

# 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.

# Florida

## The Children

- 170,000 (4%) children live with a relative with no parent present.
- 442,935 (11.0%) children under 18 live in homes where householders are grandparents or other relatives.
  - 342,268 (8.5%) of these children live with grandparents.
  - 100,667 (2.5%) of these children live with other relatives.

## The Grandparents

- 157,353 grandparents are householders responsible for their grandchildren who live with them. Of these:
  - 51,606 (32.8%) do not have parents present.
  - 92,894 (59.0%) are under age 60.
  - 92,996 (59.1%) are in the workforce.
  - 33,988 (21.6%) are in poverty.
  - 36,002 (22.9%) have a disability.
  - 49,566 (31.5%) are unmarried.
  - Race/Ethnicity:
    - 78,991 (50.2%) are white (not Hispanic or Latino)
    - 43,429 (27.6%) are black or African American
    - 30,684 (19.5%) are Hispanic or Latino origin
    - 2,675 (1.7%) are Asian
    - 1,101 (0.7%) are American Indian or Alaska Native
    - 157 (0.1%) are Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
    - 2,360 (1.5%) are multiracial
    - 2,990 (1.9%) 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 Florida](#).

[www.childtrends.org](http://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 Florida

#### **Aging True Community Senior Services - Relatives as Parents Program of Jacksonville (RAPPJAX)**

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

**Phone:** 904-807-1292

**Email:** [mrackley@agingtrue.org](mailto:mrackley@agingtrue.org)

**Service area:** Duval County

**Description:** Trainings, support groups, transportation, long term goal planning, bi-monthly newsletter, caregiver respite, stipends for children's summer camps and more. Open to grandparents and relative caregivers age 55+.

#### **Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Sun Coast**

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

**Contact:** Joy Mahler, CEO

**Phone:** 941-488-4009

**Email:** [jmahler@bbbssun.org](mailto:jmahler@bbbssun.org)

**Service area:** Sarasota, Manatee, Desoto, Highland, Hardee and Charlotte Counties

**Description:** Provides children facing adversity with strong and enduring, professionally supported, one to one relationships.

#### **Broward Meals on Wheels**

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

**Phone:** 954-731-8770

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

**Service area:** Broward

**Description:** Nutrition services for Broward's 60 years and older population.

**Children's Home Network Inc.**

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

**Contact:** Larry Cooper

**Phone:** 888-920-8761

**Email:** [Lcooper@childrenshomenetwork.org](mailto:Lcooper@childrenshomenetwork.org)

**Service area:** Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties

**Description:** Information and referral, case management, navigation, benefit enrollment, support groups, and educational workshops to grandparents and relatives raising children.

**Easter Seals South Florida, Inc.**

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

**Contact:** Angela Aracena

**Phone:** 305-547-4721

**Email:** [aaracena@SFL.easterseals.com](mailto:aaracena@SFL.easterseals.com)

**Service area:** Miami

**Description:** Sitter services in the home and on-site child care.

**Florida Legal Services, Inc. (FLS)**

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

**Phone:** 850-385-7900

**Service area:** Statewide

**Description:** Legal support center that provides technical consultation.

**Grandparents Parenting Again of Flagler County, Santa Maria del Mar Church**

**Contact:** Dolores and Deacon Mike Moody

**Phone:** 386-447-0044

**Email:** [dmjmoody3@cfl.rr.com](mailto:dmjmoody3@cfl.rr.com)

**Service area:** Flagler County

**Description:** Information, legal guidance, support groups, and resources.

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

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

**Contact:** Christine Stilwell

**Phone:** 321-231-0587

**Email:** [cstilwell@informedfamilies.org](mailto:cstilwell@informedfamilies.org)

**Service area:** Central Florida

**Description:** Support groups, workshops, home visits, and family activities.



**Kids Central, Inc. – Kinship Care Program**

**Website:** [www.kidscentralinc.org](http://www.kidscentralinc.org)  
**Contact:** Tawnya Drent, Kinship Supervisor  
**Email:** [tawnya.drent@kidscentralinc.org](mailto:tawnya.drent@kidscentralinc.org)  
**Phone:** 352-387-3400  
**Service area:** Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Marion and Sumter Counties  
**Description:** Monthly support groups, case management, mentoring, free legal services to those who meet criteria, home visits, events, and advocacy.

**Manatee Children's Services – Grandparents As Parents**

**Website:** [www.manateechildrenergencies.com/prevention.php](http://www.manateechildrenergencies.com/prevention.php)  
**Phone:** 941-345-1200  
**Email:** [info@mcsfl.com](mailto:info@mcsfl.com)  
**Service Area:** Manatee and surrounding counties  
**Description:** Advocacy services, support groups and crisis intervention for relative caregivers.

**Tallahassee Senior Center & Foundation – Grandparents As Parents Program (GaP)**

**Website:** [www.tal.gov.com/seniors/neighborhoodsites.aspx](http://www.tal.gov.com/seniors/neighborhoodsites.aspx)  
**Contact:** Karen Boebinger  
**Phone:** 850-891-4027  
**Email:** [Karen.boebinger@tal.gov.com](mailto:Karen.boebinger@tal.gov.com)  
**Service Area:** Leon County  
**Description:** Support groups, educational programs, legal services, health screenings, access to community resources, information & referral, and family outings and social events.

**University of South Florida Child and Family Services - Florida Kinship Center**

**Website:** [www.cas.usf.edu/~krisman/](http://www.cas.usf.edu/~krisman/)  
**Phone:** 813-974-4601 or 1-800-640-6444 (toll-free)  
**Email:** [flkinship@yahoo.com](mailto:flkinship@yahoo.com)  
**Service area:** Hillsborough, Polk, Manatee, Highlands, Hardee  
**Description:** Support, information and referral, training, home-visiting, monthly newsletter, and legal hotline.

**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)

Benefits QuickLINK State and Federal Public Benefits	Benefits QuickLINK Public Benefits for Families Raising Children
<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)

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

**Key Public Benefits: Income**

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

**Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)**

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

**Florida Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) Relative Caregiver Program**



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

[www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access/tca.shtml](http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access/tca.shtml)

To apply online – Go to <http://www.myflorida.com/accessflorida/>

#### **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](http://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.

##### **Florida Food Assistance Program**

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

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

[www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access/foodstamps.shtml](http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access/foodstamps.shtml)

To apply online – Go to <http://www.myflorida.com/accessflorida/>

#### **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.

Email: [commissioner@fldoe.org](mailto:commissioner@fldoe.org)

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

### Educational Enrollment

Relative caregivers can contact their local school district's administrative office or their local school to find out how to register the child and what paperwork is needed. Caregivers may need birth records, health records or previous school records. Some states have laws that allow relative caregivers 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.

#### Child Find Services

386-329-3811

Email: [childfind@nefec.org](mailto:childfind@nefec.org)

[www.nefec.org/fdlrs/childfind](http://www.nefec.org/fdlrs/childfind)

#### Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

850-245-0475

Statewide Contacts: Carole West and Cathy Bishop, 850-245-0478

Email: [carole.west@fldoe.org](mailto:carole.west@fldoe.org) and [cathy.bishop@fldoe.org](mailto:cathy.bishop@fldoe.org)

[www.fldoe.org/ese](http://www.fldoe.org/ese)

**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.aspx](http://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](http://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/](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.

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

## State Laws

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



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### **Data Sources:**

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