



# Starting Points *for* Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

**A Resource Guide with Information and  
Services for Grandparent Caregivers**

Illinois Department on Aging

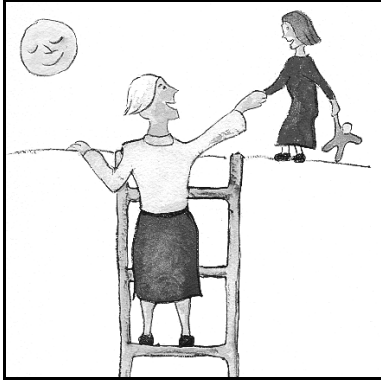
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# A Message from Director Margo E. Schreiber



Grandparents have always been a vital part of the family. Not only are they family historians, they are often a parent’s first contact when it comes to child-rearing advice or babysitting needs. A grandparent is also a grandchild’s best friend—sharing adventures, secrets and stories—and giving gifts simply for the fun of it. This is the role grandparents seem to enjoy most. There are many grandparents, however, who find themselves in a new role that is perhaps more vital than ever before—the role of raising their grandchildren.

In Illinois, as well as the rest of the nation, grandparents in record numbers are courageously taking on this responsibility due to unforeseen circumstances. Reasons may relate to parental drug and alcohol abuse, abandonment, incarceration, mental illness, unemployment, divorce, death and a host of others. Whatever the case, grandparents who are facing the challenge of raising grandchildren are found in every social, racial, geographic and economic stratum.

While individual grandparent needs and caregiving situations vary, there seems to be a universal need for resource information. Some grandparents need help with legal and financial matters or want to know more about schools and day care. Others need help dealing with the emotional ups and downs of parenting the second time around.

This guide will hopefully offer some starting points for grandparent caregivers who need a helping hand. Their journey is not an easy one, but they should take great pride and comfort in knowing they have become “silent saviours” to their beloved grandchildren.



# Purpose of this Guide

Attempting to find services and resources can be a long, frustrating process even for those who work in or are familiar with the social service delivery system. For the majority of people the task of finding help can sometimes seem overwhelming. Sometimes determining where to begin can be the most difficult and time-consuming task of all.

The purpose of this resource guide is to give grandparents raising

grandchildren a quick overview of services, programs, and general “starting points” to get needed assistance. The guide also provides tips and general information that grandparents may want to consider as they courageously take on the responsibility of raising their grandchildren.

Note: This guide is by no means an exhaustive listing of all agencies and services available to

grandparents raising grandchildren. We attempted to list resources and services that are statewide and that serve as clearinghouses for further referrals— starting points. If you know of valuable services that are statewide and benefit grandparents raising grandchildren, please let us know.

# How to Use this Guide

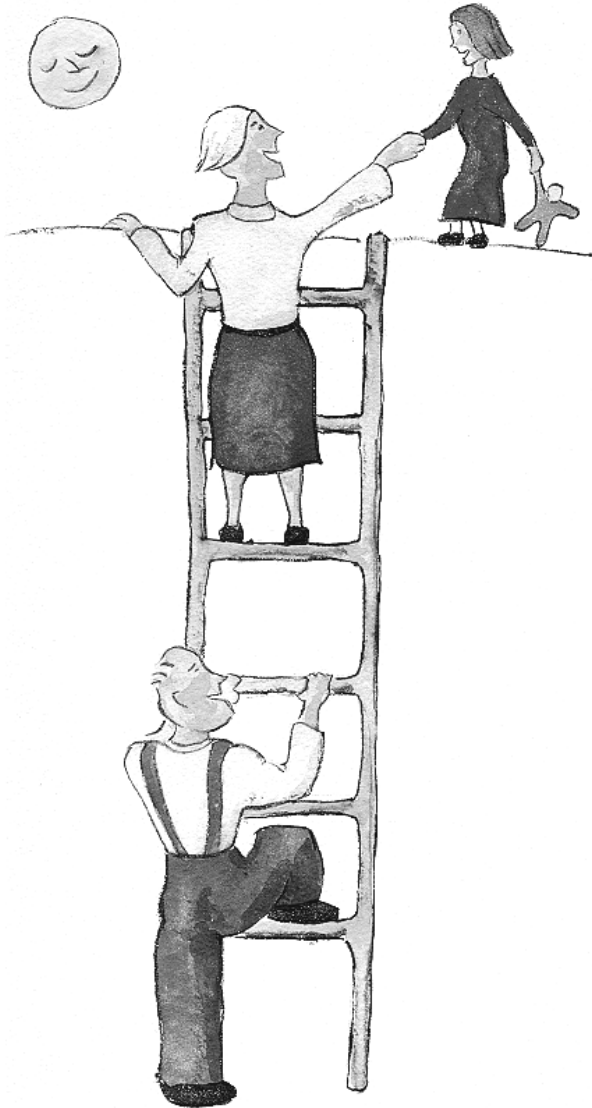
This guide has been divided into sections. The guide begins with emotional ups and downs that are often common experiences associated with being a grandparent caregiver. In the first section you will find general information on developmental, health and safety needs. The second section provides information on child care, school and educational needs. The third section offers information on challenges facing today’s children. The fourth section contains information on obtaining needed documents, as well as general assistance regarding financial assistance, food, and medical care, and custody and legal issues. The last section of the guide offers suggestions for coping, including information on support groups. For ease and readability, we have used the following symbols throughout the guide:



*for phone numbers to call for help*



*for ideas, tips and information*



## Emotional Ups...

**Faith** that your grandchildren's lives will be stable and sound

**Satisfaction** in knowing you are making a better life for your grandchildren

**Comfort** in knowing your grandchildren are safe with you

**Gratification** in knowing you are making a difference in your grandchildren's lives

**Patience** to cope with yourself and your grandchildren

**Courage** to take on the responsibility of parenting (and it is a big responsibility)

**Inspiration** that comes from hearing your grandchildren say, "I love you"

**Gain** in personal satisfaction knowing you are strong enough for this task

**Sense of Order** when things go right

**Happiness** that you made it through another day

**Pride** in yourself and your grandchildren for persevering through tough times

**Compassion** in your relationships with your grandchildren, their friends and others

**Hope** that the situation will get

## and Downs that You May Encounter:

**Denial** of the current situation—unrealistic expectations that the parents will become responsible

**Fear** of how you will be able to financially and emotionally care for your grandchildren

**Guilt** thinking you should have or could have done things differently with your own child

**Anger** at your child for abandoning or not being a responsible parent

**Sacrifice** in order to keep your family together

**Loss** of the grandparent-grandchild relationship, as well as peer contacts

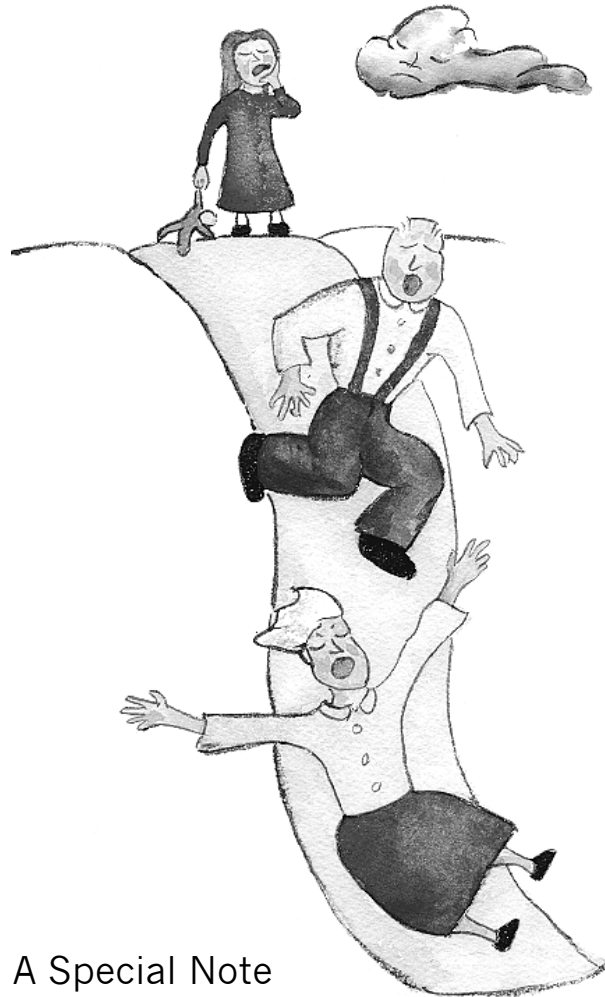
**Frustration** when things don't go as planned

