

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

STATISTICS

In the United States about 4.5 million children or 1 in 12 are living with families headed by grandparents or other relatives. According to AARP, Missouri has 96,000 children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives. The U. S. Census Bureau reports that 2.4 million grandparents reported that they are responsible for grandchildren under age of 18. Between 1980-1994 there has been a seventy percent (70%) increase in children living in grandparent headed households.

Why are these families in these situations? Reasons are numerous...and include but not limited to a death of the parent(s), parent(s) are not mentally competent to raise a child, parent(s) have become involved with drugs, parent(s) are abusive to or abandon the child.

SPECIAL ISSUES

These families face legal issues, financial issues, and suffer grief/loss. They become scattered families and new grand families. Mental health issues arise for the grandchildren and the grandparents. Age and health of the grandparent(s) also becomes an issue.

How can these families be helped? Throughout the state, educational programs and support groups are being formed to work with families facing parenting the second time around.

WHY A SUPPORT GROUP?

Support groups offer a safe place for caregivers to come and share their feelings and experiences. Families could gain encouragement and information. Research has shown that support groups meet the educational, social, and emotional needs of grandparents. Support groups also improve the life situation of its support group members.

HOW CAN MAFCE HELP?

When the educational meetings are held or the support groups meet, MAFCE members are available to provide **educational lessons**. MAFCE can **provide care** for the children. Some families may not be able to attend unless there is care available for their grandchildren. MAFCE members can also offer to **provide refreshments** or a meal for the meetings depending on the time the program meets. For the support program to succeed, participants need to be contacted the day before the meeting to remind them of the meeting. MAFCE members could be **beneficial in providing support**. In Butler County, MAFCE members provided wrapped Christmas presents for the grandparents support group's children.

For more information on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren educational workshops and support groups, contact your local University of Missouri Extension Center. Other contacts include: Phyllis Flanigan and Mary Gosche, Human Development Specialists for the University of Missouri Extension in Southeast Missouri. They have formed support groups in their region.

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RESOURCES:

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (U. S. Administration on Aging)

http://www.aoa.gov/press/nfc_month/2004/fact%20sheet%20-%20tips%20for%20grandparents%20in%20template%20a.pdf

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (U. S. Administration on Aging)

AARP

www.aarp.org

U. S. Census Bureau

[http://ask.census.gov/cgi-](http://ask.census.gov/cgi-bin/askcensus.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=295&p_created=1077904318&p_si)

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Grandparents Living with Grandchildren: 2000

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