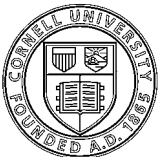


RAPP

Relatives As Parents Program

Resource Guide

A Guide to Supportive Services
in Orange County



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Orange County



Youth
Bureau

The “Relatives As Parents Program,” administered by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Orange County, is a collaborative effort of the Dependent Care Alliance, Inc. and its’ member agencies. The Dependent Care Alliance, Inc. provides education and outreach to businesses addressing dependent care needs in the workplace.

For more information regarding this resource guide or other relative caregiver issues, please contact:

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Table of Contents

<i>I. INTRODUCTION</i>	1
<i>II. ENABLING KINSHIP CAREGIVERS IN NEW YORK</i>	4
A. Custodial Arrangements for Grandparents Raising Children and other Relatives	4
1. Informal Custody	4
2. Legal Custody	4
3. Guardianship	5
4. Standby Guardianship	6
5. Foster Care	7
6. Kinship Foster Care and Kinship Custody	7
7. Adoption	8
8. Opportunity to Become a Caregiver	9
9. Legal Assistance	9
B. Finances: Programs Available to You and Your Grandchild	11
1. Financial Assistance	11
a. Temporary Assistance	10
b. Food Stamps	10
c. WIC	10
d. Supplemental Security Income	11
e. Social Security Benefits	11
2. Tax Benefits	11
a. Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit	11
b. Earned Income Tax Credit (EIC)	11
c. Employee Dependent Care Accounts	12
d. Free Tax Information	12
C. Health Care for Your Grandchild	12
1. Health Insurance Coverage	12
a. Medicaid	12
1. Eligibility	13
2. Child/Teen Health Program (CTHP)	13
3. Medicaid Managed Care Program	13
b. Child Health Plus / Family Health Plus	14
2. Medical Consent	15
3. Children's Health Care Services	15
4. Tips For Raising Healthy Grandchildren	18

D. Education for Your Grandchild	20
1. School Enrollment	21
2. Special Education Services	21
E. Child Care For Your Grandchild	23
1. Types of Child Care Available	
a. Child Care Centers	23
b. Family Child Care Homes	23
c. In-Home Care	23
d. Summer Day Camps	23
e. School-Age Child Care	23
2. Choosing Suitable Child Care	24
3. Where To Get Help	25
F. Youth Development Programs and Services	25
 III. OTHER RESOURCES FOR YOU AND YOUR GRANDCHILD ..	28
A. Orange County Department of Health, Social Services and Other Services	28
B. Parenting Education Services	30
C. Disabilities Services	31
D. Elder Care Services	32
E. Suggested Readings for Grandparents and Grandchildren	32
1. Books for Children	33
2. Books for Adults	39
3. Additional Print Resources	41
F. Sources of Support for Grandparent Caregivers	41
G. Additional Resources of Information and Support	44

A Family Right to Care

By Gerard Wallace, Esq., Government Law Center, Albany Law School

(The legal information in this Guide is current as of November 16, 2006. However, legal information is not legal advice and is not a substitute for the advice of an attorney. It is recommended that readers seek the advice of a knowledgeable attorney for answers to their legal questions.)

Since the early 1990's, the number of grandparents and other relatives raising grandchildren has risen dramatically. According to the 2000 Census, in New York over 143,000 grandparents were primarily responsible for their grandchildren. In 2006, estimates are that more than 200,000 grandparents and other non-parent caregivers are caring for children. They are doing a great job. According to one study of national health data, in almost every measurement of children's behavior, grandparents were successful caregivers.

Yet this caregiving comes at a high cost. Over half the grandparents are over fifty years old. Often, they are raising children with special needs. They have economic difficulties, housing issues, family issues, and legal issues. They must continually fear the birth parents' intrusion; they must worry about their ability to be there as the children get older. They must parent without the recognition and support that they deserve from our society, our laws, and our institutions.

While in recent years grandparents and other caregivers have gotten increased attention, the efforts of policy makers and law makers have yet to provide protections, rights, and assistance similar to those available to birth parents.

For instance, a grandmother cares for her grandchild for over five years. Legally she is the temporary custodian, "pursuant to Article 10", the state neglect proceedings. The local department of social services attempted to terminate the mother's rights. But an appeals court reversed the termination and ordered the department to continue efforts at reunification with the parent. The child, who is now five and a half years-old, will probably be sent back to her mother, despite the skull fracture and other multiple fractures suffered when she was three months old and in the care of her mom and dad. In a similar proceeding, another grandma is forced to return two children after two years in her care.

Another grandparent patiently endures her drug addicted daughter's threats that if the grandma seeks public assistance, the mother will take the child away forever. Grandma cannot afford an attorney, and fears going to court. She cares for her grandchild at great expense, deciding not to seek public assistance. And one grandparent pays for eight years of private schooling, erroneously informed that they are not eligible for free public school tuition because the child was not in their legal custody.

These examples are just a few of the unfortunate circumstances where wrong advice, ill-fitting laws, and fear of losing a child have created unnecessary suffering for grandparents and other relative caregivers.

Since 2000, New York has addressed some of the issues facing relative caregivers. But many problems still exist. Some answers are about simple fairness, others are more complex, pitting entrenched parental and/or state control of children against the emerging rights of non-parent, especially grandparent, families. Undoubtedly, as eighty million baby boomers become grandparents, a comprehensive investigation and response to these problems will emerge. Yet, that end is not yet in sight, and children must live in families who are burdened by unnecessary obstacles.

Kinship families should expect more from law makers, and they will get more - only when law makers focus on these issues and enact comprehensive solutions.

When a grandparent takes over caring for a child, the first question they ask is what is their legal authority and legal control of the child. The answer depends on whether they are: Informal Custodians, Legal Custodians, Guardians, Foster Parents, or Adoptive Parents.

In the following pages is a short discussion about the legal issues associated with these legal arrangements. For a start, we summarize the legal "options" available to non-parent caregivers:

Informal Custodians

Non-parents who care for children without court orders are known as "informal custodians." In at least seventeen states, the enactment of the Uniform Probate Act has given parents the right to delegate their authority to these "third party" custodians. Other states have similar authorizations in their powers of attorney statutes. All such delegations are for limited periods of time, usually six months or one year. Delegation laws may have special provisions regarding school enrollment, medical decision making, and access to official records. In New York, recent legislation permits parents to delegate most parental authority, but not major medical decision making.

Legal Custody and Guardianship

Most legal authorities agree that legal custody and guardianship offer similar rights and authority. While there are legal differences between legal custody and guardianship in court procedures and in practical authority. Most school districts, medical providers, and government agencies regard the two as possessing the same powers. However, at times legally technical differences can arise. For instance, access to certain government documents or what legal status is covered by private health insurance policies can be dependent upon guardianship but not legal custody.

Foster Care

Once children are removed from their parents, every state has laws providing a preference for placement with relatives. The scope of the search, the legal deference given to families, and the placement options may differ. In New York, all of these legal elements have legislative authority, but remain dependent upon implementation, which can result in significantly different local practices.

Adoption

Most of the children adopted in America are adopted by their relatives. Since the surrendering and adopting families know each other, there is often continuing contact between the birth parents and the child. Often families reach agreement about this contact. In a few states these agreements are legally enforceable. Some, like New York, enforce adoption agreements only for children who are in foster care. When children are in foster care, the local department will work with a reluctant parent (who might be legally unfit) to help them understand the benefits of adoption.

Visitation

Grandparents do have a special legal relationship to their grandchildren. The U. S. Supreme Court has carved out an exception to parental rights, allowing grandparents to seek visitation with their grandchildren, even when parents are fit. That right to seek visitation is not a fundamental right, but one that New York and other states can create by enacting a law. In New York, its grandparent visitation statute permits grandparents to ask a court to order visits. Under most circumstances, the court will hold a trial to decide whether visitation is in the "best interests" of the grandchild.

(Note that additional legal information about these legal arrangements is available in the second section of this Guide.)

Answers Still Needed

Grandparents are at a disadvantage in many other areas. They frequently do not know their custodial rights when a parent threatens to remove a child from their care. They do not receive notice of custody, guardianship, or adoption proceedings. They may be steered away from becoming foster parents, although, in many instances, they are eligible. In most court proceedings, poor grandparents are not guaranteed assignment of counsel. Once they take a child into their home, they may be forced to move because of violations of their tenancy agreement. They lose public assistance if they adopt. They may be unable to retain custody of a child in their care, when confronted with a birth parent's petition for custody. And they, like most legal professionals, may never be able to understand what responsibilities, duties, and authorities are associated with informal care, legal custody, or guardianship.

In the past six years some progress has been made. One example of assistance is Presbyterian Senior Services GrandParent Apartments in the Bronx, New York City. Another is Kentucky's "de facto" custody law which gives relative caregivers equal standing with parents, once a child has lived for more than one year in the caregiver's home. These innovations and others happened when policy makers and private non-profits focused on the issues facing "kinship" families. Yet, much still needs to be done. In general, there is still an overriding need for comprehensive solutions for issues facing grandparents and other relative caregivers. More assistance, more family rights, and special grandparents' rights are needed. To accomplish this, state and federal authorities must dedicate the time and effort to examine these barriers. Only then will grandparents and other relatives start to get a legislative and regulatory response that assists rather than hinders them in raising children.

A. Custodial Arrangements for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children

As mentioned, in New York State there are several legal options for grandparents and other relatives who are raising children: Informal Custody, Legal Custody, Guardianship, Kinship Foster Care, and Adoption. This section of the guide will help answer questions about these caregiving arrangements in order to help you to decide which one best suits your family circumstances. It will also refer you to useful resources that can answer additional legal questions.

In general, the word "custody" has two meanings: physical custody and legal custody. Physical custody refers to the care and control of a child. Legal custody is court ordered custody started by a custody petition. Physical custody is lawful when parents consent to the care and control of another person or a court orders another person to assume care and control. Courts order care and control of children via custody, guardianship, foster care, or adoption proceedings.

1. Informal Custody

Informal custody arrangements are made without court involvement. In New York, non-parents who are informal custodians do not have sufficient authority to make educational and medical decisions for children unless they qualify as "persons in parental relationship." These "persons" include informal "custodians" who are caring for children because the parents are deceased, incarcerated, mentally ill, disabled, or cannot be found. And since 2005, a parent can "designate" a caregiver as a "person in parental relationship" via a simple writing. For periods of one month or less, the writing doesn't need to be notarized. For longer periods more information and notarization are necessary.

Without court orders regarding the care and control of children, parents retain their superior rights to care for their children. They can demand the return of their children at any time. In order to keep physical custody, a grandparent or some other full time caregiver must seek a court order. If the non-parent has cared for the children for an extended period of time, or if the non-parent can show that the parents are unfit, then a judge will order a trial to decide care and control. Likewise if the caregiver has the consent of the parents then a judge can grant custody or guardianship. For grandparents, a special law states that two years residence in a grandparents' home is an extended period of time. Unfitness and an extended period of time are considered "extraordinary circumstances" which result in a trial to determine who will be granted care and control.

2. Legal Custody

Legal custody is court ordered custody. A non-parent should seek legal custody when he/she wants clear legal authority to care for the child and the protections of a court order, but does not want to terminate parental rights and assume permanent responsibility for the child. It

is important to note that legal custody is never really permanent because under certain circumstances parents can petition the court to regain custody. Also, a judge may limit the authority of a custodian or award a joint custody with a parent. Grandparents and other relatives (and sometimes non-relatives) who wants legal custody must get the parents' consent or go to court and prove to the judge that the parents are not able to care for the child. If the child's parents agree to custody, a petitioner can usually make out a simple petition form at your local family court. However, if the parents do not agree, then it will be necessary to prove an "extraordinary circumstances" that make it necessary for the court to decide whether to give custody of a non-parent. "Extraordinary circumstances" is a legal term. It includes abandonment, persistent neglect, unfitness, abuse, and other extraordinary circumstances like an extended period of time during which the child lived with a non-parent.

As mentioned, a special New York law provides that two years residence with a grandparent is an "extraordinary circumstance" which will allow a judge to hold a custody trial. In almost all custody proceedings, the parents will have the right to a lawyer, and a lawyer (called a law guardian) will be appointed to represent the child

For residents of Orange County, petitions for legal custody are filed in the Orange County Family Court, 285 Main Street, Goshen, NY 10924, (845) 291-3030. Also, Probation Intake can and will assist in preparation of such documents. Probation Intake personnel are located at: 255-275 Main Street, Goshen, NY 10924 (845) 291-4750 and at 141 Broadway, Newburgh, NY 12550, (845) 568-5000.

3. Guardianship

Guardianship is a legal arrangement granted to a non-parent by either a family or surrogate's court. Guardianship provides the legal authority similar to parental authority. In New York State, there are two types of guardianship: guardianship of the person - where the guardian has the legal authority to make all daily decisions concerning a child including his/her education, medical care, and where he/she will live; or guardianship of the property whereby the guardian is placed in charge of a child's property and finances.

Generally speaking, guardianship and legal custody are very similar. What differences exist are usually ignored by schools, medical providers, and other officials. However, there are some differences. All guardianship proceedings will include a child abuse registry check and a criminal record check for all members of the household. Such investigations are not necessary in custody proceedings. While the practical effect of guardianship is usually treated as being similar to that of legal custody, some differences may arise, though not frequently.

Guardians have the authority to make medical decisions, guardians are usually able to add a child to their health insurance, and guardians have full authority to apply for government records and documents. If possible, it is advisable to seek guardianship rather than legal custody. However, the responsibility and rights of the parents do not end if you become the guardian of your grandchild. The parents are still responsible for the financial support of your grandchild and, if the court orders it, they may also be allowed to visit their child and, as in legal custody, the parent still has the right to petition the court to regain control of their child.

While both Family Court and Surrogate's Court may appoint a guardian, for residents of Orange County, guardianship petitions may be filed at the Surrogate's Court in Goshen, NY; P0 Box 329, 30 Park Place, Goshen, NY 10924, (845) 291-2193. Guardianship of an infant may be applied for in either Surrogate's Court or Family Court. Only where guardianship over the property of an infant is required, or when guardianship over a mentally disabled infant is sought, must the application be made to the Surrogate's Court. The Surrogate's Court will provide instructions and information regarding the petition procedure. It is recommended that interested parties call the department first before going to file a petition.

4. Standby Guardianship

New York, like some other states, has a standby guardian statute, which allows the appointment of a standby guardian. In most states, only parents or legal guardians can name a standby guardian. But in New York, a parent, guardian, legal custodian, or a informal custodian who cannot locate the parents can petition the court to name a standby or can designate who they wish the court to appoint in a out of court writing. A standby must wait till the occurrence of an event, typically the debilitation, incapacity, or death, of the principal (i.e., the parent, legal guardian, legal custodian, or informal caregiver) before assuming guardianship.

The Standby Guardianship statute, Surrogate's Court Procedure Act 5. 1726, has two very different ways to name a successor guardian:

OPTION ONE: If the principal (parent, guardian, legal custodian or other authorized informal) is chronically ill or dying, they can go to court with the person chosen to be the standby guardian and ask the court to appoint that person as the standby guardian. Upon incapacity or death, the standby guardian becomes an active guardian, but he/she must go to court within ninety days for confirmation of the appointment.

When the principal goes to court to have the court appoint the standby guardian, they are taking steps to make sure that the person chosen as standby guardian will be appointed by the court to act as the child's guardian when they die or are no longer able to take care of a child, but they do not give up their current right to make decisions for the child.

OPTION TWO: The principal can designate a standby guardian by writing and signing a document in front of two witnesses who are at least 18 years old that states:

- ◆ the principal's name;
- ◆ the name, address, and telephone number of the proposed standby guardian;
- ◆ whether the authority of the standby guardian will be to make decisions for the daily needs of the child, the child's finances and property, or both; and
- ◆ whether the authority or the power of the standby guardian should begin when the principal becomes debilitated, incapacitated, or dies.

When a principal designates a standby guardian in writing, they are recommending a person to be the child's guardian. If the court agrees, the court will appoint or name that person as the child's guardian. When a principal makes such a designation, he/she does not give up their current exclusive right to make decisions for the child. Upon debilitation, incapacity, or death, the standby guardian must go to court within sixty days and petition for appointment.

For residents of Orange County, petitions for standby guardianship (application #1726) must be filed at the guardianship department of the Surrogate's Court in Goshen, NY; P0 Box 329,30 Park Place, Goshen, NY 10924, (845) 291-2193 or Family Court, 285 Main Street, Goshen, NY 10924, (845) 291-3030.

5. Foster Care

Children who are abused, neglected or abandoned by their parents may be placed in the legal custody of the Commissioner of Social Services after a court has decided that their parents cannot safely care for the children. Children who are removed from their homes are placed in a foster family home, a group home, a child care institution, or with relatives. It is important for caregivers to know that once a child is living in their home, it is probably too late for them to become foster parents. Grandparents and other relative caregivers who want to become foster parents should make sure that the child is first placed in the care and control of the State. They can then ask to become the kinship foster parent. In most instances, the court will place the child with them.

The goal of foster care is to find a permanent home for the child. The Commissioner of Social Services, through the child welfare agency, will try first to reunite the parent and child. If this cannot happen, the agency may go to court to request that the rights of the parent be terminated so that a permanent home can be found for the child. The agency will then want to find a home for the child with people who will want to adopt the child.

If your son or daughter is being charged with abuse or neglect, and their child may need placement, the Family Court will want to know whether there are suitable relatives like you available to take care of the child. Your son or daughter can tell the court that you are available to care for the child; and you should go to court and let the court know that you are available to take care of your grandchild. The local department of social services also has a duty to locate relatives, including all the grandparents, and to inform them of their custodial options. However, the extent of these searches varies from county to county.

6. Kinship Foster Care and Kinship Custody

When there is an abuse or neglect proceeding, New York State's Social Service Law requires that the Commissioner of Social Services or the child welfare agency look for relatives to become foster parents. Upon finding a suitable relative, the local department and the family court judge should inquire whether the relative wishes to become a foster parent, to take temporary custody with the continuing involvement of the department, or to become an independent legal custodian.

Kinship foster care is foster care granted to a grandparent or another relative of a child until the parent and child are reunited or until a permanent home is found for the child. A kinship foster care parent has temporary physical custody of the child, not legal custody. Legal custody of that child remains with the Department of Social Services (DSS). This means that the kinship foster care parent takes care of the child's daily needs but cannot make any legal or major decisions regarding the child without first obtaining the consent of DSS. An advantage to kinship foster care is that you may be able to receive kinship foster care payments to assist you with the care of your grandchild, and you may receive other forms of assistance, like family services, payment of special expenses, and educational assistance for the child. Like foster parents, kin must be certified after completing a foster parent course and submitting to an investigation.

Some relatives are awarded temporary custody, often called "direct" custody or "N docket" custody. The relative is subject to the department's scrutiny and oversight, like a foster parent. In this situation, the department will continue efforts to "reunite" the parents with their children, and eventually the parents may regain custody.

Many relatives choose not to become kinship foster parents nor to become temporary custodians, because they prefer to take care of the child without the department of social services supervision and involvement in their home. These relatives can petition for legal custody. However, some courts are refusing to hear such petitions once efforts at reunification of parent and child have begun, so petitions seeking independent custody should be filed as soon as possible.

The law regarding kinship foster care is changing rapidly because of the need to place foster children in permanent homes, and because relatives and children are gaining more legal rights. Everyone interested in the well being of children should rely upon up to date legal information and advice from a competent attorney.

7. Adoption

Adoption is the only permanent legal arrangement granted by a court. In adoption, the rights of the child's birth parents are terminated and the adoptive parent obtains all the parental rights and responsibilities of the original parents. Once you have adopted a child, you will be the child's legal "parent" and the child's birth parents will no longer have any rights to the child.

If you adopt a child, you will be legally and financially responsible for the care, education and support. This means that the child cannot receive a public assistance grant based solely on the child's income and resources. See the section on Public Assistance below.

Adoption subsidies may be available for children adopted through kinship foster care if the child has special needs or is considered hard to place. Most foster children are considered hard to place. Additionally, in order to be eligible for an adoption subsidy the child must be in the legal custody of the Department of Social Services and the kinship relative must be a certified foster parent. Another special feature to adoption of kinship foster children is the chance for the birth parents to make an enforceable agreement indicating who may adopt the child or what contacts the surrendering parent may have with the child.

In New York State, adoption is sought at the family court in the jurisdiction where the child resides. For residents of Orange County, all adoption petitions must be filed in the Orange County Family Court. Orange County Family Court is located at 285 Main Street, Goshen, NY, (845) 291-3030 or Surrogate Court, P.O. Box 329, 30 Park Place, Goshen, NY 10924, (845) 291-2193.

8. Opportunity to Become a Caregiver

Relatives, especially grandparents, may want to become caregivers of children who are still living with their parents or who are in state care (usually foster care). In both circumstances, relatives can ask for a court proceeding.

When children reside with their parents, the petitioner must allege that the parents are unfit, or that the child recently lived with the petitioner. As mentioned, they must show an "extraordinary circumstance" that justifies the intrusion into parental control.

When children are already in state care, the petitioner can start a custody proceeding, intervene in the neglect proceedings, or seek to become a foster parent in a separate proceeding. Custody proceedings are governed by Article Six of the Family Court Act. Intervention, which needs the consent of the parents, is governed by Family Court Act Section 1035(f). Petitions to become a foster parent, pursuant to Family Court Act Section 1028-a, must show that the relative filed the petition within one year of the child's removal and no more than six months after the relative learned about the removal.

9. Legal Assistance

Although it is not always necessary to get an attorney, it would be beneficial to speak with an attorney about whether it is better to file for custody, guardianship, or adoption. The following are some referral services that may be able to help you locate an appropriate attorney.

In Orange County:

- ◆ The Orange County Bar Association - 198 Main Street, Goshen, NY 10924 (845) 294-8222.
- ◆ The Dispute Resolution Center of Orange, Putnam, Sullivan and Ulster counties -- 14 Scotchtown Ave., Goshen, NY 10924 (845) 294-8082.
- ◆ The Orange County Office for the Aging - 18 Seward Avenue, Middletown, NY 10940. Legal Services for the Elderly: (845) 615-3700.
- ◆ The Mental Health Association in Orange County, Inc., 20 Walker Street, Goshen, NY 10924. 24-Hour Help Line: 1-800-832-1200.

For a lender copy of various publications, please call the Orange County Relatives As Parents Program (RAPP) at Cornell Cooperative Extension at (845) 344-1234.

B. Finances: Programs Available to You and Your Grandchild

1. Financial Assistance

One possible consequence of a grandparent raising a grandchild is a need for additional financial resources. There are a number of government programs that provide financial assistance for low income and/or financially needy children. These include:

a. Temporary Assistance

You may apply at your county department of social services for Temporary Assistance (TA) on behalf of a child living with you. This type of TA case is called non-parent caregiver (popularly called child-only grant, may also be called other than grantee, for child, kinship or non-legally responsible relative) and provides a cash grant to be used for the care of the child.

Your income and resources will not be considered when determining the TA grant for the child. However, you must complete an application, which requires answering many questions. Federal requirements also mandate that we collect certain information about you.

If you receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), you should be aware your SSI amount may change because the child receives a TA cash grant.

You must pursue child support for any child applying for TA. If you are afraid that the parent you are trying to get child support from will hurt you or the child, you should let your TA worker know and you may be eligible for an exemption.

You may apply for these services at your county social services department.

b. Food Stamps

Food stamps can be an important source of help when you are having trouble making ends meet or trying to get back on your feet financially. Depending on your income, resources and the size of your family, you may be entitled to benefits that help you put healthy food on the table.

Eligible households receive monthly benefits through an electronic benefit transfer card, similar to a credit or debit card, that can be used at most places where you normally purchase food. If you think you might benefit from Food Stamps, call 1-800-342-3009 or visit the website: www.otda.state.ny.us.

c. Women, Infant and Children

Women, Infant and Children (WIC) clinics provide special supplemental nutrition for high-risk pregnant and breast-feeding women, as well as to infants and children up to 5 years of age. Clients gain access to medical care and are provided supplemental food vouchers, nutrition education and breast-feeding support. Clinic sites are in Goshen, Middletown, Newburgh, Port Jervis, Walden, Harriman, and Pine Island Migrant Health Center. The WIC program is free to women, infants and children who are found to be medically and financially eligible. Application forms are available at all Health Department offices. For information, please call the WIC office at Harriman (845) 291-2044, Newburgh (845) 568-5333 or Middletown (845) 346-1500.

d. Supplemental Security Income

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is cash assistance for people who are aged, blind or disabled and have limited income and resources. For information call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213.

e. Social Security Benefits

Social Security Benefits are monthly cash benefits for unmarried children under the age of 18 (or full-time students under 19 and older disabled children) whose parents have died. The parent in question must have worked, paid Social Security taxes, and earned enough credits to generate benefits. Applications should be made to the Social Security office. In Orange County that number is 1-800-772-1213. You will need original documents or certified copies of the child's Social Security card and birth certificate, the parent's Social Security number, the parent's death certificate, and the deceased parent's W-2 forms or Federal tax return (if self employed) for the most recent year. If a child has lived with a grandparent for at least six months before the grandparent applies for Social Security and the child's parents are dead or disabled, the child is eligible for the benefits of the grandparent. A child who is adopted by their grandparent is also eligible.

2. Tax Benefits

In addition to financial assistance, there are also certain **Tax Benefits** for which grandparents raising their grandchildren may be eligible.

a. Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit

The *Child Care Credit* is a benefit for working people with children who pay for someone else to care for the children while they are working. In a single parent family, the single parent must be working. In a two-parent family, both parents must be working. In order to qualify, the child must be either less than 13 years old and physically or emotionally unable to care for themselves. The child must have a social security or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) and must live with the parents or grandparents. Credit is based on the cost of the childcare. For one child the maximum is \$3,000 per year and for two or more children, the maximum is \$6,000 per year. The parent must provide the child care provider's social security or ID number, the name of their organization and the address.

b. Earned Income Tax Credit (EIC)

If you have earned income and have taken care of a qualifying child for more than half the year, you may be eligible to receive the Earned Income Tax Credit from New York State as well as from the federal government. In order to claim the credit, you must file both federal and state income tax forms. Everybody's circumstances are different, but for Tax Year 2005, the maximum credit for two or more children was \$5,720. You may qualify if your income is under \$37,263. For more details, check www.irs.gov or visit your nearby Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site.

c. Employee Dependent Care Accounts

A growing number of employers allow employees to have up to \$5,000 a year in pretax dollars taken directly from their paycheck. This is known as a *Dependent Care Account*. The money is then used to reimburse expenses for childcare or elder care. Grandparents should be aware that money in the plan that is not used can be lost. It is essential that you know exactly how much to have deducted.

d. Free Tax Information

Free tax assistance and help completing the necessary forms is available to grandparents. You can call the IRS office at 1-800-829-3676 for forms. You can also call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040 for further information and help in preparing forms.

During income tax season, the Orange County Office for the Aging provides assistance by IRS trained volunteers in preparing and filing simple federal and state income tax forms for people 60 years and over. You can contact the OC Office for the Aging at 615-3700.

Additionally, the AARP Tax Aide Program with its local sites that operate from February 1st to April 15th can help you complete the appropriate forms. You can contact the AARP Tax Aide Program at 1-888-227-7669 to find the site location nearest you.

C. Health Care for Your Grandchild

1. Health Insurance Coverage

Grandparent caregivers may find it difficult to find health insurance coverage for their grandchildren. Grandparents in the paid work force that have employer-provided group insurance still run into problems because employer provided group health insurance is generally unavailable for children in kinship care arrangements. Sometimes the policy does provide coverage even for informal custodians. You will need to contact your employer and/or insurance company to find out for sure what coverage you have.

Grandparents who are retired and on Medicare are either forced to buy an individual policy or must find out whether their grandchild qualifies for State Medical Assistance. In some instances the Third Party Health Insurance (TPHI) Department is able to pay the cost for the child's premium.

a. Medicaid

In New York State the medical assistance program is called Medicaid. It is a program funded by the state and federal governments, which helps people who are receiving public assistance and/or have a low income pay for doctor and hospital bills and some medication. **You may apply for Medicaid on your grandchild's behalf at the Social Service Office located on Quarry Road, Goshen, NY. Make sure you apply and sign the application form as soon as you realize you need Medical Assistance because payment for medical expenses can only go back 3 months from the date of application.**

1) Eligibility

Federal law requires states to provide Medical Assistance benefits to individuals who receive Family Assistance (formerly AFDC) grants or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and children in foster care.

Note: Even if you have grandchildren in your care who, for any reason, are not eligible for Family Assistance or SSI, you should still apply for Medicaid on their behalf by going to your local Social Service Office (Located at 11 Quarry Road, Goshen, NY 10924; 845-291-2002).

2) Child/Teen Health Program (CTHP)

The *Child/Teen Health Program (CTHP)* is a provision of the federal Medicaid program, which provides financially needy children with preventive health care. **Every child who is eligible for Medicaid is eligible for federally funded CTHP services.** CTHP is a critical program for your grandchild because it provides many services that may not be available to adult Medicaid recipients.

When you see your doctor for an CTHP exam (sometimes called a well-child visit or a check-up), your grandchild should receive the following:

- ❖ A complete physical exam
- ❖ Eye and hearing tests
- ❖ Lab tests, including levels, if needed
- ❖ Immunizations, if needed
- ❖ Dental assessment
- ❖ Health education about issues of concern for you and your grandchild
- ❖ Nutrition assessment
- ❖ Developmental assessment

3) Medicaid Managed Care Plans

If your grandchild or yourself is granted Medicaid benefits, you may choose to enroll in a *Medicaid Managed Care* plan. Managed care in Orange County is mandatory (effective Jan. '07). You will need to complete an enrollment form. If you are found eligible you will be notified by Orange County and the plan you have chosen. Be sure to carefully read the information that the Department of Social Services provides to you about the Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs)/Prepared Health Services Plans (PHSPs) serving Orange County Medicaid recipients. Call the HMOs/PHSPs that look best for your grandchild or family. Ask them for more information about what you need to know. They can send you a list of doctors, other medical providers and give you details on the services they offer. This program is not available if private insurance is available to you at no cost or if DSS pays the premium.

When choosing an HMO, consider the following:

- ❖ Do my family's doctors belong to this HMO?
- ❖ Does this HMO have doctors, clinics, and hospitals near my home?
- ❖ Are there enough specialists to treat my family's health needs?
- ❖ Does this HMO offer special services or "extras?" For example, will they pay for any health care items not prescribed by a doctor? Do they offer free parenting classes?

Affinity Health Plan
(MA, FHP, CHP) 1-866-247-5678

GHI HMO Select, Inc
(MA, FHP, CHPA) 1-877-244-4466

Hudson Health Plan
(MA, FHP, CHPA) 1-800-339-4557

Wellcare Healthy Choice
(MA, FHP, CHPA) 1-800-288-5441-X4065
1-800-334-4069

DBA Fidelis Care NY
(NYS Catholic Health Plan Inc) (MA, FHP, CHPA) 1-888-343-3547

For any questions about Medicaid Managed Care, you can call the Orange County Managed Care Unit:

Affinity 291-4646

Hudson Health Plan 291-4060

Fidelis 291-4060

Wellcare 291-4647

GHI 291-4647

For the names and the telephone numbers of insurance companies in other counties, or to learn more about Child Health Plus B, call 1-800-698-4KIDS.

b. Child Health Plus and Family Health Plus

In addition to the Medicaid program, New York State also offers low-cost health insurance for children up to age 19 called *Child Health Plus B* and *Family Health Plus* for adults between the ages of 19 and 64. The programs are available to NYS families who are not eligible for Medicaid and have limited or no health insurance.

Even if your family income is high, you can enroll your grandchild in the program (although you will have to pay more for your coverage). The fees for Child Health Plus B are based on family size and income.

2. Medical Consent

Under New York State law, only parents or legal guardians can make all decision regarding medical care for children. Legal custodians can also make medical decisions, but their court orders may indicate some limitations on their authority. For informal custodians, a note from the parent or parents can give medical decision making power to the caregiver for most medical care. The note, officially called a designation, must contain certain information in order to be legally valid. (For a copy of the Parental Designation Form contact Cornell Cooperative Extension's Relatives as Parents Program at 845-344-1234). There are two kinds of notes, the simpler one is good for one month from the day of writing and it does not need to be notarized. The longer note is good for six months and must be notarized. The designations are renewable. While the law declares who can make these decisions, the reality is that often medical providers accept the authority of grandparents and other relative caregivers, and never inquire about court orders or parental designations. Sometimes, a statement from you, or the parent, or from a social worker, which shows your relationship to your grandchild, is enough to get medical care for a child.

New York State law does allow grandparents and older sisters and brothers to consent to a young child's immunizations. No court order or parental designation is necessary.

In case of an emergency, take your grandchild to the emergency room of a hospital. Since emergency care is necessary to save lives or to prevent serious injury, New York and other states permit medical personnel to treat children without getting the consent of the authorized adult caregiver. You do not need legal guardianship of a child to get emergency medical treatment for a child. In an emergency, the doctor will decide whether the child needs immediate medical attention. If there is not time to get consent from the authorized caregiver and the life and health of a child would be in danger, then the doctor can treat the child without obtaining permission.

If a relative caregiver is having difficulty obtaining medical care, it may be necessary to obtain legal guardianship or legal custody or a parental designation. See other sections in this guide for advice on how to become a legal custodian or guardian and for parental designation forms. In some cases a lawyer should be contacted for assistance.

3. Children's Health Care Services

In addition to your grandchild's pediatrician or family physician, the Orange County Department of Health (DOH) offers many low and no cost health services for children residing in Orange County. If you would like to receive any of these services or have a question about a particular service, please call the DOH District Office in your area (See **Page 28** for a listing of DOH District Offices). The following Children's Services are offered at no cost or on a sliding fee scale by the DOH (Medicaid is also accepted):

Clinics

Immunization clinics are conducted year round in six locations: Middletown, Harriman, Newburgh, Goshen, Port Jervis and Warwick. Immunizations are recommended to begin at two months of age, and children are eligible for this free service through 18 years of age. College students should attend the adult clinics and there is a fee. Vaccines are provided to protect against diphtheria, polio, whooping cough, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella (German Measles), hepatitis, and HIB (Hemophilus influenza type B, which is one cause of meningitis), hepatitis B, hepatitis A, chickenpox and meningitis. Flu and pneumonia shots for senior citizens are offered in November. Clinic times and dates may be obtained from any Health Department office.

Tuberculosis Control Clinics are held monthly in the Middletown and Newburgh offices. Telephone any office for clinic hours.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) clinics are conducted for the diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases. No appointment is necessary and, consistent with Public Health Law, parental permission is not required for minors. All information is strictly confidential. Clinic services include epidemiological follow-up by a Public Health Advisor to trace sexual contacts of the infected persons and bring those contacts to diagnosis and appropriate treatment. STD clinics are held in the Health Department office in Newburgh (845-568-5333) on Thursday evening 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. and in the Middletown office (845-346-1113), Wednesdays 10 a.m. - Noon (Walk-ins seen).

HIV Counseling and Testing both anonymous and confidential is conducted in Middletown and Newburgh, weekly, by certified counselors. In Middletown (845-346-1113), services are offered Wednesdays 10 a.m. - Noon (no appointment necessary) and in Newburgh (845-568-5333) services are offered Thursdays from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. without appointment.

Women, Infant and Children (WIC) clinics provide special supplemental nutrition for high-risk pregnant and breast-feeding women, as well as to infants and children up to 5 years of age. Clients gain access to medical care and are provided supplemental food vouchers, nutrition education and breast-feeding support. Clinic sites are in Middletown, Newburgh, Port Jervis, Monroe, Walden, and Pine Island Migrant Health Center. The WIC program is free to women, infants and children who are found to be medically and financially eligible. Application forms are available at all Health Department offices.

For information, please call the WIC office at Harriman (845) 291-2044, or Newburgh (845) 568-5288 or Middletown (845) 346-1300.

Physically Handicapped Children's Program (PHCP)

The purpose of the PHCP is to help families pay for medical services needed by children to the age of 21 who have certain kinds of long lasting health problems or are in need of orthodontia treatment. The program will only make payment for services approved by NYS and authorized by Orange County. A family must meet PHCP financial eligibility requirements. An application must be made with the Department of Social Services prior to an application with PHCP, unless your child already has Child Health Plus. For further information you may call the Orange County Department of Health.

Environmental Health

The Division of Environmental Health provides services directed at safety and the prevention of disease, as well as the alleviation or prevention of human suffering resulting from harmful environmental conditions. Major responsibilities include the surveillance of all public water supplies, including the bacteriological and chemical content of water, the inspection of food service establishments in both commercial and non-commercial settings, and the approval of plans for realty subdivision, sewage systems, water supplies and swimming pools.

In addition, other services apply to schools, day care centers, children's camps, hotel/motels, mobile home parks, state licensed and local institutions, swimming pools/bathing beaches, insect and rodent control, migrant labor camps, and the investigation of nuisances, hazards and animal bites. The Public Health Law and the Sanitary Code mandate many of these services. There are charges for operating permits for various facilities and plan review charges are also levied for realty subdivision, sewage, swimming pool and food services plans. For information, call Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (845) 291-2331 or visit the website at www.orangecountygov.com

Community Health Outreach

Community Health Outreach (CHO) is a county and grant-funded unit of the Orange County Department of Health that provides public health education, intervention services, case management and prevention services to target high-risk communities and/or specific public health issues in Orange County. CHO provides education, information and referral to individuals who are at highest risk of contracting communicable and infectious disease and/or require medical management for acute or chronic health problems.
(845) 568-5231 / Fax: (845) 565-5279.

The overall goal is to foster behavioral changes that will result in positive outcomes through outreach, education, referral and case management with the following programs:

- ❖ Adolescent Tobacco Use Prevention Act (ATUPA)
- ❖ Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP)
- ❖ Community Health Worker Program (CHWP)
- ❖ Comprehensive Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Plan
- ❖ Healthy Neighborhoods
- ❖ Lyme Disease Surveillance and Education Program
- ❖ Migrant Health Services (MHS)
- ❖ Public Health Education
- ❖ Tobacco Free Schools
- ❖ West Nile Virus Surveillance and Education Program
- ❖ Youth Empowerment Program Against Tobacco Use (Reality Check)

Early Intervention Services

In Orange County, children from birth to age three, who are experiencing a developmental delay, are eligible for Early Intervention Services. Early Intervention provides services such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech, and educational therapy, and family counseling in the child's natural environment whenever possible. The aim is to provide family training to help the family to enhance their child's development. For more information contact the Intervention Division Office (845) 291-2333.

Child Find / Infant-Child Health Assessment Program (ICHAP)

Child Find / ICHAP is a component of the Early Intervention Program, which is designed to identify, track and monitor infants and toddlers at risk of developmental delay and disabilities. Public Health Nurses provide periodic home visits to assess the child's developmental status and provide appropriate information and referral for families concerning their child. For information contact Child Find / ICHAP at (845) 568-5281.

It may also be helpful to contact your local hospitals and inquire about the services they offer in their pediatric clinics and immunization centers.

4. Tips For Raising Healthy Grandchildren

Immunizations

Immunizations are shots that protect children from many contagious diseases. It is important for your grandchildren to get their shots at the right times in order to prevent them from getting sick with fevers and rashes or diseases that can cause more serious problems such as brain damage, heart problems, crippling, deafness, and blindness. School districts and daycare centers require proof of immunizations before a child can be enrolled. Following is a chart for all major childhood immunizations and the correlating recommended ages for each. In order to read this chart, locate the "recommended age" in the first left-hand column and follow the row across. Each box that has a check in it corresponds to a type of immunization that the child should receive at that age.

Recommended Age	Prevnar	Polio (IPV)	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis (DTaP)	Haemophilus Influenzae type b (HbOC-Hib Titer) (Hib)	Hepatitis B (Hep B)	Measles Mumps Rubella (MMR)	Tetanus Diptheria Booster (Adult Td)	Varicella (chickenpox)
Birth					✓			
2 Months	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
4 Months	✓	✓	✓	✓				
6 Months	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (16-18 mo.)			
12-18 Months	✓		✓	✓		✓ (16-18 mo.)		✓
4-6 Years		✓	✓					
Every 10 Yrs.							✓	

Lead Poisoning

Many American children are at risk of lead poisoning. One out of every six American children has too much lead in their blood. The biggest source of lead in the home is lead-based paint used on walls, floors, doorway trim, window sills and radiators in some older homes. Children with high levels of lead in their bodies can suffer from anemia, behavior problems, hearing loss, developmental delays, and some brain damage.

Guidelines for Keeping Your Grandchildren Safe from Leaded Paint in the Home

- ◆ Be sure all children are tested for lead at ages one and two.
- ◆ Wash your grandchild's hands and toys often with soap and warm water to get rid of lead dust.
- ◆ Store your food and beverages in plastic, glass (not lead crystal), or stainless steel containers only.
- ◆ Keep cribs and beds away from painted radiators, windows and woodwork that are chipped and peeling.
- ◆ Look out for any chipping, peeling, or flaking in your apartment or rental house. Report it in writing to your landlord. When work is being completed on the painted surfaces remove children from the environment. Thoroughly damp-dust and wet mop the renovated area before children return.
- ◆ Let your tap water run for a few minutes in the morning before using it for drinking, cooking, or making baby formula. Use cold water only. Hot water or water that has been sitting in the pipes for hours may contain high levels of lead.

SIDS

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden and unexplained death of an infant under one year of age. SIDS, sometimes known as 'crib death', strikes approximately 2200 babies in the United States every year. But, cribs don't cause SIDS. Doctors and nurses don't know what causes SIDS, but there are steps you can take to reduce the risk of SIDS.

One of the most important things you can do is to put your baby to sleep on his or her back. Do this when your baby is being put down for a nap or to bed for the night. This is new information since you may have been told that babies sleep on their tummies. Babies who sleep on their stomachs are much more likely to die of SIDS than babies who sleep on their backs. You may have also heard that babies can sleep on their sides. But, now we know that the side sleep position can be risky too and is no longer considered a safe option.

Other Steps You Can Take to Help Reduce the Risk of SIDS

- ◆ ***Sleep space*** - Make sure your baby sleeps on a firm sleep surface, such as a safety approved crib mattress covered by a fitted sheet. Do not use fluffy blankets or comforters under the baby or in the crib. Do not let the baby sleep on a waterbed, sheepskin, pillows, or other soft materials. Also, keep toys, soft objects, and loose bedding out of the baby's sleep area. Keep your baby's sleep area close to, but separate from, where you and others sleep. Babies should not sleep on a futon, couch or armchair and older children should not share the same sleep space as your baby.
- ◆ ***Smoke-free*** - Create a smoke-free zone around your baby. No one should smoke around your baby.
- ◆ ***Temperature*** - Don't let your baby get too warm during sleep. Dress your baby in light sleep clothing and keep the temperature in your baby's room at a level that feels comfortable to you.
- ◆ ***Pacifiers*** - Think about giving your baby a pacifier when putting your baby down to sleep, but don't force the baby to take it.
- ◆ ***Wedges/Special Mattresses*** - Avoid products that claim to reduce the risk of SIDS. Most of these products haven't been tested for safety or effectiveness and your baby doesn't need any special devices to sleep on his or her back.
- ◆ ***Tummy Time*** - Your baby should spend time on his or her tummy while awake and supervised. Tummy Time helps your baby's head, neck, and shoulder muscles get stronger and helps to prevent flat spots developing on his or her head. Also, avoid having your baby spend too much time in infant seats, swings, carriers, and bouncers as they can cause flat spots to develop.
- ◆ ***Doctor or clinic visits*** - If your baby seems sick, call your doctor or health clinic right away. Make sure your baby receives his or her shots on schedule.

If you have any questions about your baby's sleep position or health, first talk to your doctor or nurse. For more information, call the New York State Center for Sudden Infant Death at 1-800-336-SIDS (7437).

* Adapted from brochures from the *Back to Sleep* campaign sponsored by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

D. Education for Your Child

Relative caregivers who are raising children will need to enroll them in school. Boards of Education issue guidelines about who can enroll a child in school or see a child's school records. These guidelines vary depending on where the grandchild lives. However, New York State law says that persons in parental relation to the child may enroll a child in school. Persons in parental relation include:

- ◆ the child's father or mother
- ◆ the child's adopted father or mother
- ◆ the child's step-father or step-mother
- ◆ the child's court appointed guardian
- ◆ the child's custodian

New York State Education Law defines a custodian as a person who does not have a legal relationship to the child but is caring for the child as if he or she is the child's parent because the parent or legal guardian:

- ◆ has died
- ◆ is in prison
- ◆ is mentally ill
- ◆ is in an institution
- ◆ has abandoned the child
- ◆ is absent and has disappeared
- ◆ is living outside the state

1. School Enrollment

In addition, it is necessary to show that you have assumed care and control of the child and that the child is residing with you and will continue to live in your home. Schools may require legal custody or guardianship in order to prove that you have assumed the care and control of a child. Often school districts will only ask for an affidavit stating that you are the child's caregiver and the reason you are caring for your grandchild. An affidavit from the parent attesting to the fact that you have assumed the full care and control of a child may also be necessary. Schools can also request documents that prove where the relative and child live. Suitable documentation includes a utility bill, driver's license, medical insurance card, a letter from the Department of Social Services, etc. (For a copy of the Parental Designation form contact Cornell Cooperative Extension's Relatives as Parents Program at 845-344-1234.)

Following the aforementioned procedure should allow you to enroll your grandchild in school, see your grandchild's school records, and make decisions about your grandchild's education. Note: You may need to educate your school administrators to help them understand that legal custody or guardianship of the child is not necessarily required in order for you to enroll him or her in school.

2. Special Education Services

Any student with a disability is entitled to receive a "free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment". If you feel that a child has a disability and would benefit from special services you must request this in writing. Send a letter to the Committee on Special Education in your school district or to the principal of your neighborhood school. Your letter should include your reasons for making this request and any details that describe the child's areas of difficulty. Date the letter and keep a copy for your records.

The Committee on Special Education (CSE) will send you a plan for an evaluation. Federal law permits grandparents and other relative caregivers to participate in the deliberations of the CSE. The evaluation must include a physical examination, an individual psychological evaluation (when necessary), a social history, an observation of the student in the classroom and appropriate educational evaluations and assessments relating to the areas of suspected disability. Once you agree upon the appropriate tests, sign and return the plan. In New York, the school district has 40 school days from the date of the grandparent's original letter or within 30 school days from receipt of the signed consent to complete the evaluation. Although the Committee on Special Education is responsible for making all the arrangements for the evaluation, you also have the right to bring or send additional information about your grandchild to the Committee. The results of the evaluation are used to determine what your grandchild's individual needs are and if your grandchild has a disability.

If the evaluation determines that a child requires special education, the recommendation will identify the disability; describe your grandchild's strengths and areas of need; list goals that the child should reach in a year's time, include short-term instructional objectives to be mastered or major accomplishments to be gained that will lead toward reaching the annual goals, and, identify the types of programs and services that your grandchild will receive. All of this information will be included on your grandchild's Individualized Education Program (IEP). You will be sent a copy of the IEP, and as the authorized caregiver, you must approve it. Read it carefully to make sure it does what it is meant to do. Consider the following: Does the IEP cover all areas of your grandchild's development including behavior, socialization, communication, self-help, academic and motor skills? Does it state specifically how goals and objectives will be measured? Is it realistic? Does it encourage growth at a reasonable rate? Is it written in language that you can understand and discuss? Once your child has begun the IEP process, he or she will be reviewed annually and reassessed at least every three years.

The needs of many children with disabilities can be met in a public school setting with peers who are not disabled. Alternative programs should be considered only when the student's needs cannot be met within the regular school setting. The success of any student's educational program relies on the active participation of all persons responsible for the student. Your involvement, as a caregiver is essential. For more information on special education services, technical assistance and referral, contact Orange/Ulster BOCES Special Education Training Resource Center, 163 Harriman Heights Rd., Monroe NY 10924 at 845-781-4363 ext. 10787 or Family Empowerment Council, Inc., YESS (Youth Educational School Services), 225 Dolson Ave., Middletown, NY 10940, 845-343-8100.

E. Child Care For Your Grandchild

The early years are a time of rapid growth and development for your grandchild. There will be new ideas to explore, skills to master and many new people to meet. A good early childhood program should nurture your grandchild's development on all levels.

1. Types of Child Care Available

The following are the types of childcare that are available for full time or regular part time care. For help in finding child care based on your family's individual needs, contact one of the Child Care Resource and Referral agencies listed at the end of this section. (Nursery Schools are not listed here as they run for less than 3 hours per day and are not a registered or licensed child care program by the NYS Office of Children & Family Services.)

a. Child Care Centers

These are full or part day programs in public or private locations. They include day care centers and Head Start programs (free part day program for income eligible children). Children are grouped according to age.

b. Family Child Care Homes

Care for children in the home of another family. Children of various ages can be accommodated in a small group setting and flexible hours can be arranged. The number of children allowed in the care of any family childcare home is regulated by the state.

c. In-Home Care

This is care in a child's own home by a person hired specifically for that purpose.

d. Summer Day Camps

Camps offer summer activities usually for school-age children. Programs vary from number of hours per day to number of weeks in a session.

e. School-Age Child Care

School-age child care means care provided on a regular basis to 7 or more school-age children who are under 13 years of age or who are incapable of caring for themselves.

2. Choosing Suitable Child Care

Before deciding what type of childcare best suits your needs, you should visit several potential programs and/or providers. During your visit, consider the following questions:

◆ Do the adults:

- appear warm and friendly? seem calm and gentle?
- hold and touch each child in a caring manner?
- have experience working with children?
- treat each child as an individual?
- share your methods of guiding and controlling behavior?

◆ Is there ample opportunity for your child to enjoy:

- good quality picture books?
- manipulative toys?
- creative materials which a child can use in his/her own way?
- active play indoors and outside?

◆ Do children:

- receive individual attention?
- work alone as well as in small groups?
- have a balance between vigorous outdoor play and quiet indoor play?

Now that you've found childcare, how can you maintain a good relationship between you and your child care provider?

The most important thing you as a grandparent can do to deal with problems that may arise with your caregiver, is to work on establishing and maintaining a good relationship. The following are a few suggestions:

- ◆ Keep your side of the contract. Pay tuition and fees on time, provide all requested items for your child, and be prompt for pick-up and drop-off time.
- ◆ Talk things over. A short talk each day with the provider will be all you need. You might want to mention anything that has happened in your grandchild's life that might be affecting his/her behavior in care.
- ◆ Consider the caregiver's feelings. Show the caregiver that you appreciate what she is doing. Don't just wait for problems to arise before you provide feedback to your caregiver.
- ◆ If you disagree with the caregiver's childcare methods discuss these differences with her. State how you would like things done and reasons for it. Listen to her reasons.

3. Where To Get Help

A community based Child Care Resource and Referral agency can help you find childcare based on the individual needs of your family. The following are the telephone numbers for referral agencies in the metropolitan New York area.

In Nassau County	(516) 358-9288
In New York City	(212) 929-7604 x 3025 & 3032
In Orange County	(800) 827-1751
In Putnam County	(845) 621-5619
In Rockland County	(845) 425-0009
In Suffolk County	(516) 462-0303
In Westchester County	(914) 761-3456 ext. 140

Some of these agencies can help you determine if you are eligible for financial assistance to help pay for childcare or direct you to the agencies that can.

What if you have concerns about your childcare program or provider?

In New York State, the Department of Social Services maintains a state-wide, toll free Child Complaint Line at 1-800-732-5207 for complaints of possible regulatory violations in a child care program.

To report suspected cases of Child Abuse or Maltreatment in New York State call toll free: 1-800-342-3720.

F. Youth Development Programs and Services:

There are a variety of services and programs dedicated to servicing the youth of Orange County. Please call the programs listed below as well as checking with your faith community, local libraries and school district to see what specific services they offer.

Cornell Cooperative Extension

1 Ashley Ave. Middletown NY 10940
344-1234
www.cce.cornell.edu/orange

The Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H Program's goal is to encourage youth (5-19 years old) to learn life skills, give back to their communities, and gain leadership skills that will help them grow into healthy and productive citizens. The 4-H Staff utilize a wide variety of delivery methods-including 4-H Clubs, school, after school, camps and special interest programs-to involve youth in hands-on learning experiences.

Town of Walkill Boys and Girls Club

PO Box 14, Circleville, NY 10919
361-2222

Provides recreational and educational activities for school age youth. Includes homework help, leadership development, employment skills, sports and cooking.

Sarah Wells Girl Scout Council

162 Bloomingburg Rd., Middletown NY 10940
361-2898

The mission of the Girl Scouts is to help girls develop to their fullest potential in order to become competent and resourceful women. Offers traditional and non-traditional mentoring opportunities for girls.

Middletown YMCA

81 Highland Ave., Middletown NY 10940
343-1158

Newburgh Family YMCA

10 Little Britain Rd., Suite 204, Newburgh NY 12550
566-0800

The YMCA's offer a wide variety of recreational and educational services to children and adults.

Boy Scouts of America/ Hudson Valley

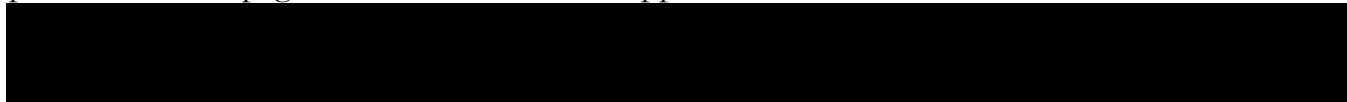
21-30 Route 94, Salisbury Mills 12577
497-7337

Offers youth programs for boys to build positive character development and values based leadership skills.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Orange County

253 South William St., Newburgh NY 12550
1-888-412-BIGS, 562-5900, 342-3939

A county wide service that matches qualified adult volunteers with children (ages 6 - 14) to provide friendship, guidance and emotional support.



561- 4936

A comprehensive recreation and youth service program targeting minority and disadvantaged youth. Includes social, cultural and educational programs.

Center for Youth Development (OCCC)

Liberty Partnership Program
One Washington Center, Newburgh NY 12550
562-2469

Offers a variety of support services to students grades 7 through 12.

Port Jervis Youth Center

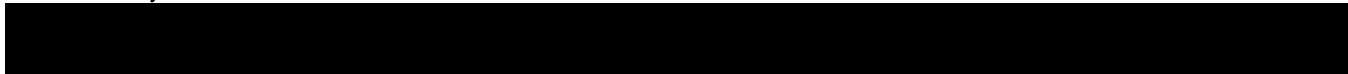
134 Pike St., Port Jervis, NY 12771
858-4045

Provides recreation for youth in grades K -12. Includes arts and crafts, games, tutoring and socializing opportunities.

Warwick Valley Community Center

11 Hamilton Ave. Warwick, NY 10990
986-6422

Provides affordable social, cultural, educational and recreational activities for the Warwick community.



38 Seward Ave., Middletown NY 10940
343-0970

Provides a group care facility that will address the needs of run away and homeless youth up to age 17.

National Runaway Switch board/ Adolescent Suicide Hotline

1-800-RUNAWAY

Provides crisis intervention, information and referral.

Orange County Parks

211 Rte. 416 Montgomery NY 12549
457-4900

The Orange County Parks and Recreation Department provides year-round programming and facility usage for all county residents. Call the Orange County Department of Parks and Recreation for a listing of Orange County parks.

Town of Newburgh Recreation	564-7815
Blooming Grove Recreation Program	496-9201
Cornwall Recreation Program	534-4388
Cornwall-Hudson Recreation Program	534-4200
Crawford Recreation Program	744-2029 ext.115

Florida Youth Recreation	651-7815
Goshen Recreation Program	294-1558
Greenwood Lake Recreation Program	477-9215
Hamptonburgh Recreation Program	457-5141
Maybrook Recreation Program	427-2717 ext.202
Middletown Recreation Program	346-4180
Montgomery Recreation Program	457-2622
Mt. Hope Recreation Program	386-5603
Newburgh Downtown Youth Center	565-1213
Newburgh Youth Recreation Center	565-3230
New Windsor Recreation Program	565-7750
Port Jervis Recreation Program	858-4045
Tuxedo Recreation Program	351-5598
Walden Recreation Program	778-2655
Warwick Recreation Program	986-2031
Woodbury Recreation Program	928-9588

A. Orange County Department of Health & Social Services Branches & Other Services

1. Orange County Department of Health Offices/Branches

Main Office

124 Main Street
Goshen, NY 10924
(845) 291-2341

Middletown Branch

33 Fulton Plaza
Middletown, NY
(845) 346-1113

Harriman Branch

33 Route 17M
Harriman, NY 10963
(845) 291-2044

Newburgh Branch

141 Broadway
Newburgh, NY 12550
(845) 568-5333

Port Jervis Branch

168 East Main Street
Port Jervis, N Y 12771
(845) 858-1468

Woman, Infant and Children (WIC) Clinic, Immunization Clinics, Early Intervention Services, Infant-Child Health Assessments, Sexually Transmitted Diseases Clinic, HIV Counseling and Testing, Tuberculosis Control Clinics, Public Health Nursing, Physically Handicapped Children's Program (PHCP), Environmental Health, Community Health Outreach, and Long Term Health Care Services.

2. Orange County Department of Social Services - Medicaid Offices

Goshen Office

Medicaid & Food Stamp only
Quarry Road
Goshen, NY 10924
(845) 291-4000

Middletown Office

Temporary Assistance & HEAP
33 Fulton Plaza
Middletown, NY 10940
(845) 346-1120

Newburgh Office

Temporary Assistance & HEAP
141 Broadway
Newburgh, NY 12550
(845) 568-5100

*Call ahead for Medicaid

For any questions regarding social services, call (845) 291-2002.

3. Orange County Youth Bureau

18 Seward Avenue
Middletown, NY 10940
(845)615-3620

Newburgh Youth Bureau
104 S. Lander Street
Newburgh, NY 12550
(845) 565-1213

The Orange County Youth Bureau's main mission is to prevent juvenile delinquency, promote positive youth development and coordinate services for all youth in Orange County. The Orange County and Newburgh Youth Bureaus are responsible for: information and referral to youth programs, coordination of youth services, county comprehensive planning, advocacy for youth and families, allocation of funding, and data collection on youth issues.

4. RAPP Peer to Peer Mentoring Program

RAPP has partnered with Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Orange County to create a peer to peer mentoring program for grandparents and relatives raising children. RAPP families may be assigned a peer mentor to assist with navigating their journey through the legal, educational and social services. This will be accomplished through monthly telephone calls and in person contact.

5. RSVP - An Invitation To Serve.

RSVP Volunteers in Orange County serve at more than 61 human service agencies, located in most areas and neighborhoods. RSVP volunteers who are over the age of 55 are eligible for benefits including insurance coverage while volunteering, mileage reimbursement to and from their volunteer station, and recognition for their service. If you are interested in finding out more, please call 291-2176.

B. Parenting Education Services

Cornell Cooperative Extension Orange County

1 Ashley Avenue, Middletown, NY 10940. (845) 344-1234

In cooperation with the Orange County Parenting Coalition, Cornell Cooperative Extension - Orange County offers parents and grandparents assistance in identifying and clarifying their needs in respect to parenting education and support services. Through a resource and referral telephone help line, Extension provides information about the diverse parenting education resources available in the county and distributes written materials to support parents with caregiving responsibilities. Copies of the "Orange County Parenting Education Directory" are available at no charge.

Cornell Cooperative Extension Orange County, with guidance from the Dependent Care Alliance as the Advisory Committee, offers the Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP). Through RAPP, mutual support groups for grandparents and/or relatives caring for children are held in Middletown, Central Valley and Newburgh. In Middletown the support group is held the first Tuesday of the month from 6:30 - 8:00 pm at Cornell Cooperative Extension Orange County, 1 Ashley Avenue, Middletown, NY. In Central Valley the support group is held the first Thursday of the month from 6:30 - 8:00 at Central Valley Elementary School, 45 Route 32, Central Valley, NY. In Newburgh, the support group is held the second Tuesday of the month from 6:30 - 8:00 pm at Independent Living, Inc., 5 Washington Terrace, Newburgh, NY.

"Parenting the Second Time Around", a Cornell Cooperative Extension 6-part educational series designed specifically for kinship care families. This curriculum received the 2003 First Place National Award (NEAFCS) for Curriculum Development. The series will assist caregivers to explore and gain current research based knowledge and skills to foster safe and healthy parenting education practices. Topics include: child development, discipline and guidance, rebuilding a family, acknowledging ambivalent feelings, legal issues and advocacy.

"Help for Grandparents Raising Children with Developmental Disabilities" is a six-week series of workshops to provide practical and useful information to grandparents. Raising a grandchild with developmental disabilities enters one into a whole new world of systems, laws and policies that are difficult to understand and navigate. This curriculum was administered by the New York State Office for the Aging with funding provided by the New York State Developmental Disability Planning Council.

"From Hardship to Hope: Recognizing and Responding to Mental Health Concerns of Grandparent Caregivers" is a six-week education series for relative caregivers. This curriculum focuses on the emotional and mental health needs of grandparents and other relatives who are caring for and raising someone else's children. This curriculum was developed at the Brookdale Center on Aging of Hunter College and was funded by the office of New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer with a grant made possible by the 2003 Lorazepam and Clorazepate Antitrust Litigation Settlement.

C. Disabilities Services

Action Toward Independence

2927 Route 6
Slate Hill, NY 10973
(845) 355-2030

Independent Living, Inc.

5 Washington Terrace
Newburgh, NY 12550
(845) 565-1162

Both agencies provide resource and referral information for individuals with physical disabilities such as vision loss, hearing impairment and/or mobility difficulty.

Orange County Department of Mental Health

Drawer 471, Harriman Drive
Goshen, NY 10924
(845) 291-2600

Through collaboration with public and private organizations, this agency supports families caring for an individual diagnosed with a developmental disability. Developmental disabilities include: mental retardation, autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy or other neurological impairments which become apparent during childhood. Support services include residential treatment, day treatment, case management, caregiver respite and supported employment.

Families who have a child (0-3 years of age) who may be disabled should contact the Early Intervention Program at the Orange County Department of Health, (845) 291-2333. For children ages 3-5, contact your local school district's committee for pre-school special education.

Home & Community Based Services Medicaid Waiver - Waives parental income to allow the child with the developmental disability eligibility for Medicaid and waiver services.

Services Provided Through the Medicaid Waiver: contact Sally Kohut (845) 291-4133.

Service Coordination: An individual, selected by the family, to identify, link, access and follow-up on needed services. The service coordinator is the fundamental key to accessing the system and alleviating some of the parental burden within the system. Adaptive Technologies which include environmental modifications and adaptive equipment, in home residential rehabilitation and respite.

- ◆ ***In-home Residential Rehabilitation:*** An individual is hired in conjunction with the family, to work hands on with the child while in the home setting. The individual can work with the child in many areas such as: daily living skills, socialization, adapting school learning and techniques to home life and accessing community resources. This also facilitates in alleviating parental responsibility so other family members and siblings can flourish.
- ◆ ***In-home Respite:*** An individual is hired in conjunction with the family, to provide safe and competent care for the child so the family may get a needed break. This service can occur in the home or at a certified respite site.

D. Elder Care Services

Orange County Office for the Aging

18 Seward Avenue

Middletown, NY 10940

(845) 651-3700

Supportive nutrition, health, and other support services related to social and physical well-being are available to help safely maintain older people in their homes and provide assistance to their caregivers. Trained staff answer caregiver's questions, help in identification of specific issues/needs and link individuals to appropriate public and private programs which address those issues/needs. Direct and indirect support services include, but are not limited to: home delivered meals, caregiver support groups and education, information and referral, transportation, in-home non-medical personal care, limited legal assistance, adult day care, Alzheimer's specific care and insurance counseling.

E. Suggested Reading for Grandparents & Grandchildren

When someone you love dies or is gone for a long period of time the natural reaction is grief. Anyone old enough to love is old enough to grieve. Even before children are able to talk, they grieve when someone they love dies or is absent. These feelings about loss become part of them forever.

How adults respond when someone loved is absent has a major effect on children. Grandparents who are raising their grandchildren and who are willing to talk openly about the death or prolonged absence of the child's parent will help the children understand that grief is a natural feeling. Children need adults to confirm that it's all right to cry and be sad, and that the hurt they feel now won't last forever.

A child's questions about death and loss need to be answered in language they can understand. Adults shouldn't worry about having all the answers. The most important thing is to answer as best you can and in a caring way.

The following is a list of books for children that deal with feelings, losing someone you love, and/or the challenges in being raised by a grandparent. We have included the suggested age for use, but most of these books will be enjoyed by older children and adults too! Feeling confident that you will find these useful, additional lists are included that have been developed and generously shared with us by area libraries.

1. Books for Children

Aarvy Aardvark Finds Hope

Donna O'Toole

All Ages

1988

An aardvark's delayed grief over the loss of family begins to heal through the support of a caring friend.

Abuela

Arthur Dorros

Illustrated by Elisa Kleven

Four to Eight

1995

While riding on a bus with her grandmother a little girl imagines they are carried up in the sky and fly over the sights of New York City (in Spanish).

Alexander and the Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day

Judith Viorst

Four to Eight

1972

This book has become a classic. Alexander has a terrible day, beginning when he wakes up with gum in his hair and ending with the cat wanting to sleep with his brother instead of with him. His wise mother reassures him that "some days are like that!"

An Elephant in the Living Room

Jill Hastings & Marion Typpo

Seven to Twelve

1984

This book helps children from alcoholic homes learn about alcoholism, and teaches new ways to handle feelings.

A Lei for Tutu

Rebecca Fellows

Illustrated by Linda Finch

Four to Eight

1998

Nāhoa and her grandmother plan to make a particularly beautiful lei for Lei Day. When grandmother becomes ill and is taken to the hospital Nāhoa devises a special plan.

Belle Prater's Boy
Ruth White
Elementary School
1996

When Woodrow's mother disappears suddenly, he moves to his grandparents' home in a small Virginia town. He befriends his cousin and together they find the strength to face the terrible losses and fears in their lives.

Can You Do This Old Badger?
Eve Bunting
Illustrated by LeUyen Pham
Four to Eight
2000

Although Old Badger cannot do some things as easily as he used to, he can still teach Little Badger the many things he knows about finding good things to eat and staying safe and happy.

Dinosaurs Divorce: A Guide for Changing Families
Laurence Krasny Brown and Marc Brown
Five to Twelve
1986

Dinosaur characters depict the range of experiences and feelings encountered by children whose parents have divorced. Simple, direct text and lively pictures encourage young readers to acknowledge and express their own fears and reactions to this experience. (Dinosaur Death is also very good.)

Do I Have a Daddy?
Jeanne Warren Lindsay
Four to Eight
1991

This story provides a model for how to respond to children's questions about a parent they have never seen.

Daddy, Will You Miss Me?
Wendy McCormick
Illustrated by Jennifer Eachus
Four to Six
1999

A boy and his father think of many different ways to be in touch while the daddy spends a month in Africa.

Everett Anderson's Goodbye

Lucille Clifton

Four to Six

1983

Everett Anderson has a difficult time coming to terms with his grief after his father dies.

Good-Bye Daddy!

Brigitte Weninger

Illustrated by Alan Mark Illush

Four to Nine

1995

After spending the day with his daddy, a young bear is sad and angry that his father has to leave. The bear comes to learn that even when a father has to live in another home, the love and caring never go away.

Grandpa's Garden

Shea Darian

Illustrated by Karlyn Holman

Five to Eight

1996

Every Saturday Grandpa and grandchild work in the garden, sharing words and thoughts. For a time, when Grandpa has a heart attack his grandchild works alone.

How Are You Peeling?

Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers

For all ages

1995

Wonderful illustrations of "foods with moods" can provide springboards for discussions about feelings.

It's Okay to Be Different

Todd Parr

Four to Eight

2001

There are many ways to be different and all of them are okay.

Keeping Up with Grandma

John Winch

Four to Eight

2000

When Grandma decides that it is time to have fun outdoors Grandpa has trouble keeping up with her.

Kids and Grandparents: An Activity Book

Ann Love and Jane Drave

Kindergarten age - preteen

1999

A collection of activities to help grandparents and grandchildren stay committed and build on their special relationship.

Let's Talk About Living with a Grandparent

Susan Kent

Six to Ten

2000

New York: Rosen Publishing

What it's like to live with a grandparent and some hints for ways to make it pleasant.

Love is a Family

Roma Downey

Illustrated by Justine Garguet

Four to Eight

2001

Lily worries that she will be the only kid in her class who brings just one person to Family Fun Night. It turns out that there were many kinds of families, including grandparents raising a grandson.

My Grandmother has AIDS

Valerie Reeder-Bey and Annisha Monic Wiburn

Six to Ten

2000

Arinisha lives with her grandmother, who has Aids. Through the story young readers learn that it is safe to live with, kiss and hug someone you love who is infected with Aids.

My Many Colored Days

Dr. Seuss

Illustrated by Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher

All ages

1996

Days seem to take on different colors, according to your moods.

Nonna

Jennifer Bartoli

Four to Seven

1975

A boy tells the story of the death of his grandmother, portraying how young children respond to the death of a loved one.

Read To Me

Judy Moreillon

Illustrated by Kyra Teis

All ages

2004

Sweet and gentle text and illustrations about all the good reasons to read.

Remember Me

Margaret Wild

Illustrated by Dee Huxley

Four to Eight

1990

Although she may forget many things Ellie's Grandma remembers the special times they have shared.

Robert Lives With His Grandparents: A Concept Book

Martha Whitmore Hickman

Illustrated by Tim Horton

Kindergarten-Fourth grade

1995

Robert's parents are divorced and he lives with his grandparents. When his grandmother decides to attend Parents Day at his school, he is afraid of what the other kids will think of him.

Sophie

Mem Fox

Illustrated by A.B.L. Robinson

Five to Ten

1994

As Sophie grows bigger and her grandfather gets smaller they continue to love each other very much.

Tear Soup A Recipe for Healing after Loss

Pat Schwiebert and Chuck DeKlyen

Illustrated by Taylor Bills

Five to adult

1999

This is the story of how Grandy (an old and somewhat wise woman) faced a big loss in her life by setting out to make tear soup.

The Boys and Girls Book about Divorce, With an Introduction for Parents

Richard A. Gardner

Pre-Teen through Adolescence

1992

A warm reassurance and honest answers to questions frequently asked by children of divorced parents.

The Saddest Time

Norma Simon

Four to Eight

1986

Losing a loved one is the subject of these three gentle stories.

The Tenth Good Thing About Barney

Judith Viorst

Illustrated by Erik Blegvad

Five to Eight

1971

When a cat dies a boy tries to think of ten good things to say about his pet at this funeral.

What! Cried Granny: An Almost Bedtime Story

Kate Lum

Illustrated by Adrian Johnson

Four to Eight

1998

Patrick's first sleepover at his Granny's house is quite an adventure!

What Grandmas Do Best

What Grandpas Do Best

Laura Joffe Numeroff

Illustrated by Lynn Munsinger

Preschool

2000

Grandparents can do many things but best of all, they give you lots of love.

When Dinosaurs Die

A Guide to Understanding Death

Marc Tolon Brown and Laurie Krasny Brown

Five to Ten

1996

Explains the feelings people may have when a loved one dies and suggests ways to honor the dead.

When Sophie Gets Angry - Really, Really Angry

Molly Bang

Three to seven

1999

Simple text and large bright illustrations show what Sophie does when she gets angry and provide an opportunity for readers to talk about what they do when they get mad. Different people handle anger in different ways. When Sophie gets angry she climbs her favorite tree.

2. Books for Adults

Author: Sylvie De Toledo

Title: *Grandparents as Parents A Survival Guide for Raising a Second Family*

Date: 1995

A guidebook for any grandparent who is raising a grandchild.

Author : Deborah Doucette-Dudman
Title : *Raising Our Children's Children*
Date : 1997

The social, legal and emotional issues faced by grandparents as parents, such as custody battles, housing issues, and prior mistreatment of the children.

Author : Lillian Carson
Title : *The Essential Grandparent: A Guide for Making a Difference*
Date : 1996

An easily readable book that honors grandparenthood, dispelling grandparenting myths and helping readers develop their own grandparenting strategy.

Author : Arthur Komhaber
Title : *Contemporary Grandparenting*
Date : 1996

A synthesis of current knowledge about grandparents and their role in families and society. Includes a chapter on grandparents raising their grandchildren.

Author : Eda J. Leshan
Title : *Grandparenting in a Changing World*
Date : 1997

Insightful, witty advice on such topics as grandparents who remarry, grandchildren who live far away, grandparents raising their grandchildren, and more.

Author : Katherine Gabel
Title : *Children of Incarcerated Parents*
Date : 1995

Author : Barbara Hermie
Title : *Coping When a Parent Has AIDS*
Date : 1993

Author: John J. La Valle
Title: *Coping When a Parent Is In Jail*
Date: 1995

Author: Jim Fay
Title: *Grandparenting With Love & Logic:
Practical Solutions to Today's Grandparenting Challenges*

Date: 1994

Author: Marianne Takas

Title: *Relatives Raising Children: A Guide to Finding Help and Hope*

Date: 2005

Available for \$6.00 by writing: The Grandparent Guide, The Brookdale Foundation, 950 Third Ave., 19th Floor, New York, NY 10022. (212) 308-7355.

Author: Traci Truly

Title: *Grandparents Rights: With Forms (Take the Law into Your Own Hands)*

Date: 1995

Author: Naomi Weinstein & Marianne Takas

Title: *The Ties That Bind (Parental Substance Abuse & Kinship Care)*

Date: 2001

Author : Steven Finkelstein

Title : *1997 Rockets Family Fun Activity Guide and Directory:
For Children and Their Parents, Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles (Day trips)*

Date : 1997

3. For Additional print resources, please contact:

Generations United - www.gu.org

Children's Defense Fund - www.childrensdefense.org

Brookdale Foundation - www.brookdalefoundation.org

National Committee of Grandparents for Children's Rights -
www.grandparentsforchildren.org

F. Sources of Support for Grandparent Caregivers

AARP GRANDPARENT INFORMATION CENTER (GIC)

601 E. St. N.W.

Washington, DC 20049

(202) 434-2296; 1-888-687-2277; www.aarp.org/families/grandparents/raising_grandchild

This organization provides local support-group referrals to grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. Available publications include *Parenting Grandchildren: A Voice for Grandparents*; *Tips for Grandparents: Finding Help Untangling the Web of Public Programs*.

BROOKDALE FOUNDATION

950 Third Ave., 19th Floor, New York, NY 10022

(212) 308-7355; www.brookdalefoundation.org

Focuses on the needs of America's elderly. Supports RAPP.

CENTER ON CHILDREN AND LAW

American Bar Association

740-15th Street N.W., Suite 900#

Washington, DC 20005

(202) 662-1720; www.abanet.org search: raising grandchild

FOUNDATION FOR GRANDPARENTING

www.grandparenting.org

Under shortcuts, click on “raising grandchildren.”

GENERATIONS UNITED

1333 H St. NW, Suite 500W

Washington, DC 20005-4752

(202) 289-3979

A coalition of over 100 national organizations that deals with intergenerational issues and programs. Publications include Generations United Newline (a newsletter).

GRANDPARENTS' RIGHTS ORGANIZATION

National Chapter: (248) 646-7191

A nonprofit organization that provides grandparents with information necessary to work effectively for their own rights and the rights of their grandchildren.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF GRANDPARENTS FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS, INC. (NCGCR)

School of Social Welfare, Health Science Center

Stonybrook University

Stonybrook, NY 11794

(866) 624-9900

A coalition of concerned grandparents, citizens and agencies united to create one powerful voice and to network with groups throughout the nation to advocate and lobby for children at risk.

**NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE FOR ALCOHOL AND
DRUG INFORMATION (NCADI)**

P.O. Box 2345
Rockville, MD 20847
(800) 729-6686

This is a federal clearinghouse that provides pamphlets, booklets, posters, fact sheets, and directories on alcohol and drugs. Gives referral for national treatment.

NATIONAL COALITION OF GRANDPARENTS (NCOG)

137 Larkin
Madison, WI 53705
(608) 238- 8751

A coalition of grandparent caregivers who work for legislation and other policy changes in support of relative caregivers.

**NATIONAL INFORMATION CENTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH
DISABILITIES (NICHCY)**

P.O. Box 1492
Washington, DC 20013
(800) 695-0285; www.nichcy.org

NICHCY is a clearinghouse for free information on disabilities and disability-related issues involving children and youth. NICHCY publications include explanations of special education laws and school services for children with disabilities, state resource sheets, and information on individual disabilities. Call or write NICHCY for a free copy of their publication list.

NYS KINSHIP NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

877-454-6463
www.nysnavigator.org

The NYS Kinship Navigator Program is designed to assist all caregivers throughout the state. It's an interactive site to learn about caregiver rights and resources. In addition, you can receive phone consultations with an experienced Kinship Specialist between 10:00am and 4:00pm.

**ZERO TO THREE – NATIONAL CENTER FOR INFANTS, TODDLER &
FAMILIES**

2000 M. St., NW
Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 638-1144

An organization dedicated to development of America's infants and toddlers.

G. Additional Sources of Information and Support

www.grandsrus.com

Grands R Us . . . website for grandparents and special others raising children. This website lists support groups and grandparent rights groups.

www.fosterparents.com/articles/grandparent.htm

The Foster Parent Community homepage.

www.amazon.com

Website to browse for books by subject.

www.divorcenet.com/welcome.html Search: grandparents rights

Family Law Advisor Home Page; Grandparents' right to visitation with their grandchildren.

www.pbs.org/kids/

PTV assists caregivers across America on how to use public television to help children love learning. It offers adults guidance for selecting appropriate programs for their children.

www.eric.ed.gov

ERIC provides free access to more than 1.2 million bibliographic records of journal articles and other educational related materials. ERIC is sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Education, Institute of Education Services (IES).

www.childrensdefense.org

Children's Defense Fund
420 Lexington Ave., Suite 655
New York, NY 10170
www.childrensdefense.org
(212) 697-2323
202-628-8787 (national)

Website provides information and resources on children's wellbeing and issues facing grandparents and caregivers

www.cyfernet.org

Children, Youth and Families Educations and Research Network (CYFERnet)
612-624-8181

Provides information on children, youth and families

Special Thanks To:

Child Care Council of Orange County, Inc.

Cornell Cooperative Extension - Orange County

County Attorney's Office in Orange County

Crystal Run Village, Inc.

Dependent Care Alliance, Inc.

Dispute Resolution Center of Orange, Putnam, Sullivan and Ulster Counties, Inc.

Gerard Wallace, Esq.

The Junior League of Orange County, Inc.

Maternal Infant Services Network of Orange, Sullivan & Ulster Counties, Inc.

Orange County Community College

Orange County Department of Health

Orange County Department of Social Services

Orange County Office for the Aging

NYCOCFS / Orange County Youth Bureau

Orange/Ulster B.O.C.E.S. Special Education Training Resource Center