



GRANDFAMILIES IN GEORGIA CHALLENGES AND HOPE

WHAT IS KINSHIP?

Grandfamilies and Kinship families are used interchangeably to mean families in which grandparents, other relatives such as aunts, uncles, an older sibling, godparents or a close family friend are raising a child for a birth parent. The reasons Grandfamilies may form include parental military deployment, parental substance abuse, incarceration, mental or physical illness, job loss, or death. Whatever the reason, when parents are unable to care for their children, these caregivers often step in at a moment's notice to keep the children within the family.

How Many Children Live in Grandfamilies

Over 7.8 million children in the United States live with a relative who is head of household.

- Over 6 million of these children live with grandparent householders and another 1.8 million live with other relative householders such as aunts, uncles or older sibling.
- About 2.7 million children are being raised by a grandparent, or relative or close family friend and do not have a parent living in the household.

Grandfamilies In Georgia

Georgia has the 6th highest number of children in the United States in Kinship Care.



♥ 288,297 children under the age of 18 live in homes where the householders are grandparents or other relatives.

♥ **218,708** of the children live with grandparents

♥ **69,589** of the children live with other relatives

CHILDREN IN GRANDFAMILIES ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE POORER THAN CHILDREN IN OTHER FAMILIES. THE MEDIAN INCOME FOR A GRANDPARENT HEADED HOUSEHOLD IS \$38,303. WITHOUT TIME TO PLAN, GRANDFAMILY CAREGIVERS TYPICALLY NEED ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO MEET THE CHILDREN'S NEEDS.

CHILDREN IN GRANDFAMILIES ARE ETHNICALLY DIVERSE

- 49.3% are Black or African American
- 38.2% are White
- 7.3% are Hispanic or Latino
- 5.2 % are mixed races



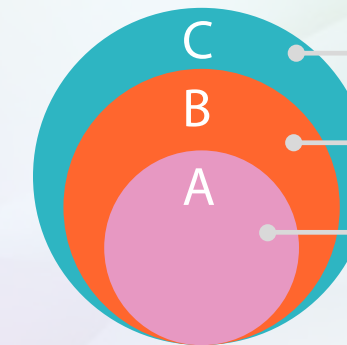
Ethnicity

- Black (49.3%)
- White (38.2%)
- Hispanic or Latino (7.3%)
- Mixed Races (5.2 %)

CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18 IN GRANDFAMILIES

- 38.7% are under age 6
- 34% are ages 6-11
- 27.3% are ages 12-17

Child Age

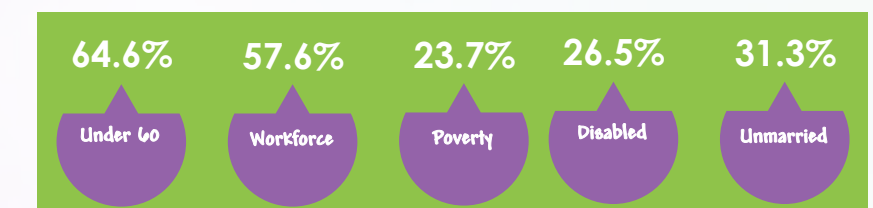


- Under 6 yrs old (38.7%)
- 6-11 yrs old (34%)
- 12-17 yrs old (27.3%)

115,245 GRANDPARENTS ARE HOUSEHOLDERS WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CARE OF THEIR GRANDCHILDREN.

- 64.6% are under age 60
- 57.6% are in the workforce
- 23.7% live in poverty
- 26.5% have a disability
- 31.3% are unmarried

Grandparents



What Challenges Do Grandfamilies Face

Over the past twenty years, available data and research have identified grandfamilies' challenges as well as their strengths. Generations United and its many partners have collectively made great strides in collecting information about grandfamilies. Their challenges are many.

LEGAL

- Unlike parents and children in child welfare cases, relative caregivers are not typically provided free legal counsel.
- Unlike parents, grandfamily caregivers may not have legal rights to the children they are raising without going to court or receiving a power of attorney from the parents or completing an educational consent affidavit.
- Private attorneys may be unaffordable, and other existing legal resources such as legal aid, law school clinics, and lawyers for the elderly may be unknown.
- Opting to raise the children without any legal relationship may severely limit the caregivers' ability to access services on the children's behalf.
- Grandparents or kinship relatives may need to develop a succession plan for raising the child in their care if they are unable to do so because of illness or death.



FINANCIAL

The addition of children in the household typically requires additional income and other resources. Available ongoing assistance to help meet these children's needs is greatly inadequate and inequitable.