**Sadness** at the loss of a child and of the typical grandparent role

**Dissappointment** in not being able to do the things you wanted at this stage in your life

**Confusion** in understanding the issues facing today's children

**Embarrassment** at having to ask for assistance for raising your "new family," and asking yourself,



### A Special Note to Grandparents:

Do any of these emotions sound familiar? If so, you are not alone. Grandparents raising their grandchildren experience all kinds of emotional ups and downs. The emotions listed above (and many more) represent the feelings of grandparents who are confronted with the challenge of raising their children's children. Parenting is a difficult, emotional job even in the best of situations. Remember to take a moment now and then to commend yourself for what you are doing—making a difference in your grandchild's life by giving her or him the chance to be a safe, loved and nurtured child.



# Child Development, Health & Safety Needs

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**Wanda never thought much about when children should begin doing key developmental tasks, such as pulling themselves up, crawling, walking and talking. After all, she had made the decision not to have children of her own. Her husband, Jim, had children from a previous marriage and suffered from medical problems. Now, at 40 years of age, Wanda cares for Jim and raises her**

Wanda's situation is not unusual. Many grandparents raising their grandchildren are concerned they lack the

knowledge and ability it takes to raise a child. Some grandparents (and relative caregivers) may be

parenting for the first time in their lives. Others may have been away from the role of parent for so long that they do not remember or simply do not know the latest "ins and outs" of parenting today. And, things change—new technologies, ideas and practices affect the ways we raise and care for our children.

## Child Development

- Children are unique individuals. They think, look, act and grow in different ways. This is part of what makes them so special. The Ages and Expectations chart (next page) has been developed to give examples of what you might expect at certain ages. Talk to your medical professional about your grandchild's development.

- Children may have been exposed to emotional or physical traumas, or prenatal conditions that could make their development and behavioral patterns different from other children their own age.



| Ages | Expectations   |
|------|--|
| 1    | <i>plays games like patty cake and peek-a-boo, sits up without support, pulls into a standing position, feeds self finger foods, knows own name and repeats sounds</i> |
| 2    | <i>makes 2-word sentences, walks alone, eats with a spoon, names toys and people, recognizes self in mirror, can point and name ears, eyes, nose</i>                   |
| 3    | <i>toilet training, plays simple games, counts out loud on fingers, rides a tricycle</i>   |
| 4    | <i>begins thinking in an organized manner, knows about 1,000 words</i>   |
| 5    | <i>plays logically, able to perform activities in sequential order</i>   |
| 6    | <i>able to learn and recognize differences between right and wrong</i>   |
| 7    | <i>able to concentrate well on tasks at hand, often self-absorbed to the point of appearing withdrawn, shows sensitivity to others</i>                                 |
| 8    | <i>curious about all things they are learning - including sexuality, high energy, and often act impulsively</i>  |
| 9    | <i>acts with independence, likes to learn facts, rules and standards, takes on more responsibility and engages in chores around the house</i>                          |

Sources: *Grandparents Guide: Helping to raise your children's children, Phoenix, AZ.*  
*Second Time Around. Kalamazoo, MI.*



For more information on child development, health and medical needs for children, call the Illinois Department of Public Health

## Special Needs and At Risk Children

**Ray's heart felt heavy as he waited for the assessment report on his grandson. Nathan was only 6 years old and had already lived a tough life. His mother was in jail, and his father was no where to be found. Ray had hoped the boy would "settle down" by the time he started school. When this didn't happen, he knew he**

risk. Prenatal (and often environmental) exposure to harmful substances and behaviors can result in the child being deprived of certain age-appropriate development steps.

Children with special needs include those with physical or mental disabilities, emotional or behavioral problems, or are

considered at-risk for developing disabilities. Children who had prenatal exposure to drugs and alcohol are considered at-

If you are concerned about your grandchild's development or are raising a child who has a disability, there are programs that can

help you. Also, schools are a valuable resource for children with special needs. Children who have disabilities are mainstreamed into most classrooms. Ask about available programs at your grandchild's school.

### Early Intervention Services

Early intervention is for families with infants or toddlers ages birth through 2 years old who have concerns about how their



child is developing. If you are concerned about

grandchild's walking, talking, crawling, understanding, seeing or hearing, you will want to find out more about early intervention assessment and services. For more information on Early Intervention Services, contact Child & Family Connections at 1-888-217-3505.

Illinois Parent

### Training and Information Centers

Parent Training and Information Centers serve Illinois families with



children ages 0-21 years of age. Primary focus is on disabilities

and school inclusion. The centers provide resources, referrals, training classes and advocacy to parents and children. Call Family T.I.E.S. Network at 1-800-865-7842, TDD 1-800-544-5809.

### Helpful Resources for General Information on Raising Children Include:

Doctors. Contact your grandchild's pediatrician or clinic to locate other valuable resources and referrals.



rearing. Call your local hospitals to find out if they offer such programs, and if so, request to be put on their mailing list..

Hospitals. Many hospitals sponsor programs and activities regarding child development and child

Libraries. Libraries are a great source for parenting books and materials. There

are many good books, video tapes and guides that can help answer your questions. For instance, you may want to check out *Dr. Benjamin Spock's Guide to Baby and Child Care* and others as a quick and easy-to-use reference.



For general parenting tips, support and referrals, call the Parent Help Line at 1-888-

## Immunizations

Your grandchild not only needs immunization so that she or he is protected from disease, but also because it is required by schools and many day care centers for enrollment.

