://www.seiaoa.com)

**Phone:** 618-262-2306

**Email:** [seiaoa.megan@gmail.com](mailto:seiaoa.megan@gmail.com); [seiaoa.sherri@gmail.com](mailto:seiaoa.sherri@gmail.com)

**Service Area:** Crawford, Edwards, Hamilton, Jasper, Lawrence, Richland, Wabash, Wayne and White Counties

### Legal Aid Chicago

**Website:** [www.legalaidchicago.org](http://www.legalaidchicago.org)

**Phone:** 312-341-1070

**Service Area:** Cook County

**Description:** Free legal assistance in non-criminal cases to caregivers and others living in poverty.

### North Shore Senior Center – Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

**Website:** [www.nssc.org/](http://www.nssc.org/)

**Phone:** 847-784-6000

**Email:** [info@nssc.org](mailto:info@nssc.org)

**Service Area:** North Shore of Chicago

**Description:** Support group, parenting education, financial counseling/assistance, advocacy. Provides information and assistance with connecting to resources and accessing public benefits.

### Parents of Addicted Loved Ones (PAL)

**Website:** <https://palgroup.org/>; find a local meeting at <https://meetings.palgroup.org/meetings>

**Phone:** 480-300-4712 (8:00 a.m. to 8 p.m. MST)

**Email:** [info@palgroup.org](mailto:info@palgroup.org)

**Service Area:** Breese

**Description:** PAL is a national faith-based nonprofit that helps families learn healthy ways to deal with an adult child struggling with addiction. Meetings are facilitated by parents who complete the training program and receive ongoing education. Weekly meetings include an evidence-based educational component using a curriculum written by a licensed Substance Abuse Counselor, and peer-to-peer support. Meetings are offered free of charge to both the facilitator and the attendees.

### The Parent Place – Relatives As Parents Network (RAPN)

**Website:** [www.tppos.org](http://www.tppos.org)

**Contact:** Amy Chase

**Phone:** 217-753-8730

**Email:** [achase@tppos.org](mailto:achase@tppos.org)

**Service Area:** Springfield and surrounding area

**Description:** Guardianship assistance and support, guardianship court advocacy, resource referrals and monthly support groups for grandparents and other relatives raising children.

### Sankofa Safe Child Initiative

**Website:** [www.sankofasafechildinitiative.org](http://www.sankofasafechildinitiative.org)

**Phone:** 773-542-9900 (Westside); 773-874-7233 (Southside); 844-669-5049 (24/7 Helpline)

**Email:** [wsafechild@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wsafechild@sbcglobal.net)

**Service Area:** Cook County

**Description:** Information and referral, home visits, support groups, and case management. Operates “Sankofa House”, a 58-unit supportive housing facility for grandparents/kinship caregivers and young adults aging out of foster care.

## 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 guardianship or legal custody. Relative caregivers may become eligible for benefits programs when their household size increases.

### Help with Public Benefits

#### [AARP Foundation’s Benefits QuickLINK](#)

Benefits QuickLINK, powered by BenefitsCheckUp of the National Council on Aging, offers a free and private way to complete a questionnaire to find out if relatives and/or the children they are raising qualify for certain programs that pay for food, increase income and cover home and healthcare costs. The specific programs covered by the questionnaire in the website are listed below. Once the questionnaire is completed, the website generates a list of eligible programs and contact information.

[www.aarp.org/quicklink](http://www.aarp.org/quicklink)

<b>Benefits QuickLINK</b> <b>State and Federal Public Benefits</b>	<b>Benefits QuickLINK</b> <b>Public Benefits for Families Raising Children</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medicare Savings Programs</li> <li>• Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage</li> <li>• Medicare Rx Extra Help</li> <li>• State Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs (SPAP)</li> <li>• Medicaid for Aged, Blind, and Disabled</li> <li>• Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)</li> <li>• Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)</li> <li>• Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)</li> <li>• State Property Tax Relief/Rebates</li> <li>• Supplemental Security Income (SSI)</li> <li>• Employment Programs</li> <li>• Telephone and Cellphone Assistance</li> <li>• Transportation Assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medicaid for Children</li> <li>• State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)</li> <li>• TANF-Child Only Grants</li> <li>• Supplemental Security Income for Children</li> <li>• Child Care Assistance</li> </ul>

#### [Benefits.gov](#)

An official website of the federal government, this resource has state specific information on benefits, in addition to a screening tool to find out which programs you may be eligible to receive.

[www.benefits.gov](http://www.benefits.gov)

### 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)

[eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx](http://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx)

### 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. There are two types of TANF grants: child-only and family grants. Under virtually all states' policies, caregiver income is not considered in determining eligibility for TANF child-only grants. TANF child-only grants are based solely on the income of the child, and are designed to help meet the needs of just the child. Child-only grants are not subject to time limits and work requirements like TANF family grants.

