

# GRANDFAMILIES & KINSHIP SUPPORT NETWORK

A National Technical Assistance Center



## KINSHIP MATTERS TO

## EDUCATION

### INTRODUCTION TO KINSHIP FAMILIES & GRANDFAMILIES

Kinship families, also known as grandfamilies, are families in which grandparents, other relatives, or close family friends are raising children whose parents are unable to do so. Your school, district, agency, organization, or program likely already serves kinship/grandfamilies yet may not provide tailored services specifically for them.



**Over 2.4 million children** in the U.S. are being raised by their grandparents, other relatives, or close family friends



**For every 1 child** being raised by kin in foster care, there are **18 children** being raised by kin outside of foster care



**An average of 15 children** in each K-12 public school in the U.S. are being raised in kinship/grandfamilies

Being part of a kinship family benefits both kin caregivers and the children in their care. Compared to children living in foster care with non-relatives, children with relatives experience **greater safety, stability, and well-being**. Kin caregivers report feelings of **satisfaction, pride, and meaning in their role**. However, these caregivers also face an array of challenges. They may lose their peer group; feel socially isolated; and/or experience guilt, deep concern, and/or grief related to their own adult child or relative who cannot parent. These emotional challenges are compounded by the stress of needing to meet the child's basic needs, including their education and health care, all without the automatic legal authority that parents have.

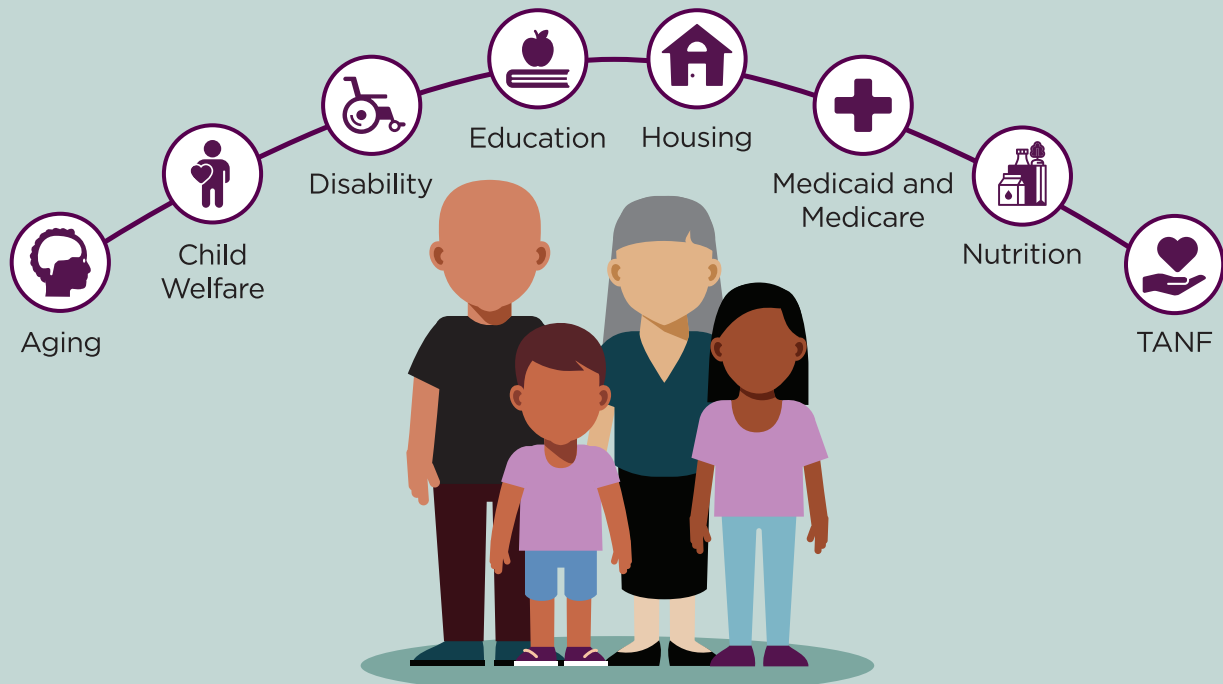


## KINSHIP/GRANDFAMILIES AND THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Kinship/grandfamilies often form unexpectedly and in times of crisis. This sudden transition can disrupt a child's education. Caregivers who do not have a legal relationship to or legal authority over the child may be unable to enroll the child in school or sign forms for them, preventing them from accessing school or important supplemental programs. **By taking steps to identify these families, schools and educational programs can provide supports that improve children's educational outcomes.**

## KINSHIP/GRANDFAMILIES INTERACT WITH MANY SYSTEMS

In addition to schools and educational programs, kinship/grandfamilies interact with many other systems, including aging, child welfare, disability services, housing, Medicaid/Medicare, nutrition providers, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Dealing with multiple systems is time-consuming and emotionally draining. Schools and educational programs can help by facilitating/participating in cross-system collaboration and coordination and by supporting individual families as they navigate this challenging landscape.





## PROGRAM EXAMPLES

The KIN-TECH Kinship Navigator Practice Model in Florida coordinates the Kinship Community Collaborative, a multisystem, multisector partnership that includes schools and meets monthly to support the kinship navigation work in the community.

In Kentucky, Family Resource Centers are school-based Family Resource and Youth Service Centers. School-based FRCs are a great resource for all families – including kinship families – to access concrete goods and services in a convenient, familiar environment.

The Virginia Family Engagement Network and Formed Families Forward provide Virginia schools with a form to ask kin caregivers about how to support them and the children they are raising. They also offer a checklist and resource list for kinship families working with the schools.

To learn more about these and other examples, check out our education toolkit, **Five Actions for Supporting Students and Caregivers in Kinship/Grandfamilies**.

## THE GRANDFAMILIES & KINSHIP SUPPORT NETWORK CAN HELP

The Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network offers **no-cost assistance** to state, tribal, and territorial government agencies and community-based organizations to empower them to better serve kinship/grandfamilies. Access tip sheets, reports, webinar recordings, and more, all free of charge, on our **website**.



Sign up at [GKSNetwork.org](https://GKSNetwork.org) to receive our monthly newsletter, which contains the latest resources and information from the Network and around the field.

# GRANDFAMILIES & KINSHIP SUPPORT NETWORK

A National Technical Assistance Center



[GKSNetwork.org](https://GKSNetwork.org)

Sign up for our newsletter here:



The Network is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$9,950,000 with 95 percentage funded by ACL/HHS and \$523,684 and 5 percentage funded by non-government sources. The contents are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

The Network is a project of Generations United.

**generations  
united**<sup>®</sup>

Because we're stronger together<sup>®</sup>