

Monthly Resource: April 2023

Becoming a Grandfamily: First Steps

Everything, everywhere, all at once. Assuming the care of a grandchild or other young relative can feel overwhelming. Most caregivers take on a child's care without child welfare agency involvement. If that's you, here are the first steps to think about and where to go for help.

Find the support you need and deserve.

Laws and resources for grandfamilies are different depending on where you live. Find information for your community in the [GrandFacts fact sheet](#) for your state, tribe, or territory.

See if your area has a [kinship navigator program](#). These programs connect grandfamilies with resources.

Other kinship caregivers can be a great source of information. Look for a **kinship or grandfamily support group** in your area. Mental health organizations may house these support groups.

Get paperwork that shows your legal relationship to the child.

If possible, coordinate with the child's parents to get the child's **Social Security number** and a "[power of attorney](#)" signed by the parents that spells out your role.

For a more permanent option, ask the courts to award you [legal custody or guardianship](#) of the child.

Find financial help.

Apply for [TANF](#) (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families). TANF usually provides help to low-income families. If your income is too high to qualify, ask about **child-only TANF**.

See if your family qualifies for food programs like [SNAP](#) and [WIC](#).

Use the [GrandFacts](#) fact sheets to find financial supports where you live.

Prepare for health care needs.

If the child needs health insurance, look into [Medicaid](#) and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

If the child has health insurance, see about getting their insurance number/card.

Get the legal paperwork needed to oversee the child's health care. It could be a power of attorney, guardianship/legal custody, or [a simple authorization form](#) if one exists in your state.

Enroll the child in school.

Make sure you have the [paperwork needed for school enrollment](#). If you aren't sure what's needed, you can call the school and ask. The district's McKinney-Vento program might help.

If you have [concerns about disabilities or developmental delays](#), call your school district's Special Education office and ask for the [Child Find](#) program.

Technical Assistance Tip for Professionals Working with Kinship/Grandfamilies:

Share both this resource and the [GrandFacts](#) fact sheet for your jurisdiction with the families you serve to help them connect with kinship navigators and other programs and supports.

The Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network: A National Technical Assistance Center (Network) helps government agencies and nonprofits in states, tribes, and territories work across jurisdictional and systemic boundaries to improve supports and services for families in which grandparents, other relatives, or close family friends are raising children whose parents are unable to do so. For more information, please visit www.GKSNetwork.org.

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