#### Illinois Temporary Assistance to Needy Families

Department of Human Services

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

[Illinois DHS Office Locator](http://www.dhs.state.il.us)

[www.dhs.state.il.us](http://www.dhs.state.il.us)

To apply online – Go to <https://abe.illinois.gov/>

#### Generations United's Grand Resources:

[A Fact Sheet for Grandparent and Relative Caregivers to Help Access Support through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families \(TANF\) Program](http://www.gu.org/resources/)

[www.gu.org/resources/](http://www.gu.org/resources/)

### 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. Your grandchild may also qualify for benefits based on your work record. 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)

<https://secure.ssa.gov/>



## Key Public Benefits: 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](http://www.dhs.state.il.us)

To apply online – Go to <https://abe.illinois.gov/>

### Food and Nutrition Services of the U.S. 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, center or program to ask if they participate in any of the child nutrition programs and 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/contacts](http://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts)

**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/wic-contacts](http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-contacts)

### Foodbanks

Organizations that provide free food and sometimes other items, such as diapers, to families in need.

**Online State Directory** - To find local food banks.

[www.feedingamerica.org/foodbank-results.aspx](http://www.feedingamerica.org/foodbank-results.aspx)

## Key Public Benefits: Health Care

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

[www.aarp.org/quicklink](http://www.aarp.org/quicklink)

### 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 Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which provides health coverage to eligible children through both Medicaid and separate CHIP programs. CHIP and Medicaid are the national names, and your state may use different names.

#### **Illinois’ All Kids Program**

1-866-255-5437 (toll-free)

[www.illinois.gov/hfs/MedicalPrograms/AllKids/](http://www.illinois.gov/hfs/MedicalPrograms/AllKids/)

To apply online – Go to <https://abe.illinois.gov/>

#### **Illinois Medicaid**

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

[www.hfs.illinois.gov/medical/apply.html](http://www.hfs.illinois.gov/medical/apply.html)

To apply online – Go to <https://abe.illinois.gov/>

#### **Consent to Obtain Health Care**

Even with insurance, consenting to health care for a child can be a challenge for relative caregivers who do not have legal custody. Some states have laws that allow these caregivers to “consent” to such treatment.

**Grandfamilies.org Online Database** - To see if your state has such a law.

[www.grandfamilies.org/Search-Laws](http://www.grandfamilies.org/Search-Laws)

#### **Key Public Benefits: Tax Credits**

The following information is about tax credits from the federal government available throughout the United States. Similar tax credits may exist in your state for state taxes. For example, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), 29 states and the District of Columbia offer a state tax credit based on the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and four states offer a Child Tax Credit. See CBPP’s **“Get it Back Campaign”** for more information on state tax credits.

**Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)** is an income tax credit for workers who do not have high incomes. It is a refundable tax credit, which means you could get a refund check from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) even if you don't earn enough to pay taxes.

**Child Tax Credit** is a tax credit for up to \$2,000 per dependent child. But, it is not refundable.

**Additional Child Tax Credit** may help if you don’t owe enough taxes to benefit from the child tax credit. Unlike the child tax credit, this tax credit is refundable.

**Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit** may help you if you’ve hired someone to help care for the child so you could work or look for work. If so, you may be able to claim up to \$3,000 in expenses per child.

**Adoption Tax Credit** can help if you have adopted your grandchild or other relative. It can give you a credit for the money you spent to adopt. If you adopted a child from the foster care system with special needs, you may be eligible for the maximum amount of credit for the year you adopted regardless of whether you had any

qualifying expenses. If you did not adopt from the foster care system, you must have qualifying expenses like legal fees. This tax credit allows adoptive parents to claim up to \$14,300 per child in 2020, with the amount increasing incrementally each year.

Please note that tax credits themselves are not counted as income. They will not be counted when you apply for financial help.

**Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP)** – To find out about tax credits in your state.  
[www.cbpp.org](http://www.cbpp.org)

**The U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS)** – To find out more information about each of these tax credits  
[www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)

## Education

The **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](http://www.ed.gov/parents)

**Illinois State Board of Education**  
1-866-262-6663 (toll-free)  
[www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net)

## 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 without legal custody or guardianship to enroll the children they are raising in school. These laws are often called education “consent” laws, but they may be called something else in your state.

**Grandfamilies.org Online Database** - To find out if your state has an education consent law.  
[www.grandfamilies.org/Search-Laws](http://www.grandfamilies.org/Search-Laws)

## Early Intervention, Special Education and Related Services

**The Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** - From birth to age 21, children who have learning disabilities, physical disabilities or other special needs may be able to get early intervention, preschool and special education services in school through the federal IDEA. Services may include speech, physical and occupational therapies.

The IDEA requires that states identify, locate and evaluate all children ages 3 to 21 with disabilities who may need special education and related services. Once the evaluation team, which includes a child’s caregivers, has

decided if a child is eligible for early intervention, preschool or special education services, an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP; birth to three years of age) or an Individual Education Plan (IEP; three to 21 years of age) is developed and services should begin shortly.