- Children in foster care with unrelated caregivers receive a monthly foster care maintenance payment, whereas, most children raised by grandfamily caregivers do not.
- Children in the care of grandfamily caregivers are often referred to child-only Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grants as the only source of ongoing financial support. There are many obstacles to obtaining these grants. If received, they are typically much smaller than foster care maintenance payments and only increase incrementally for each child.
- Children may receive Social Security survivor or disability benefits but that can prevent them from receiving TANF and other public assistance benefits.
- Grandfamilies may need financial assistance for basic needs.

SOCIAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Both the caregiver and the children in these families may face physical and mental health issues to a greater degree than the general population.

- Children being raised by grandparents may exhibit a variety of physical, behavioral, and emotional problems to a greater degree than the general population of children. This is often due to the difficult situations that caused them to be placed in the grandparents' care.
- Grandparent caregivers are often socially isolated from their peers and may have feelings of guilt and shame about their adult children who are unable to parent.
- The caregivers may be experiencing grief because of the loss of the child's parent, expectations for their own retirement, or the cherished role of being a traditional grandparent.
- Grandfamily caregivers are frequently unable to attend to their own healthcare needs due to a lack of daycare, respite care, or adequate health insurance.
- Supportive services such as caregiver empowerment groups, support groups, respite, and counseling to help the families cope with their physical and mental health issues are essential.



EDUCATION

- Children may be denied school enrollment because their grandfamily caregiver does not have guardianship or legal custody.
- Children may need additional educational support through tutoring and other services.

What Does The Research Show

Kinship Care increases child safety, stability, permanence and well-being. The notion that children do better in families is a fundamental value that cuts across racial, ethnic and socioeconomic boundaries.

- Kinship care helps children maintain familial and community bonds and provide them with a sense of stability, identity and belonging especially during times of crisis.
- Kinship care also helps to minimize the trauma and losses that accompany parental separation experienced by the children.

Helping Grandfamilies In Our Local Communities

According to a 2019 Needs Assessment completed by Grandparents and Kinship relatives in Fayette, Coweta and Clayton Counties, local leaders can develop a comprehensive approach to help mitigate the challenges faced by Kinship/Grandfamilies by connecting them to:

- Food and Household Supplies
- Financial Assistance for Basic Needs
- Educational and Technological Support
- Legal Services
- Emotional Support
- Enrichment Opportunities for the Children
- Fun Filled Family Activities
- Transportation



Message to Grandfamilies:

I am a Mother and a Grandmother who raised my grandchild because of the death of her mother.

Over the past five (5) years, I've had the privilege of meeting, working with and serving hundreds of other grandparents and relatives who are raising children because their birth parents are unable to do so. They are all loving, unselfish, and dedicated to doing their best for the child or children in their care.

It takes a lot to raise a child in today's society. The sacrifices and challenges are many but the rewards are great. It is my hope and the hope of Generations Together that the services we provide will uplift the lives of grandfamilies and kinship families by reducing their challenges; help to create a safe, stable, healthy, opportunity-filled home environment for the children in their care; and advocate for others to do the same.



**Family is Everything.
Knowledge is Strength.
Children are our Future.**

Karen Gillespie

Additional Informational Resources

Generations Together Inc. - www.generations-together.com

Grandparents And Kin Raising Children Support Group - www.grandparentsandkin.com

Generations United - www.gu.org

Georgia Kinship Navigator Program - [Kinship Navigator Program](#)

References

Generations United (GU) supports a National Center on Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children which seeks to improve the quality of life of these caregivers and the children they are raising. The website provides information including overviews of current innovative kinship care programs, updates on federal and state legislation, legal options, housing, public benefits, and links to additional kinship care resources.

www.gu.org

www.grandfamilies.org

www.grandfactsheets.org

U.S. Census Bureau "Table S1001" Grandchildren, 2018 ACS-5 Year Survey estimate by state Georgia.

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=S1001&tid=ACSS15Y2018.S1001&vintage=2018&q=0400000US13>

U.S. Census Bureau. "Table S1002" Grandparents, 2018 American Community Survey 5-year Estimate by State Georgia.

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=S1002&tid=ACSS11Y2018.S1002>



This publication was funded by Generations United whose mission is to improve the lives of children, youth and other adults, through intergenerational collaboration, public policies, and programs for the enduring benefit to all.

Share this fact sheet with governmental officials, business leaders, churches and friends. If you are interested in helping to improve the lives of grandfamilies visit our website for more information. www.generations-together.com

If you have any question about this publication or would like more information about grandfamilies/kinship families, please contact:

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