

# 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.

# California

## Grandfamilies Data

**1,152,548**

Children living in homes where a relative is head of household

**263,000**

Children being raised by kin with no parent present

**17,234**

Children in foster care being raised by kin

**235,657**

Grandparents responsible for their grandchildren in California

For every **1** child raised by kin in foster care, there are **14** 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 California living in homes where a relative is head of household, click [here](#). For national data, click [here](#).
- To learn more about children in California being raised by kin with no parent present, click [here](#). For national data, click [here](#).
- To learn more about children in California in foster care being raised by kin, click [here](#). For national data, click [here](#).
- To learn more about grandparents in California 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 California

#### A Greater Hope

**Website:** <https://aghope.org/en/kinship>

**Phone:** 833-947-1347

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

**Service Area:** San Bernardino County High Desert- Hesperia, Oak Hills, Victorville, Adelanto, Apple Valley, Barstow, Yermo, and Daggett areas

**Description:** Kinship Support Service Program that offers monthly classes, training, and events.

#### Alliance for Children's Rights

**Website:** <https://allianceforchildrensrights.org/>

**Phone:** 213-368-6010

**Email:** [info@kids-alliance.org](mailto:info@kids-alliance.org)

**Service Area:** Los Angeles County

**Description:** Legal services and advocacy for children in poverty and in foster care; assists relative and non-relative caregivers and foster parents with services that include guardianship, adoption, public benefits, healthcare, and education advocacy.

#### Alliance of Relative Caregivers (ARC)

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

**Phone:** 818-789-1177; or 818-203-2763

**Email:** [Support@allianceofrelativecaregivers.org](mailto:Support@allianceofrelativecaregivers.org)

**Service Area:** Los Angeles County; virtual services available state and nationwide

**Description:** Provides weekly support and education groups for all relative caregivers in various locations in LA County. In addition, provides advocacy, information, resources, referrals, crisis intervention and family recreational activities. Assists relative caregivers with navigation services in court. Can help with basic needs and well as mental health needs. All services are free of charge.

#### **BANANAS, Inc.**

**Website:** <http://bananasbunch.org/>

**Phone:** 510-658-7353

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

**Service Area:** Northern Alameda County (based in Oakland)

**Description:** Childcare information, support groups, and agency referral.

#### **Bet Tzedek- Services for Seniors, Child Guardians and Adult Conservators**

**Website:** <https://www.bettzedek.org/our-services/justiceforseniors/>

**Phone:** 323-939-0506

**Service Area:** Los Angeles

**Description:** Helps grandparents and other relatives legally step up for the children they are raising. Bet Tzedek works with caregivers to keep kids with family and out of foster care, homeless shelters, and deportation proceedings.

#### **California Community Colleges, Foster and Kinship Care Education Program**

**Website:** <https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Educational-Services-and-Support/Student-Service/What-we-do/Foster-and-Kinship-Care-Education>

**Phone:** 916-445-8752

**Email:** [FKCEhelp@cccco.edu](mailto:FKCEhelp@cccco.edu)

**Service Area:** 57 participating community colleges throughout the state

**Description:** Resource parents' pre-approval and annual training

#### **California Department of Social Services – Approved Relative Caregiver (ARC) Program**

**Website:** [www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/foster-care/approved-relative-care](http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/foster-care/approved-relative-care)

**Phone:** 916-651-7465, or go to [www.cdss.ca.gov/County-Offices](http://www.cdss.ca.gov/County-Offices) to find your county contact information.

**Service Area:** Statewide

**Description:** Monthly payments equal to the state foster care rate for approved relative caregivers of eligible foster children. Participation the program is optional for states, and you should contact your local Department of Social Services to see if your county offers ARC.

#### **California Department of Social Services - Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care (AFDC-FC)**

**Website:** [www.cdss.ca.gov](http://www.cdss.ca.gov)

**Phone:** 1-877-846-1602, or go to [www.cdss.ca.gov/County-Offices](http://www.cdss.ca.gov/County-Offices) to find your county contact information.

**Email:** [fosterfamilyhelp@dss.ca.gov](mailto:fosterfamilyhelp@dss.ca.gov)

**Service Area:** Statewide

**Description:** Monthly payments equal to the state foster care rate for eligible children.

### **California Family Life Center (CFLC) – Kin Care**

**Website:** [www.cflckids.org/kin-care](http://www.cflckids.org/kin-care)

**Phone:** 951-791-3587

**Email:** [kwilliams@clfkids.org](mailto:kwilliams@clfkids.org)

**Service area:** Riverside County

**Description:** Permanency planning, links to legal services, advocacy, needs assessment, parenting and teen workshops, referrals and case management for families exiting foster care and moving into guardianship (KinGAP), kin adoption assistance, respite, tutoring, counseling, preschool in a box, support groups, and recreational activities.