**Illinois State Board of Education, Special Education Services**

866-262-6663 (toll-free)

[www.isbe.net/Pages/Special-Education-Programs.aspx](http://www.isbe.net/Pages/Special-Education-Programs.aspx)

**Illinois Early Intervention Program**

Department 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/page.aspx?item=30321](http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30321)

**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.

[www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/](http://www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/)

**Generations United's Grand Resources:**

A Grandparent's and Other Relative's Guide to Raising Children with Disabilities

[www.gu.org/resources/](http://www.gu.org/resources/)

## Early Childhood Education

**Head Start** and **Early Head Start** are 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)

[eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/center-locator](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/center-locator)

**Child Care Aware** provides information, resources and connection to local Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&R) that help you find local child care.

**Online Directory** - To find your local Child Care Resource & Referral Agency.

1- 800-424-2246 (toll-free)

[www.childcareaware.org/families/](http://www.childcareaware.org/families/)

## Legal

The following legal relationships may be options for both those children exiting the foster care system and those outside the system. For those families who do not want to establish a legal relationship, consent and power of attorney laws are available in several states.

All of the following options are presented in general terms. This area of the law is created at the state level, so how these options are defined and which ones are available can vary significantly by state.

## Adoption

With adoption, the relative caregiver becomes the parent in the eyes of the law. This fact makes access to services on behalf of the child the same as for any parent. Adoption ends all of the birth parents' rights and responsibilities, which means that birth parents cannot go to court later and reclaim those rights and responsibilities.

**Adoption assistance** payments may be available to relative caregivers who choose to adopt children in their care from the child welfare system.

**North American Council on Adoptable Children** - To get information about your state's subsidy, in addition to other adoption information.

[www.nacac.org](http://www.nacac.org)

**Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption** - To find adoption resources that may be helpful to you.

[www.davethomasfoundation.org](http://www.davethomasfoundation.org)

## Guardianship

The biggest difference between adoption and guardianship is that guardianship does not take away all the birth parents' rights and responsibilities. Parents typically keep certain rights and the obligation to financially support the child. Unlike adoption, the parents can go back to court and ask for the guardianship to be ended. For caregivers, a guardianship allows them to access services on behalf of the child that otherwise might prove impossible while not changing family relationships, like making grandma legally mom.

**Guardianship assistance** payments may be available to relative caregivers who choose to get guardianship of the children in their care who are exiting the child welfare system.

**Subsidized Guardianship**- Illinois has an approved Title IV-E Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGAP)

Access the KinGAP application [here](#)

## Comparing Adoption and Guardianship

This chart, created by Generations United with support from the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, is designed to help kinship foster parents compare adoption and guardianship as two options that you and the children in your care can pursue to exit foster care and create permanent families.

<https://www.gu.org/resources/adoption-and-guardianship-for-children-in-kinship-foster-care/>

## Legal Custody

Legal custody is similar to guardianship, but it is usually granted by a different court that has different procedures.

## Other Options

In some states, relative caregivers who do not want or have a legal relationship to the children in their care have laws that make it possible to access health care treatment and educational services on behalf of the children without going to court.

For more information on all these options, and to see what exists in your state, see [www.grandfamilies.org](http://www.grandfamilies.org).

## State Laws

**Grandfamilies.org** is a collaboration between [Generations United](#), the [American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law](#) and [Casey Family Programs](#). It contains an easy-to-use, searchable [database](#) of state laws and legislation directly impacting kinship families. You will also find explanations of legal topic areas, practical implementation ideas, personal stories and many other resources.

Topics Covered:

- Adoption
- Care and Custody
- Education
- Federal Laws
- Foster Care Licensing
- Financial Assistance
- Healthcare
- Housing
- Kinship Navigator Programs
- National Family Caregiver Support Program
- Notification of Relatives
- Subsidized Guardianship

The online database of laws and legislation is at [www.grandfamilies.org/Search-Laws](http://www.grandfamilies.org/Search-Laws).

## Updates

If you have an update or a resource to be included in this or any of the other GrandFacts State Fact Sheets, please email [grandfamilies@gu.org](mailto:grandfamilies@gu.org).

## Acknowledgements

***Major support for the GrandFacts State Fact Sheets for Grandfamilies was provided by  
The Brookdale Foundation Group***

***in partnership with Casey Family Programs***

***with additional support from  
AARP, ChildFocus and the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption***

**Disclaimers:** None of the sponsoring organizations or foundations of this fact sheet assessed or evaluated listed programs for their responsiveness or effectiveness. Consequently, none of the sponsoring organizations or foundations assume any liability for any program's usefulness or accuracy of their listed information. The programs are included solely based on their own claim that they provide services or supports to grandfamilies. Omission of any relevant program is not intentional. We welcome feedback and updates via email to [grandfamilies@gu.org](mailto:grandfamilies@gu.org).

Reprinting permissible provided "GrandFacts State Fact Sheets at [www.grandfactsheets.org](http://www.grandfactsheets.org)" is credited and no profits are made. Organizations and individuals that want to share the GrandFacts State Fact Sheets online must link to [www.grandfactsheets.org](http://www.grandfactsheets.org). Excerpts of these Fact Sheets may be used online or in print with permission only.

*Updated March 2021*