### Immunization Schedule

| Age                   | Immunizations                    | Provider/Date |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| <i>Newborn</i>        | <i>Hepatitis B</i>               |               |
| <i>2 months old</i>   | <i>DPT, POV, and HIB</i>         |               |
| <i>4 months old</i>   | <i>DPT, OPV, and HIB</i>         |               |
| <i>6 months old</i>   | <i>DPT and HIB</i>               |               |
| <i>15 months old</i>  | <i>MMR and HIB</i>               |               |
| <i>18 months old</i>  | <i>DPT and OPV</i>               |               |
| <i>4-6 year</i>       | <i>DPT and OPV</i>               |               |
| <i>5-18 years</i>     | <i>MMR</i>                       |               |
| <i>Every 10 years</i> | <i>Adult tetanus, Diphtheria</i> |               |

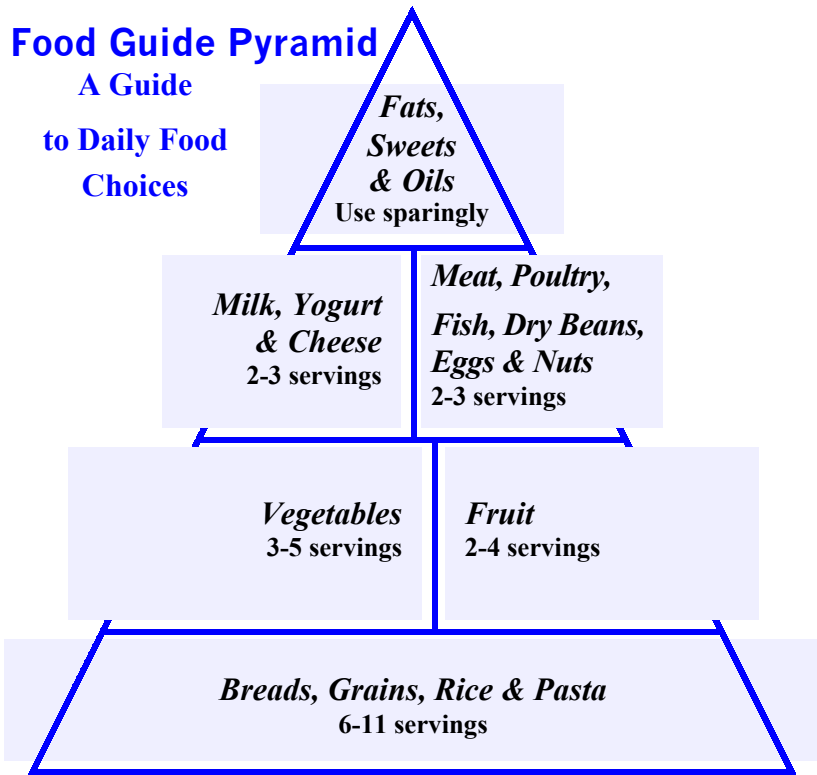


For information on immunizations and programs in your area that offer free or low-cost immunizations, call the Department of Public Health at 1-800-323-4769.

# Healthy Eating Habits

Children learn from adults. If you practice good, healthy eating habits—chances are your grandchildren will too. The food guide pyramid can be used to ensure that your grandchildren are eating a variety of foods and getting an adequate supply of vitamins and nutrients for growth and health.

Remember: Quality rather than quantity of food is the important factor for meeting your grandchildren’s nutritional needs.



## Tips for Healthy Eating

- ✍ Establish a consistent eating routine.
- ➊ Keep healthy snacks handy for your grandchild.
- ✍ Avoid eating too much junk food and sweets.
- ➋ Avoid foods high in fat and cholesterol.
- ➌ Read food labels carefully.

## Programs that May Be Able to Help You with Nutrition and Food:

### Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants & Children (WIC)

- Provides nutrition education, counseling and food vouchers to mothers, babies and children who qualify.

- Grandparent caregivers can apply for this service for their grandchildren.

- Program participation is based on income, child’s age and medial or health risk.



For information on WIC services and the nearest agency, contact the Illinois Department of Public Health at 1-800-323-4769.



### Food Stamps

- Provides qualifying families with assistance in purchasing food.
- Food stamps are issued monthly via an I-LINK card and can be used at most grocery stores.



For guidelines, eligibility, information and where to apply for the Food Stamp

Program, contact the Illinois Department of Human Services at 1-800-252-8635.

### Emergency Food Assistance



There is a variety of emergency food assistance services located throughout the State. If you are in need of food, Contact the Illinois Hunger Coalition, at 1-800-359-2163, for the nearest food assistance location.



Other Helpful Resources for obtaining information regarding food, special diets and eating healthy include: your local county extension service offices, hospitals, schools, local health department.

# Dental Needs

Your grandchildren's teeth are important. They help children stay healthy by allowing them to chew foods properly. In the past dental extraction was a common cure for dental problems. Now there are treatments that make pulling teeth almost an obsolete practice. Talk to your dentist to establish a healthy plan for keeping your grandchild's teeth healthy

## Here Are Some Tips on Keeping Your Grandchildren's Teeth Healthy:

*(Sources: American Association of Pediatric Dentistry, National Institute of Dental Research)*

and strong.

- Did you know that even infants need dental care? Good dental care begins before you see the



first tooth in your grandchild's mouth. Infants need to have their gums wiped with a soft, damp cloth or gauze pad after each feeding. Do not put babies to bed with a bottle at night or at nap time. Milk, formula and other sweet drinks contain sugar. Sucking on a bottle filled with liquids with sugar in them can cause tooth decay.

- Teething. Children begin to "cut" their first tooth between the ages of 4-10 months. Teething may cause excess drooling, crying, fussiness and an overall "not happy" baby. Be alert to the fact that children who are teething may be tempted to put things in their mouth to soothe themselves. Always pay close attention to what your grandchild puts in her or his mouth. By age 2 - 2 ½ years, about 10 teeth in each jaw will be visible.

- Ask your dentist when to bring your grandchildren in for their first visit. **Make sure** you are brushing teeth with a fluoride toothpaste and soft bristle toothbrush.



For information on dental services for children, call the Illinois Department of Public Health at 1-800-323-4769. It may be able to direct you to dental services in your area (whether you are using Medicaid, or just seeking low-cost services).

# Insurance/Medical Coverage

**Betty already worried about her own medical bills. After all, Medicare only covers so much. She knew she couldn't afford private insurance for her two grandchildren living with her. A grandparent in a similar situation told her that Medicaid was often available to children. Betty was embarrassed at the thought of applying for assistance, but there wasn't**

Private Insurance. Many grandparents have difficulty obtaining health insurance for their grandchildren. Grandparents who are retired are often on Medicare, an insurance program that covers older persons. Grandparents who are still working may find it difficult (if not impossible) to add grandchildren to their employer-based policy. As a result, many grandparents seek Medicaid coverage for their grandchildren. If you have employer-based health insurance, ask about dependent coverage for grandchildren in your custody.



Medicaid pays for hospital and medical care for persons who qualify financially, the aged, blind or disabled. In many cases, grandchildren being raised by grandparents do qualify for Medicaid. You do not need to be receiving public assistance for your grandchildren to receive Medicaid under a child only grant. Your grandchildren are automatically eligible for Medicaid if:

- your grandchildren are receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or
- your grandchildren are

eligible for TANF cash assistance, but you apply only for Medicaid, or

- your grandchildren qualify under State's rule of "medically needy children."

To apply for Medicaid for your grandchildren, you will need to prove that you are the primary caregiver. You will also need to show that your grandchildren are deprived of parental care, proof of your grandchildren's ages, relationship to you, and current living arrangement. You **do not** need to have legal custody of your grandchildren for them to receive Medicaid.

Medical providers are **NOT** required to accept Medicaid as a payment source. Call the doctor's office or clinic and verify Medicaid participation prior to your appointment.



For information and eligibility requirements on Medicaid, call the Illinois Department of Human Services. To find the department closest to you, call 1-800-252-8635, TDD 1-800-526-5812.



For information and referrals about health care coverage, WIC services, medical providers, immunization sites, children with special health care needs and other services for families and children, call the Illinois Department of Public Health at 1-800-

## Safety

**The social worker told Bill and Janet that the children would be at the police station downtown. Getting ready for the trip, Janet looked around her house. It was by no means child-proof. What she had considered “comfortable clutter” now just looked like safety risks.**



Keeping your grandchildren safe may seem like a full-time job, and at times it will be. However, by establishing good safety practices for you and your grandchildren, you are not only setting a good example, but will also help protect your grandchildren from potential dangers and accidents.