### **Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County – Kinship Care Resource Center**

**Website:** <https://www.catholiccharitiesscc.org/kinship-resource-center?rq=kinship&locale=en>

**Phone:** 408-200-0980

**Email:** [doris@catholiccharitiesscc.org](mailto:doris@catholiccharitiesscc.org)

**Service Area:** Santa Clara County

**Description:** Case management, support groups, educational seminars recreation activities, information and referrals, and guidance with guardianships.

### **Edgewood Center for Children and Families- Kinship Support Program**

**Website:** [www.edgewood.org/kinship-support/](http://www.edgewood.org/kinship-support/)

**Contact:** Cynthia Green, Director of Kinship

**Phone:** 415-682-3242

**Email:** [CynthiaG@edgewood.org](mailto:CynthiaG@edgewood.org)

**Service Area:** San Francisco and San Mateo Counties

**Description:** Case management, parenting and educational workshops, food and supplies, independent living skills and classes, family activities and celebrations, wellness activities for caregivers, referrals to Edgewood's Outpatient Mental Health Services Program, and caregiver support groups in multiple languages.

### **Kids & Families Together**

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

**Phone:** 805-643-1446

**Email:** [connect@kidsandfamilies.org](mailto:connect@kidsandfamilies.org)

**Service area:** Ventura County

**Description:** Offering clinical counseling and education support services to families that have come together through foster/resource family, kinship, legal guardianship and adoption. Services include: therapeutic counseling, pre-service training for prospective resource parents, mentor program-

peer partner and educator, referrals-donations depots, housing assistance, caregiver training workshops and community events.

### Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles

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

**Phone:** 800-399-4529

**Service Area:** Los Angeles County

**Description:** Direct legal representation for caregivers in benefits cases, including foster care benefits, KinGAP benefits, and Social Security benefits.

### Legal Assistance for Seniors

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

**Phone:** 510-832-3040

**Email:** [las@lashicap.org](mailto:las@lashicap.org)

**Service Area:** Alameda County

**Description:** Legal advice and representation to assist with guardianship petitions for seniors who are caring for minor children. Also assist with elder abuse restraining orders, naturalization, and public benefits. Our attorneys are court-appointed to represent proposed conservatees in conservatorship cases. Also provide health insurance counseling, and community education.

### Lilliput Children's Services- Kinship Support Services Program (KSSP)

**Website:** [www.lilliput.org/parents/kinship-services](http://www.lilliput.org/parents/kinship-services)

**Phone:** 855-912-2622; 916-923-5444

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

**Service Area:** Butte, Contra Costa, Napa, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin and Sonoma Counties

**Description:** In-home support, counseling, support groups, respite resources, advocacy, information and referrals, legal referrals, guardianship workshops and adoption assistance, family activities, play care, mentoring, and assistance with basic emergency needs.

### Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services – Relative Caregiver Resources

**Website:** [dcfs.lacounty.gov/caregivers/relative-caregivers/](http://dcfs.lacounty.gov/caregivers/relative-caregivers/)

**Phone:** 626-430-3200 (Kinship Resource Center); 800-697-4444 (Resource Family Helpline)

**Email:** [FCHL@dcfs.lacounty.gov](mailto:FCHL@dcfs.lacounty.gov)

**Service Area:** Los Angeles County

**Description:** Explains the process of having a relative's child placed in your home. Details available financial and support services available to kinship caregivers in LA County. Includes a list of support and advocacy groups for relative caregivers.

### Napa/Solano Area Agency on Aging

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

**Phone:** 707-784-8960

**Service Area:** Napa and Solano Counties

**Description:** Information and referral, assessment and case management and transportation, counseling, support groups, caregiver training, respite care and supplemental services.

### **Nevada County Superintendent of Schools- Foster Kinship Care Education (FKCE)**

**Website:** [www.nevco.org/foster-youth-services/foster-kinship-care-education-fkce](http://www.nevco.org/foster-youth-services/foster-kinship-care-education-fkce)

**Contact:** Melissa Balderston

**Phone:** 530-478-6400, Extension 2020

**Email:** [mbalderston@nevco.org](mailto:mbalderston@nevco.org)

**Service Area:** Nevada County

**Description:** Offers education and support opportunities for caregivers of children and youth in foster and kinship care to learn how they can meet their children's educational, emotional, behavioral and developmental needs.

