



The Family Friends Program  
*Grandparent/Relative Caregiver Support Program*  
Children's Mercy Hospital, 2401 Gillham Rd., Kansas City, Missouri 64108  
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FAMILY FRIENDS FACT SHEET  
SUPPORTING GRANDPARENTS AS PARENTS

**HISTORY**

The Family Friends Grandparents and Relative Caregivers program was established in 1993. It was created to empower grandparents and relatives to help themselves improve the quality of their lives and those of the children they care for. We provide group support, guidance and education by trained grandparents, one-on-one support by trained grandparents and professionals by telephone or in their home, links to community resources, access to programs for children and youth for support and guidance as they cope with life changes, opportunities to learn more about legal rights, parenting a new generation of youth, substance abuse, caring for emotional, physical and spiritual needs. Our newest contribution is providing clothing for grandparents and grandchildren through our clothes closet.

**BACKGROUND**

Kinship care is a living arrangement in which a relative or another person who is emotionally close to a child takes on responsibility for raising that child. Factors such as parental substance abuse, incarceration, death, mental illness abandonment are causing growing numbers of grandparents to step forward and keep families together. According to the US Census Bureau, nationally, there are currently over **5.7 million children** under the age of 18 living in grandparent-maintained households. This represents a nearly 25% increase since 2000.

**GOAL**

Our goal is to provide outreach, support and referrals to grandparents/relative caregivers and the children they raise who are at risk for child abuse and neglect.

As reported by the 2000-2001 US Census:

**Missouri Facts**

- 77,857 grandparents are raising their grandchildren
- 47% - Caucasian
- 29% - African Americans
- 17% - Hispanic/Latino
- 3% - Asian
- 2% - American Indian
- 2% Alaskan Native
- 19% live in poverty

Jackson County

- 9,468 grandparents are raising their grandchildren
- 65% of those grandparents are females
- 51% of those grandparents are married
- 45.8% of those grandparents are in poverty

Clay County

- 1,487 grandparents are raising their grandchildren

Cass County

- 564 grandparents are raising their grandchildren

Platte County

- 323 grandparents are raising their grandchildren

**Kansas Facts**

- 29,026 grandparents are raising their grandchildren

Johnson County

- 2,649 grandparents are raising grandchildren
- 71% of those grandparents are female
- 93% of those grandparents are married
- 30% of those grandparents are working

Wyandotte County

- 2,201 grandparents are raising grandchildren
- 19% live in poverty

**CONTACT PERSONS**

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