Consider the following safety tips:

### Car Safety

- Use proper safety belt restraints at all times in a moving vehicle.
- Make sure infants and young children are in an “approved” child safety seat in cars.
- Never leave young children alone in cars.
- Children under 12-years-old should never ride in the front seat.

### Home Safety

- Keep small objects away from small children - needles, pins, coins, beads, etc. can be deadly if swallowed.
- Make sure that cribs have a snug fitting mattress and narrowly spaced slats. Keep all cords and strings, including blinds and curtain cords, out and away from cribs.

- Never let children play with plastic bags.
- Never allow children to fall asleep with bottles in mouths.
- Help prevent poisoning by keeping all cleaning supplies, chemicals, medicines and cosmetics out of reach or in child-proof cabinets.
- Install smoke detectors and check batteries twice a year.
- Hold a mock fire drill with your grandchildren—plan escape routes and arrange for a safe meeting place outside in case of fire.
- Never leave small children alone in or near water - including bathtubs, pools.

## Personal Safety

Teach your grandchildren the following personal safety musts:

- To memorize their full name, address and phone number, including area code, state and zip code.
- How to use the telephone, how to make calls to the operator and how to dial emergency numbers.
- That a stranger is someone they and you do not know well.
- Never to enter a stranger's car or home.
- To keep the doors locked and only admit authorized people to their home.
- How to use a code word. A code word is a

special word that only you and your children know. It is used if you need to have another person pick up your children so that they can verify that the person is safe.

- They are safer playing and walking with friends.
- To avoid alleys as well as poorly lit and lonely or deserted areas.
- Never to wander away from you or your yard unless they tell you and receive permission.
- To tell you if something strange or uncomfortable has happened to them.
- Never to give information about themselves (including home phone) to anyone except authorized persons.



For more information on child safety issues, call your local Fire and Police Departments. Other places to obtain information on child safety issues include: schools, hospitals, and American Red Cross offices.



# Child Care, Schools & Educational Needs

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## Child Care

**Finding child care wasn't how Bev had planned to spend her weekend. She knew her son, Gary, was having difficulty with the children after their mother died; but she didn't think the situation was that bad. When she received the call from Protective Services saying the children had been abandoned, she knew she had to act fast. There was so much to do.... And she couldn't take time away from her job. Bev needed to find a place for the children to stay while she worked, and she**

Finding child care is a concern for parents and caregivers. One of the first steps to finding the child care option that is right for your family is knowing the types of child care.

The different types of child care include:

- In-home care — child care provider provides care in your home.

- Family child care — care provided in a caregiver's home. Family child care may or may not be licensed depending on the number of children under the caregiver's care.

- Child care centers—care provided outside of the caregiver's home. Most child care centers are required by law to be licensed; however, there are certain types that do not require a license.

## Finding the Right Type of Care.

There are many pros and cons to the different types of child care. You may find it helpful to make a list of your child care needs (i.e., hours open, individualized attention, trained workers, planned activities) to help you decide which is best for your family. An excellent resource to finding out about child care options is talking to other parents, grandparents, co-workers, etc. Ask them if they are aware of the place you are considering. One grandparent offers the following advice to those seeking child care: ASK, ASK, ASK!



You may also want to consider contacting places such as the ones listed below in your area. While not all the places you contact can assist, they may be able to refer you to places that can.

- |           |                |                         |
|-----------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Schools   | Civic Clubs    | Social Organizations    |
| Churches  | Health Clinics | Parent Training Centers |
| Hospitals | YMCA and YWCA  | Parks and Recreation    |



To help you in the decision-making process, contact the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), at 1-217-785-1700. DCFS has information you can obtain on the different types of child care and choosing the one that fits your needs.

## Getting Financial Help with Child Care

### Subsidized Child Care

The following information was obtained from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services:

- The State may be able to help with your child care costs if you work, are in a training or education program, or have other

special needs for child care. All families must qualify for subsidized child care based on family size and income.

- Qualified parents may choose either centers or home networks already funded by the state, or they may choose their own providers.

- You are required to pay a portion of the fee

based on your family's income and other factors.

The portion you pay is set according to state guidelines, and you pay only that amount directly to the child care provider.

If you think you may qualify for subsidized child care or for current eligibility guidelines, contact the Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) service in your county. To find the CCR&R office in your county, contact the Department of Human Services at 1-800-843-6154, TTY 1-800-447-6404.



## Other Subsidized Child Care Alternatives

There is a variety of Head Start programs in Illinois. These programs generally provide free half-day school-year care for eligible low-income 3- to 5-year-old children. Some programs also provide full-day, year-round care. Pre-kindergarten programs, sponsored by many public school districts in Illinois,

also offer half-day, school-year care at no cost to 3 to 5 year-olds who meet eligibility guidelines set by each local district. **Call your local school district office for information.**



## Employer Supports and Tax Credits

If you are working, your

employer may have a program to help you with your child care needs. Contact your employer's human resources department about participation in child care programs. You may also be eligible for earned income credit (EIC) on your income taxes depending on your annual income and number and age of the children you support. For more information on the Earned Income Credit

### To Enroll your Grandchildren in School You Will Need:

- Birth Certificate (if starting kindergarten)

## Enrollment Procedures

☞ Call the school district office (listed in phone book) in your area to obtain the name and address of where your grandchildren will be attending school. The District office will refer you to the school you need

to go for registration.

② When you go to register your grandchildren in school, you will need the children's birth certificate (if starting kindergarten), immunization records and, if your grandchildren have been enrolled in another school, the previous school records. Schools have forms for

requesting past school records and immunizations. They can help you fill out necessary forms and get documents. If the children have attended school previously, that school will have school records and immunization records. You may be asked to prove that your grandchildren live with you. Often this can be done by a letter from the Department of Human Services, landlord or community leader. Ask the school what type of documentation is required.

# Interactions with Schools, Teachers, Counselors and Staff

**Sylvia kept postponing the visit with her granddaughter's fifth grade teacher. How could she tell the teacher that the reason she is not involved in Marty's homework is because she does not understand it? Sylvia was not only intimidated by the school work,**

- Get to know your grandchildren's teachers. Inform teachers that you are raising your grandchildren. Teachers will want to send things home to "grandma" instead of "mom." Let the teacher know you want to be informed of your grandchild's progress.

**Keep the lines of communication open between you, your grandchildren and the school.**

- Attend open houses and meetings. Try to attend all parent-teacher conferences. Schedule personal meetings with teachers and counselors to talk about your

grandchildren. If you cannot make face-to-face contact, arrange for a telephone conference.

- Get help with homework if needed. Teachers may be able to get your grandchildren extra help with homework or tutoring. This may take place at the school or in the community. Let them know if you are having trouble

finding time or simply do not understand the homework well enough to help your grandchildren.

- Do not be embarrassed or ashamed if you do not understand your grandchildren's homework. Many adults have trouble with reading, writing, math, computer work, and other subjects. **Remember: It is in the best interest of your grandchildren to ask for help.**



- Talk with the school counselors and nurses. Counselors often have advice and resources for grandparents on social service programs in the community. This includes programs for behavioral and learning problems and other special needs. Contact the school nurse for information and resources on health and nutrition needs. Nurses and counselors can often provide information on talking with your grandchildren about difficult topics such as sexuality, drug and alcohol abuse, gangs and peer pressure.

- Sex education and other sensitive issues. Children are growing up very fast these days. As a result, schools are attempting to keep pace. Some schools do this by talking about important and serious issues in the classroom. For example, many classes integrate human sexuality and intimate relationship information into coursework. Your grandchildren may also learn about things such as: AIDS and HIV, teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, child and juvenile violence, gangs, domestic violence, substance abuse, and other social problems. Talk with your grandchildren's school about these subjects. You may want to plan special discussions with your grandchildren to see how they feel and react to these subjects.

### Other School Programs that May Be Available to You:

- Before and after school care. Many schools have programs, such as Project SCOPE, that offer before and after school child care. Most of these programs are for working parents and caregivers. Talk to the school about these programs.

- School lunch programs. Public schools have free and reduced lunch plans for children who qualify. When you enroll your grandchildren in school, ask about eligibility and

**Remember: Schools are providing services to you and your grandchildren. (They are**



# Challenges Facing Today's Children

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**Ana and her friends were good children They did well in school and never got into trouble. Les and Cathy were proud of their granddaughter, but they didn't understand why she needed to dress that way—baggy pants, stomach showing and, of all things, a tattoo!**

As you know, things are different today. Children learn about drugs, alcohol, sex, gangs and violence at very early ages. Your grandchild's history might include some of these behaviors. As a result, she

or he may not know what is right and wrong.

Many grandparents are raising children who are developmentally deprived, but socially advanced. For example, a child may have trouble reading on a third

grade level but has the survival instincts or “street-smarts” of an older teenager. The events that led up to your grandchildren being placed in your home may warrant a special approach in child rearing.

**Talk to a counselor or family therapist; check with your grandchildren's school for additional information and referrals on getting help with child**

## Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Young people are being exposed to alcohol, tobacco and drugs early—even in elementary school. The younger someone starts to use alcohol and drugs, the more likely she or he is to develop problems associated with such use.

Consider the following

facts and information from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

- Young people who use alcohol and drugs also are more likely to be victims or perpetrators of violence, engage in unplanned and unprotected sex, experience school failure, or be

seriously injured from driving or engaging in other risky behavior while impaired.

- Easy access and availability of alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs make it difficult to keep young people out of harm's way.

- Young people who use tobacco are more likely than others to drink heavily later or use illicit drugs.

- Over the past two to three years annual use of marijuana doubled among 8th graders, grew by two-thirds among 10th graders, and increased by two-fifths among 12th graders.

- Fewer young people see harm in using drugs.

Yet, understanding the harms associated with drug use is one of the greatest deterrents to drug use by

youth.

- Young people report that getting alcohol, tobacco, and most illicit

### Five Reasons Young People Give for Using Alcohol, Tobacco, and Illicit Drugs

- To Feel Grownup
- To Satisfy Curiosity
- To Fit In and Belong
- To Relax and Feel Good
- To Take Risks and Rebel



For more information about drug/alcohol abuse and prevention, call the Department of Human Services at 1-800-252-8951.

## Gangs

Criminal gang activity is a growing problem in our society. Steve Nawojczyk, a leading national expert on gangs and gang-related dynamics, offers the following information on gangs:

- It is not illegal to be in a gang, and indeed many adults are currently involved in activities that meet Webster's definition for a gang. However, when gangs engage in activities that break the law, their actions are illegal.

- Gangs may be part of a larger city or national gang, or

they may remain local.

- Joining a group that has a reputation, good or bad, gives a kid looking for a purpose something in which to be involved.

Participants have said the

mere interaction of members, listening to one another's problems and sharing the ups and downs kids face are often what entices them to join a gang.

- Once in a gang, kids may find quitting the gang difficult and, in some cases, dangerous.

### Reasons for Joining a Gang:

- Identity
- Discipline
- Recognition
- Love
- Belonging
- Money



Most police departments have juvenile gang specialists. For more information on gang prevention and intervention, contact your local police department.

## Sexuality and Kids

You may have difficulty talking to your grandchildren about sexuality. Most parents do. However, kids learn about sexuality early in their lives. They may get information at school, from their friends or through television or music. It is important that they get information from you.

### Some Tips to Help You Talk to Your Grandchildren About Sexuality Include:

- Find out what your grandchildren’s questions and concerns are.
- Make sure you know the facts about sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, birth control, and pregnancy.
- Talk about the things you see on TV or in the community that deal with sexuality. Ask your



For information on talking to your grandchildren about sexuality issues, contact local community centers, health and family planning clinics, the local Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or

## Child Abuse

● The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services states, “child abuse is the mistreatment of a child... by a parent, caretaker, someone living in his or her home or someone who works with or around children.”

● Child abuse can be physical (such as burns or broken bones), sexual (such

as fondling or incest), or emotional (verbal assaults, threats of abuse, harassment or intimidation). Neglect happens when a parent or

responsible caretaker fail to provide adequate supervision, food, clothing, shelter or other basics for a child.



To report child abuse or neglect, call the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-25-ABUSE.

The Parents Anonymous Hotline, 1-800-421-0353, is available 24 hours a day and provides information for parents involved in child

## Communication Tips for Grandparents and Grandchildren

Good communication creates a win-win situation for both grandchildren and grandparents. Learning good communication skills helps children (and adults) develop confidence, feelings of self-worth, and good relationships with others.

- Teach your grandchildren good listening skills.
  - Practice listening and talking: talk with your grandchildren about school, friends, and how they feel about things.
  - Respect your grandchildren. If you talk to your grandchildren as you do your peers, they will be more likely to tell you when things are right and/or wrong in their life.
  - Praise your grandchildren for doing things right. Praise builds a child's confidence and reinforces communication. Unkind words tear children down and teach them that they just aren't good enough.
  - Children are never too old to be told they are loved. Saying and hearing "I love you" is important at any age.
  - Give your undivided attention when your grandchildren want to talk to you. Don't read, watch TV, fall asleep or make yourself busy with other tasks.
  - Set routines for bedtime, meals and chores. Routines will help your grandchildren feel safe, and let them know your expectations.
  - Remind them of your rules. Just saying no is not enough. Younger children often need reminders.



## Tips for Setting Limits:

- Start with only a few rules. The more rules you have, the harder it will be for your grandchildren to remember them.

- Be sure you know why you are saying no. Explain your reasons for saying no. Be sure your grandchildren understand your reasons.

- Give kids a voice. Kids need a voice in setting limits. They need a chance to tell you what they think and feel. Even a child of 5 or 6 can talk with you and help you set fair limits. When kids help you make rules, they are more likely to obey them.

- Say what you mean. Be very clear about your limits.

## Culture and Tradition

- Many grandparents have strong, traditional cultural ties to their heritage. They may find that even though their children were raised in a bicultural household, their grandchildren were not. Grandparents should be aware that their grandchildren's background may be different. They may not know about long-standing family cultures and traditions. For instance, grandparents may have a bilingual household, and the grandchildren have been mainstreamed into speaking only English.

- The hairstyles, dress and language of today's children and teenagers might try the patience of traditional adults. It is important for grandparents to be sensitive to their grandchildren's need to look, dress and



# Obtaining Documents & General Assistance

## Obtaining Needed Papers and Documents

**Tim didn't have any records for his granddaughter. The way things were going, he was surprised that Rebecca had shoes and clothes in the bag she had when his son so abruptly dropped her off. Tim knew his son who had been living on the streets for the past three months wouldn't have the child's birth certificate.**

If you are raising a child that is not your own, you are going to need to have certain papers and documents in order to apply for public assistance or medical services, school registration and identification purposes.

### Birth Certificate

For a copy of a birth certificate, contact the Bureau of Vital Statistics in the state and county of your grandchild's birth. In Illinois, only parents and guardians of children can obtain birth certificates.

Attempt to get the child's birth parents to obtain the birth certificate for you. If this is not possible, you will need to get an order from a judge giving you permission to obtain a birth certificate for your grandchild. This can be done through the guardianship process in Probate Court. Once you have permission, you will

need the following information:

- ✍ name of person for whom you are requesting the certificate
- ② date of birth
- ✍ place of birth: city, county and hospital
- ④ parents' names as they appear on the birth certificate
- ⑤ a day time phone number

There are fees for obtaining a birth certificate —check with the Bureau of Vital Statistics for all fees and forms of



If your grandchild was born in Illinois, contact the Illinois Department of Public Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, 605 West Jefferson Street, Springfield, IL 62702-5097. The phone number is

## Social Security Card

If your grandchildren does not have Social Security cards, or if they are lost, you can apply for either new or replacement cards. You do not have to be the children's legal guardian to obtain Social Security cards for them. U.S. citizens need a copy of their birth certificate or baptismal record.



For information on obtaining a Social Security Card, phone the Social Security Administration General Information line at 1-800-772-1213, or go in person to the Social

payment accepted.

## Medical Records



If you have not raised your grandchild from birth, you may not have her or his medical records. Try to obtain all medical records from your grandchild's birth parents. If they do not have the records, ask them to sign a medical consent to have the records released (to the doctor or clinic who is now serving your grandchild). Also, your pediatrician's office or clinic may be able to help you in obtaining the records - Ask them. If your grandchild has been

enrolled in school, you may be able to obtain a copy of the medical records it has.

If you do not have prior medical records and your grandchild has a medical appointment, you may find it helpful to make a list of all illnesses and conditions you can remember your grandchild having. Include in this list information regarding the birth parents' medical history (if you know it), and any medical conditions or behavior during the mother's pregnancy. This can be helpful if doctors have to attempt to "reconstruct" your grandchild's medical history.



# General Assistance

**Ann Marie made a modest living, but only enough for herself. Anything left over at the end of the month was used to help cover her mother's care in the nursing home. How could she possibly financially care for the two grandchildren who were now living in her home? Her savings were depleted; yet she knew others were**

## Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

- TANF provides financial assistance in the form of a monthly check to help families care for children who need help. This program also provides help to children who have been deprived of parental support or care.

- Grandchildren who are eligible for TANF are also eligible for Medicaid health care assistance. Most grandchildren under their grandparent's care are eligible to receive child-only grants under the TANF program. This means that the grandparent's income and assets are not counted in the child's eligibility.

- You should be aware that certain factors must be established for eligibility of a TANF child only grant. For instance, you must:

- ✍ prove you are related to the child (through birth certificate and/or other legal documents);
- ② prove that the child is living with you;
- ✍ proof of grandchild's citizenship;
- ④ provide Social Security numbers for each child applying for assistance;
- ⑤ proof of health insurance, if you have it;
- ✍ provide information about the birth parents, and will be required to cooperate in attempting to obtain child support from them;
- ✍ and, provide proof of any income and/or assets belonging to your grandchild.

## Earned Income Credit (EIC)

*(Source: Internal Revenue Service)*

- The EIC is a special benefit for low and moderate income working people who are raising children.

- The EIC program provides working grandparents who qualify with assistance by either (1) if you owe taxes—reducing the amount you owe or giving you money back; or (2) if you owe no taxes—giving you money back.

- The EIC is a tax credit program



For further information on TANF or to find the DHS office nearest to you, contact the Illinois Department of Human

administered by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). You file for the EIC when you file your tax return.

- There are also Advance Earned Income Credit payments available that allow those who qualify to get part of their EIC in advance instead of waiting until after the end of the year. Check with the IRS for rules and regulations on the EIC program.



To obtain

qualifying information on Earned Income Credit, contact the Internal Revenue Service at 1-800-829-1040. You may also contact the AARP Grandparent Information Center at 1-202-434-2296

## Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

*(Source: Social Security Administration)*

Social Security Income provides low income elderly, blind or disabled individuals, including children, with financial assistance in the form of monthly payments.

- If your grandchildren have a disability, they may qualify for assistance. Disabled means one has a physical or mental problem that keeps him or her from working and is expected to last at least a year or to result in death. When deciding if a child is disabled, Social Security looks at how his or her disability affects everyday life.

- Parents or guardians can apply for blind or disabled children under 18.

**You will need to provide the following information when applying:**

- ✍ your grandchildren's Social Security cards or records of their Social Security numbers;
- ② your grandchildren's birth certificates or other proofs of age;
- ✍ the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of doctors, hospitals, and clinics that have seen your grandchildren;
- ④ and, your grandchildren's proofs of U.S. citizenship or eligible non-citizen status.

For more information or to apply for

Supplemental Security Income, go to your local Social Security office, or call 1-800-772-1213.



## Food Stamps

- Food Stamps are issued **monthly** (via an I-Link card) to qualifying families based on household size and income.

- The Department of Human Services uses current poverty level guidelines to assess eligibility.

- You will need to provide proof of your household income to the Department of Human Services when you apply for Food Stamps.



For information and where to go to apply, call the Illinois Department of Human Services Food Stamp Program at 1-800- 252-8635.

## Child Support Payments

- Even though you may be taking care of your grandchildren in your home, the birth parents may be held financially responsible.

- Certain programs, such as TANF, require cooperation in attempting to collect child support from birth parents.

To get help collecting child support,



establishing paternity or information on other Child Support Enforcement services, call the Child Support Help Line at 1-800-447-4278, TTY 1-800-526-5812, Outside Illinois, call

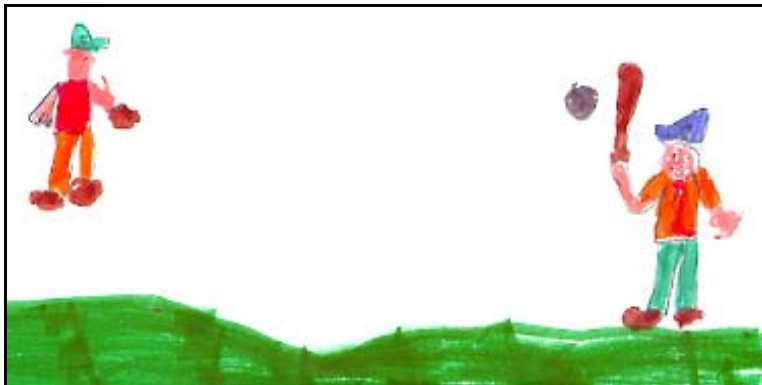
217-785-1692.

## Tips on Dealing with Social Service Agencies:

- Be patient. You may encounter long waits on the phone or in person. Many agencies do not have the staff to take your calls immediately. You may call services that have automated answering systems or answering machines.

- Call during low volume phone times. Agencies differ by the volume and types of calls they receive. However, in doing research on programs for this guide, we found that it was often easier to get through to agency helplines during the early morning hours on Tuesday through Thursday. The busiest phone times appeared to be during lunch hours, 11:00-1:00, and on Mondays and Fridays.

- Keep a log. Always write down the name, title and number of the person to whom you speak. Record important details of your conversation for future





# Custody and

**Tears ran down Paul's face as he watched his 3-year-old grandson, Jason, scream and hold out his arms as his mother pulled him away. This is the third time Jason's mother, an alcoholic and drug addict, has abruptly uprooted Jason from his grandparents' house within the past year. When Jason was 2 years old, Paul and his wife agreed to raise their grandchild after their daughter was negligent in providing for him. The agreement with their daughter was verbal. Paul knew it**

For many grandparents raising grandchildren, one of the most difficult challenges involves the court system. Legal and court systems are expensive, emotionally draining and can be difficult to navigate, but often necessary. There are many options to consider when deciding what is best for you, your grandchild and the birth parents. Prior to making any decisions regarding custody, seek professional advice and review all your options. Avoid making hasty decisions during a crisis.

The following provides

general descriptions of these options:

## Physical Custody

- Informal agreement in which grandparents are caring for grandchildren in their home without official or legal authority by a court.
- Grandparents have no formal rights or legal authority to make decisions regarding the child.
- Birth parents retain all rights and responsibilities of children.

## Legal Custody

- Formal agreement in which custody of

grandchildren are granted to a grandparent by the court.

- Grandparents assume legal authority to make decisions.
- Birth parents remain financially responsible for the children. Even though the birth parents' rights are temporarily suspended by the court, the parents have the right to visitation.

## Private Guardianship

*(Source: Human Service Technologies, 1997)*

- Private guardianship is a legal arrangement in which an adult has the court-ordered authority and responsibility to care for a child. In most counties you file for private guardianship of a child in Probate Court.
- Guardianship may be necessary if a child's parents die, or if the child has been abandoned, is not receiving adequate care or is being abused in some way.

● Guardians of related children have the authority to:

- consent for medical treatment;
- handle school enrollment;
- obtain documents, such as birth certificates;
- stop birth parents from taking the child out of their home without getting consent from the court.

● Under private guardianship, rights of the birth parents are not severed. Birth parents retain the right to contest the guardian's power, to request regaining custody of the child, and to reasonable visitation. Birth parents, if able, must contribute money to support the child.

● Once private guardianship is ordered by the court, the child must live with the guardian. Private guardianship can only be transferred back to the birth parents by the court.

## Kinship Foster Care

*(Source: Department of Children and Family Services)*

- Temporary or long

term care that is provided by a grandparent or other relative to a child who has been removed from the home because of child abuse or neglect (**determination of abuse/neglect must be made by DCFS**), voluntarily placed in foster care by the parent, or placed in foster care by a court.

● Legal custody of the child resides with the State agency, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). The foster parents have only physical custody of the child.

Kinship foster parents cannot make any major decisions regarding the care of the child without first obtaining consent of DCFS.

● Kinship foster care payments may include money or assistance for food, clothing, shelter, daily supervision, school supplies, personal needs of the child, medical and dental care, social services and

supportive services such as counseling.

● Kinship foster care parents must follow the rules and regulations regarding DCFS foster care placement.

## Adoption

● Formal legal agreement granted by the court which ends the legal relationship between a child and her or his birth parents.

● Adoption permanently transfers all parental rights from the birth parents to the adoptive parents.

● Unlike legal custody, adoption is permanent and cannot be modified if the birth parent becomes able to care for the child.

## Adoption Assistance for Special Needs Children

*(Excerpted from Department of Children and Family Services website)*

● Children with special needs, which make it highly



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For information on Kinship Foster Care, contact the Department of Children Family Services, Foster Care Helpline

## Private Subsidized Guardianship

*(Excerpted from the Department of Children and Family Services' website)*

- Private subsidized guardianship is a new permanency option *only for children who are in kinship foster care.*

- Subsidized guardianship involves the transfer of legal responsibility for a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) ward to a private caregiver, such as a relative caregiver, who becomes the legal guardian of the child.

- To be eligible for this program, there are certain criteria that must be met. This includes:

- recommendation by the child's DCFS caseworker;
- the child must have been a ward of the State for two years or more prior to establishing subsidized guardianship, and resided with the prospective relative caregiver for at least one year;
- both reunification of the child with

birth parent and adoption have been ruled out as a permanency goal option;

- the child must have a strong bond with the caregiver, and the caregiver must have a strong commitment to the child; and
- the prospective guardian has no record of felony convictions.

- Subsidized guardianship does not involve termination of parental rights. Birth parents remain legally liable for the financial support of the child even though the decision-making authority of the child is granted to the guardian.

- Once private guardianship is established only the court would have authority to remove the child, and families would no longer require the intervention of DCFS.



For information on Private Subsidized Guardianship, call the Department of Children and Family Services at 1-312-814-

unlikely that she or he can be adopted without adoption assistance, may be eligible for adoption assistance.

- The factors or conditions which may be considered "special needs"

include: ethnic background, age, membership in a sibling group, documented medical conditions or physical, mental or emotional disabilities.

- According to the

Department of Children and Family Services, eligible children may receive one or more of the following types of assistance:

- One time only payment for non-

recurring adoption expenses.

- Payment, through issuance of a Medicaid Card, for medical services which are not covered through public or private insurance or other public resources, and necessary counseling services for the adoptive family and child following the adoption.

- Monthly payment in an amount that is determined for each child, based on the child's needs and the circumstances of the family.
- Conditional adoption assistance may be available for children who at the time of the adoption do not meet the eligibility criteria,

but may be at risk for future physical, mental or emotional disability.



For general information on adoption, call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois at 1-800-572-2390. Outside Illinois, call 312-346-1516.

## When There are Problems with the Birth Parents...

**Mary wasn't the type to have a personal fight in front of her co-workers, but her daughter stormed into her office demanding that the children be returned. Her daughter was a crack-cocaine addict, and this was the third time she had shown up at Mary's office. Mary**

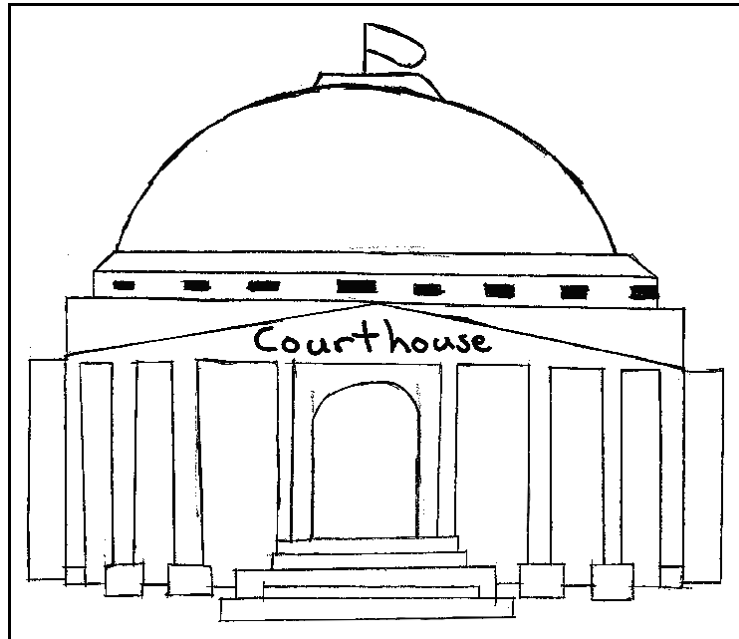
Depending on the particulars of the situation for which you became a grandparent caregiver, you may at some point encounter problems with your grandchildren's birth

parents. If you have legal custody of your grandchildren, you may be able to get either an Order of Protection or Supervised Visitation in court.

- Order of protection. This is an order issued by a judge that orders the parent to stay away from you, your grandchildren and your home. Failure to abide by a court order is cause for police arrest. You file for an order of protection at the office of the Circuit Clerk, Family Court Division in your county.

- Supervised visitation. If you are worried about the safety of your grandchildren during visitation with birth parents, you may ask a judge to order that all visitation by your grandchildren and the birth parents be supervised.

**Note: Both orders of protection and supervised visitation may be modified as situations change, or as the court determines.**



## Mediation

- Mediation is a form of dispute and conflict resolution that can be for cases whereby the parents and grandparents have trouble communicating with each other. For instance, a mediator such as a family therapist, may talk separately or with both parties and attempt to reach a plan for raising the child or establishing visitation.

- Mediators may be social workers who mediate between social service agencies and grandparents and/or parents to work out decisions that are in the best interest of the child.

- Mediation does not work in all cases. There is no one model for mediating. However, mediation is successfully being used in cases involving grandparents, grandchildren and birth parents to resolve conflict and aid decision-making.

## Negative Interactions with Birth Parents

(Source: *Grandparent Caregivers: A national guide* by Ginchild-Abeje and Perez-Porter)

There may be occasions where the parents are not in a stable living situation or are participating in activities that you think could have negative effects on your grandchild during visitation. If this is the case, you may want to consider the following suggestions:

- Ask the parents to schedule the visits for a particular time so you have time to prepare the children.
- Ask other cooperative relatives to be present for the visit.
- You could ask the court to limit the parents' contact with the children at the time that the guardianship order is issued (if there are problems with visits or phone calls).
- If there is a previous

visitation order, you can file a motion to modify that order if problems with an uncooperative parents persist. However, the parent can also file a motion to change the original order.

- If there is a real risk that the parents may endanger the children— that is, if parents have, in the past, left them alone or with an irresponsible person, taken them someplace dangerous or physically abused them, then visits should take place under the supervision of the guardian or a mutually agreed upon

person. If the parents do not agree to this, you may have to ask the court to resolve this matter.

- Do not degrade the grandchildren's birth parents in front of them— talk to other adults, such as those in a support group, instead. You can let your grandchildren know that you can be angry and upset with someone's behavior and still love and care about them.

### Factors to Consider in Determining What are Reasonable Expectations for Visitation:

- The parent should be sober for the visit.
- The visitation schedule should take into account the child's bedtime, regularly scheduled activities and school. It should also accommodate the parent's schedule including work, counseling, mandatory programs, and available free time if in work release.



For information on statewide legal aid services, call Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation, Inc. at



# Coping Strategies

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One of the best ways you can help yourself and your grandchildren through tough times is to take care of yourself, both physically and mentally. You know the drill: eat right, get plenty of rest and regular exercise, and see your doctor regularly. Talk to your doctor about any physical, mental or emotional problems you are experiencing.

## Grandparent Support Groups

**Rosemarie was nervous about going to her grandparent support group meeting. Shy at first about speaking up in the group, she just sat and listened. Within the first five minutes she began to hear that others were in similar situations. Finally, she had found a place where people understood what she was going through.**

The number of support groups for grandparents raising grandchildren is increasing in Illinois. Many of them offer child care so that both grandparents and their grandchildren have a chance to socialize. For many grandparents, support groups such as these offer the only respite from their child care duties.

### How Support Groups Can Help:

- Offer emotional support to grandparents who feel alone and isolated.
- Create a network of grandparents who are in caregiving situations.
- Offer guidance, assistance and advice to grandparents in their efforts to care for their grandchildren.
- Give grandparents ideas on formulating

positive solutions to difficult and challenging problems.

- Serve as a clearinghouse for resources and information.
- Offer a safe, understanding place for grandparents to discuss (and blow off steam) the emotional ups and downs of raising their grandchildren.
- Provide tools for advocacy and awareness of the issues facing grandparents raising grandchildren.

If there is not already an

## Tips for Organizing a Grandparent Support Group

established grandparent support group in your area, you may want to consider organizing one. There are many different ways to go about doing this. The following tips may help you get started:

- Learn from others.

Contact established support groups in other cities and ask for advice in starting a support group. The Senior HelpLine can help you locate existing support groups in the State.

- Contact professionals in the community—ask for help from family counselors, therapists, local health associations, hospitals,

social service agencies, etc. in getting a support group started. If any of the people you contact has expertise in issues facing grandchildren, ask if they would be willing to facilitate group meetings or serve as special speakers once the group is formed.

- Find a location for meetings. Churches, hospitals, non-profit organizations, schools and libraries may have facilities that the group could use at little or no charge. The facility will need to have a separate room for child care.

Explain the importance of

support groups. Do not be bashful about asking for free space.

- Hold an organizational meeting — enlist the help of other grandparents, service providers and others interested in grandparents raising grandchildren issues.

- Be patient in your attempts to organize a support group. Planning and organizing a group takes time, effort and lots of perseverance.

Remember: the benefits of the group will make all your time and effort worthwhile.



For more information on Grandparent Raising Grandchildren Support Groups, Call the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966.

For general information, call AARP Grandparent Information Center at

# Taking Care of Yourself

**It had been months since Andrea had seen her other grandchildren. She seemed to be spending all her time parenting her son's children these days, and she felt guilty at not having the time or energy to visit with her other grandchildren. She knew it would be a needed relief to be able to be just a "grandparent" for a day**

## Stress Reducing Suggestions for Grandparent Caregivers

*(Prepared by University of Illinois Extension Family Life Educators for Illinois Task Force on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Tip Sheet)*

1. Keep up your own health.
2. Walk or exercise regularly.
3. Insist on a regular quiet hour.
4. Take time for yourself.
5. Do something you enjoy.
6. Talk out your problems with friends, other grandparents, or a family counselor.
7. Consider your

religious community and personal faith for strength and assistance.

8. Concentrate on the task at hand. Don't dwell on the past. Looking too far ahead can also be overwhelming. If you can't take it a day at a time, try to accomplish one thing at a time.

9. Learn to say no.

10. Practice patience. Let those you are caring for do as much for themselves as possible.

11. Set limits with grandchildren and stick to them.

12. Focus on the positive and keep your sense of humor.

13. Let yourself off the hook. Your adult child's

circumstances are not your fault.

14. Accept reality. See things as they are and not how you wish them to be.

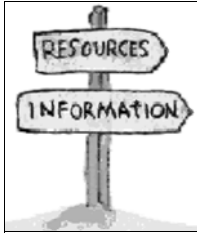
15. Eliminate hurtful thoughts and self-pity. These negative emotions only drag you down.

16. Reward yourself. Even small rewards will help your emotional well-being.

17. Avoid isolation. Make an effort to maintain friendships, even if it is only by telephone for now.

18. Join a support group. This is an excellent place to get information, ideas and emotional support.

19. Look into parenting classes to learn new methods for helping children develop self-esteem, confidence, accountability and responsibility.



# Resources for Grandparent Caregivers

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## Illinois

Illinois Task Force on  
Grandparents Raising  
Grandchildren  
c/o Illinois Department  
on Aging  
421 E. Capitol, #100  
Springfield, IL 62701-1789  
**SENIOR HELPLINE,**  
1-800-252-8966  
(Voice and TTY)

## National

AARP Grandparent Information Center  
601 E. Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20049  
(202) 434-2296

National Coalition of Grandparents  
and  
Grandparent's United for Children's Rights  
137 Larkin Street  
Madison, Wisconsin 53705  
(608) 238-8751

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren  
3851 Centraloma Drive  
San Diego, California 92107

Raising Our Children's Kids: An Intergenerational  
Network of Grandparent, Inc. (ROCKING)  
P. O. Box 96  
Niles, MI 49102  
(616) 683-9038

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### **SENIOR HELPLINE**

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*for* Grandparents

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