

Children Thrive in Grandfamilies

Compared to children in non-relative care, children in the care of relatives experience:

- **Increased Stability**
 - Fewer placement changesⁱ
 - Fewer school changesⁱⁱ
- **Higher Levels of Permanency**
 - Less likely to re-enter the foster care system after returning to birth parentsⁱⁱⁱ
 - Relatives are willing to adopt or become permanent guardians when reunification with parents is not possible. In fact, 32% of children adopted from foster care are adopted by relatives.^{iv}
- **Greater Safety^v**
- **Better Behavioral and Mental Health Outcomes^{vi}**
- **More Positive Feelings About Placements^{vii}**
 - More likely to want current placement to be permanent home
 - Less likely to try to run away
 - More likely to like who they live with (93% vs. 79% for non-relative foster care, 51% for group care)
 - More likely to report they “always felt loved”^{viii}
- **Increased Likelihood of Living With or Staying Connected to Siblings^{ix}**
- **Greater Preservation of Cultural Identity and Community Connections^x**

It's Hard for Grandfamilies to Get Help

Due to the difficult and unexpected circumstances that lead children to be removed from their parents' care, children and caregivers in grandfamilies face greater health, mental health, social and financial challenges than those in the general population.^{xi} It can be difficult for families to get the help they need:

- Less than half receive SNAP (Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program/formerly the Food Stamp Program) or Medicaid, despite need and eligibility^{xii}
- Only 17% of working caregivers receive child care assistance^{xiii}
- Only 15% of low-income caregivers receive housing assistance^{xiv}
- Less than 12% of caregivers receive TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) support^{xv}
- Limited access to mental health services for depression, stress, behavioral or emotional issues because of stigma, accessibility, lack of information about grandfamilies and cost of services (acceptance of caregiver insurance/payment options)^{xvi}
- Unique challenges faced by caregivers in rural areas with limited access to supportive services^{xvii}

Supporting Grandfamilies Helps Children Thrive More

Research shows that when caregivers in grandfamilies are offered supportive services, such as kinship navigator programs that offer them a single point of entry for learning about housing, health services, and financial and legal assistance, along with improved household resources^{xviii} and access to mental health services, the social and mental health outcomes for these children are even better^{xix} than for other children being raised by relatives not receiving services.

For more information, contact Jaia Peterson Lent at jlent@gu.org or visit www.gu.org

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