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 to find this and all GrandFacts state fact sheets.

Virginia

The Children
- 55,000 (3%) children live with a relative with no parent present.
- 174,797 (9.4%) children under 18 live in homes where householders are grandparents or other relatives.
  - 133,887 (7.2%) of these children live with grandparents.
  - 40,910 (2.2%) of these children live with other relatives.

The Grandparents
- 67,534 grandparents are householders responsible for their grandchildren who live with them. Of these:
  - 23,293 (34.5%) do not have parents present.
  - 41,133 (60.9%) are under age 60.
  - 41,128 (60.9%) are in the workforce.
  - 9,927 (14.7%) are in poverty.
  - 16,241 (24.1%) have a disability.
  - 18,504 (27.4%) are unmarried.
  - Race/Ethnicity:
    - 37,211 (55.1%) are white (not Hispanic or Latino)
    - 21,543 (31.9%) are black or African American
    - 5,065 (7.5%) are Hispanic or Latino origin
    - 2,499 (3.7%) are Asian
    - 338 (0.5%) are American Indian or Alaska Native
    - 68 (0.1%) are Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
    - 1,216 (1.8%) are multiracial
    - 1,486 (2.2%) are some other race
Children in Kinship Foster Care

For data on children in kinship care within the child welfare system, see the Child Trends fact sheet for Virginia.
www.childtrends.org

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.

Key Programs in Virginia

ACCESS AIDS Care - AIDS Care Center for Education and Support Services (ACCESS)
Website: www.accessaids.org
Phone: 757-640-0929
Service area: Norfolk, Hampton, Newport News, Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach
Description: Primary services include medical case management, transportation services, medication assistance, permanent supportive housing and HIV education for youth.

Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia, Inc.
Website: www.cceva.org
Contact: Milcah Wade
Phone: 757-533-5217
Email: mwade@cceva.org
Service area: Hampton Roads
Description: Information and referral, support groups, case management, advocacy, parenting plans, counseling and other services.

Chesterfield County Office of The Senior Advocate – Kinship Connection
Phone: 804-768-7878
Service area: Chesterfield County and Surrounding Areas
Description: Monthly support groups, events, case management, legal assistance, information and referral, and advocacy.

Crater District Area Agency on Aging
Website: www.cdaaa.org
Contact: Helen Terry
Phone: 804-732-7020
Email: hterry@cdaaa.org
Service area: Colonial Heights, Emporia, Hopewell, Petersburg and Dinwiddie, Greensville, Prince George, Surry and Sussex Counties
Description: Monthly support group, information and referral, education activities, and additional programs and services.

Henrico County Department of Social Services - Kinship Care Support Group
Website: www.henrico.us
Contact: Renee White
Phone: 804-501-5866
Email: whi86@henrico.us
Service area: Henrico County
Description: Support group meeting on the 4th Thursday of every other month.

Kids, Kin 'n Caregivers, INC
Website: www.kids-kin-care.org
Contact: Kathy Dial, Ph.D.
Phone: 757-434-5162
Email: kknc@cox.net
Service area: Hampton Roads
Description: Educational workshops, multi-location support groups, linkage to resources, advocacy, parent coaching, children/youth services and family social activities.

The Kin Connection
Contact: Dee Brown
Phone: 757-384-0074
Email: kinconnection@verizon.net
Service area: Hampton Roads
Description: Monthly support group, health and wellness seminars, community resource presentations, and social activities.

Mountain Empire Older Citizens Inc.- KinCare Program
Website: www.meoc.org
Contact: Patty Bailey
Phone: 276-523-4202 or 1-800-252-6362 (toll-free)
Email: pbailey@meoc.org
Service area: Lee, Scott and Wise Counties, City of Norton
Description: Monthly support groups, events, case management, legal assistance, information/referral, and advocacy.

NewFound Families Virginia
Website: www.newfoundva.org
Phone: 804-537-2401 or 1- 877-VA FACES (1-877-823-2237 toll-free)
Email: info@newfoundva.org
Service area: Statewide
Description: Information and referral, training, advocacy and family activities.

New River Valley Agency on Aging - Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group
Website: www.nrvaao.org
Phone: 540-980-7720
Email: nrvaao@nrvaao.org
Service area: Floyd, Giles, Montgomery and Pulaski Counties, City of Radford, and Towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg
Description: Information and referral, annual conference and resource fair, and monthly support group in Pulaski County (childcare provided).

Sentara RMH Medical Center - Grandparenting Education and Support Group
Contact: Marilyn Turner
Phone: 540-236-6638
Service area: Harrisonburg-Rockingham Area
Description: Support group, information and referral, children’s programs, and annual family events.

Spotsylvania County Public Schools Parent Resource Center - Grandparents & Extended Family Members Raising Children
Contact: Sandy Sprague
Phone: 540-528-7060
Email: prc@spotsylvania.k12.va.us
Service area: Spotsylvania County
Description: Monthly support group meetings to share resources and experiences, present speakers, and make new friends.

Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services – Kinship Care Initiative
Website: www.vda.virginia.gov/kinshipcare.asp
Grandparent Caring For Grandchildren Resource Guide:
Contact: Liz Havenner
Phone: 804-662-9340
Email: Liz.Havenner@vda.virginia.gov
Service area: Statewide
Description: Information and referral, and respite voucher.

Virginia Poverty Law Center, Center for Family Advocacy
Website: www.vplc.org/family-law/
GRANDFACTS: Virginia

Phone: 804-782-9430
Email: info@vplc.org
Service area: Statewide

Description: Collaborates to help develop and implement changes to Virginia’s child welfare system that will help children remain safely out of foster care or move out of care into permanent families. VPLC provides trainings to Legal Aid and pro bono attorneys, lay advocates and members of the public on basic family law, including custody, visitation and support. As a statewide support organization, VPLC does not generally handle individual cases except when asked to act as co-counsel with a legal aid attorney, but can provide referrals and support.

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

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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

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.

Virginia’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program
Department of Social Services
804-726-7385 or 1-855-635-4370 (toll-free)
Email: citizen.services@dss.virginia.gov
www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/tanf/index.cgi

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
www.gu.org/RESOURCES.aspx

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.

Virginia’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
Department of Social Services
804-726-7361 or 1-800-552-3431 (toll-free)
Email: citizen.services@dss.virginia.gov
www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/snap.cgi

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.

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

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

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

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.

**Virginia’s Medicaid or Family Access to Medical Insurance Security (FAMIS) Children & FAMIS Plus**
1-866-873-2647 (1-866-87FAMIS toll-free)
www.coverva.org/index.cfm

**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

**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), 26 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 $1,000 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 $13,460 per child.
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

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

### Education

The [U.S. Department of Education](https://www.ed.gov/) 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

**Virginia Department of Education**
804-225-2023
www.doe.virginia.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 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

### 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.
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/

Generations United’s Grand Resources:
A Grandparent’s and Other Relative’s Guide to Raising Children with Disabilities
www.gu.org/RESOURCES.aspx

**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)
www.eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/HeadStartOffices

**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/

**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

Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption - To find adoption resources that may be helpful to you.
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.
www.grandfamilies.org - To find out more about whether your state has guardianship assistance.

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.

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.

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.
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Programs updated September 2019

Data Sources: