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Prevent Child Abuse
Georgia™

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

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Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

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A Global Phenomenon

Africa
Caribbean
Eastern Europe
Asia
United States

A Global Phenomenon
Sub-Saharan Africa and Caribbean

HIV/AIDS
Orphans Vulnerable Children (OVCs)
Eastern Europe

Labor migration
Alcohol abuse
China

“Left Behind Children”
Labor migration
Substance abuse
Neglect
Incarceration

United States
United States

• 10% all children live with grandparents
• One million children raised by grandparents (GP) in parent-absent homes
• 1 in 12 (8.3%) children raised by grandparents
• 500,000 children in foster care, 30% with relatives
• More children in “informal” care with grandparents than in foster care
• Custodial grandparent average age: 57 years
United States

- 78% increase since 1990
- Impacts all racial-ethnic groups and income levels
- Minority and low income families disproportionately represented
Custodial Grandparents in Georgia

• 115,378 grandparents had responsibility for at least one grandchild in Georgia*
• Highest concentration in Fulton and DeKalb counties with 12,000 custodial grandparents
• 25% live in poverty
• 30% age 60 or older

*American Community Survey, U.S. Census, 2013
Custodial Grandparents:

• 60% in the workforce
• 25% live below the poverty line
• 50% live in poverty, if grandmother is sole caregiver
• 36% have provided care more than 5 yrs.
• Grandparents/other relatives save tax payers more than 6 billion dollars annually

Source: Generations United
Comparison by Household Head

- Poverty
- < HS education
- Child disability
- Parent disability

- Parent-headed
- GP-headed
Reasons Children in Care

- Abandonment
- Abuse/neglect
- Substance abuse
- Mental health issues
- Incarceration
- HIV/AIDS or other illness/injury
- Intimate partner violence/homicide
Grandparent Challenges

Social Isolation

Depression

Psychological Stress

Financial Issues

Health Issues
Challenges

- Lack of health insurance
- Housing and unsafe neighborhoods
- Adolescents in juvenile court system
- Loss and grief issues
- Parenting later in life
- Loss of “golden years”
- Child emotional & behavioral problems
Challenges

Social Isolation
- Loss of “golden years”

Health Issues
- Physical health issues
- Mental health issues

Depression
- Loss and grief issues

Financial Issues
- Lack of Health Insurance
- Housing and unsafe neighborhoods

Psychological Stress
- Adolescents in juvenile court system

Parenting later in life

Child emotional & behavioral problems
Challenges with Adult Children

- Substance abuse
- Mental health issues
- Multiple rehab attempts
- Theft/illegal activity to support addiction
- Incarceration
- Missing/on street
Advantages Over Foster Care

• Maintaining family/community continuity
• Maintaining cultural and religious continuity
• Placements with relatives more stable
• Siblings more likely to be kept together
Grandchild Challenges

- Abandonment issues
- Disruptions in attachment
- Child maltreatment
- Sporadic parental contact
- Stigma and isolation
- Developmental disabilities
Predictors of Behavior Problems in Children Raised by Grandparents

• N= 230 children, 2-16 years old

• 31.3% children elevated child behavior problems

• Predictors of increased behavior problems:
  • Elevated psychological distress (BSI) in grandmothers
  • Less supportive home environment (HOME)
  • Fewer family resources (FRS)

Perspectives of Grandchildren Raised by Grandparents.....
Justin 14 years old

My grandma is more than just a grandma to me. She is... my mom, my best friend, and my everything......If my grandma hadn’t taken me under her wing when I was little, who knows where I would be. I could be in and out of juvenile facilities...., jumping from foster home to foster home....or in a shelter....
To my wonderful grandmother, you are my inspiration.
When I was a baby you took me in like I was one of your own.
Grandma, I really appreciate all of the love that you show me. I wouldn’t trade you for anything in the world.
Project Healthy Grandparents

• Founded in 1995
• Enhance well-being of grandparent-headed households to improve child outcomes, including the prevention of maltreatment
• On-going research/outreach program
• One year intervention
• Interdisciplinary, strengths-based approach
Families Served

• Predominantly low income and African American
• Atlanta: Fulton and DeKalb Counties
• Majority informal kinship care
• Age grandparents
  • mean = 56 years, range 34-82 years
  • 30% > age 60
PHG Intervention Model

Social worker home visitation

- Monthly
- Legal referrals
- Access public assistance
- Parenting education
- Navigate complex systems
- Access child care
PHG Intervention Model

Registered nurse home visitation

- Monthly visits
- Health screenings and assessments
- Referrals to health care providers
- Health promotion, preventive care
- Management of chronic illnesses, i.e. obesity, hypertension, diabetes
PHG Intervention Model

- Support groups
- Parenting classes
- Transportation
- Holiday “adoptions”
PHG Intervention Model

**Legal referrals**

- Guardianship
- Custody
- Adoption
- Special education
- Wills with plans for grandchildren
PHG Intervention Model

Early intervention (birth to 5 years)

- Screenings (ASQ)
- Developmental evaluations
- EI case management
- Individual education plans (IEP)
- Legal referrals
PHG Website

http://phg.snhp.gsu.edu/
Published Program Outcomes

- Decreased psychological distress\(^1\)
- Improved family resources\(^1\)
- Improved social support\(^1\)
- Improved family coping\(^1\)
- Improved physical and mental health attributes\(^2\)
- Improved health indicators and health promotion behaviors\(^3\)
Select Publications


Policy Issues

• Federal and state preference for placement with relatives
• Formal foster parents often have access to more benefits:
  • Foster care payments
  • Parenting programs
  • Adoption support
  • Child mental health services
• Kinship care stipends
Supporting Intergenerational Families

• Grandparent support groups
• Parenting classes/resources
• Home visitation
• Identify resources:
  • State chapters of AARP
  • Area agencies on aging (AAA)
  • Kinship navigators
  • Child protective service (CPS) agencies
  • United Way
National Resources

• Generations United
• AARP
• Grandparents as Parents (GAP)
• Brookdale Foundation: RAPP
• Casey Family Foundation
• Grandfamilies State Law and Policy Center
• National Research Center on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
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