### **ONEgeneration Grandparents as Parents**

**Website:** [www.onegeneration.org/seniors/grandparents-as-parents/](http://www.onegeneration.org/seniors/grandparents-as-parents/)

**Phone:** 818-264-0880

**Email:** [gap@onegeneration.org](mailto:gap@onegeneration.org)

**Service Area:** Los Angeles County

**Description:** Kinship Support resource meetings, Child Court navigation, DCFS advocacy, family events, baby/kids' items & clothing, groceries.

### **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:** Corona, El Cajon, Oceanside, Palm Springs, San Jose, South Lake Tahoe and Yuba City

**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.

### **Partners for Children South L.A.- Kinship Project**

**Website:** <https://partners4childrensla.org/our-model/system-of-care/>

**Contact:** Jennifer Lara

**Phone:** 323-387-8717

**Email:** [jlara@partners4childrensla.org](mailto:jlara@partners4childrensla.org)

**Service Area:** South Los Angeles

**Description:** Provides 6 peer support groups to relative caregivers who are in need of social connection, services, training, respite, special projects and more.

### Senior Legal Hotline of Legal Services of California

**Website:** <https://lsnc.net/slh>

**Phone:** 1-800-222-1753 (toll-free), Sacramento County: 916-551-2140

**Service Area:** Northern California- Sacramento, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sierra, Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Plumas, Del Norte, Humboldt, Trinity, Lassen, Modoc, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, Lake, Mendocino, Solano and Yolo County.

**Description:** Legal advice by phone or email about guardianship petitions for people over 60 or low-income residents of Northern California.

### Westside Christian Center- Westside Kinship Support Program

**Website:** <http://www.westsidechristiancenter.net/>

**Phone:** 909-889-5757

**Service Area:** San Bernardino County

**Description:** Goal of program is to provide a safe, nourishing environment that educates and encourages caregivers and to develop support systems that will promote their endeavor to provide a stable home for the young lives in their care. Support Groups are held weekly on Tuesday mornings at 10:00 am. Respite Breakfast for the caregivers (adults only) takes place at a local restaurant the second Tuesday of each month. Evening Support Groups are held on Thursday evenings at 6:00 pm. We offer fun and educational activities (field trips) for youth and independent living skills for teens.

## 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)

[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.

#### California's CalWORKS Program

California Department of Social Services

916-657-2128

Email: [piar@dss.ca.gov](mailto:piar@dss.ca.gov)

[www.cdss.ca.gov/calworks](http://www.cdss.ca.gov/calworks)



To apply online – Go to [www.benefitscal.org/](http://www.benefitscal.org/).

**PLEASE NOTE:** In California, relatives caring for children in foster care should not rely on TANF, but instead get full foster care payments through California Department of Social Services – Approved Relative Caregiver (ARC) Program and Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care (AFDC-FC). Please see above under “key programs” for information about those two programs.

### **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/](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.

#### **CalFresh Program**

California Department of Social Services

916-657-2128

Email: [piar@dss.ca.gov](mailto:piar@dss.ca.gov)

[www.cdss.ca.gov/calfresh](http://www.cdss.ca.gov/calfresh)

To apply online – Go to [www.benefitscal.org/](http://www.benefitscal.org/).

### **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.

#### **Medi-Cal**

California Department of Health Care Services  
[www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medi-cal/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medi-cal/Pages/default.aspx)

To apply online – Go to [www.benefitscal.org/](http://www.benefitscal.org/)

### **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.

California has such a law, and your “caregiver’s affidavit” form can be found here:  
[allianceforchildrensrights.org/resources/caregivers-affidavit/](http://allianceforchildrensrights.org/resources/caregivers-affidavit/)

### **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)

**California Department of Education**

916-319-0800

[www.cde.ca.gov/](http://www.cde.ca.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](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.

**California Department of Education, Special Education**

916-319-0800

[www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/)**Early Start**

California Department of Developmental Services

800-515-2229

[earlystart@dds.ca.gov](mailto:earlystart@dds.ca.gov)[www.dds.ca.gov/services/early-start/](http://www.dds.ca.gov/services/early-start/)

**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-** California has an approved Title IV-E Guardian Assistance Program (Kin-GAP) [cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/foster-care/kinship-guardianship-assistance](https://cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/foster-care/kinship-guardianship-assistance)

## 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).

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