

**RESOURCES
FOR**

GRANDPARENTS
RAISING
GRANDCHILDREN

Written by
South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Inc.



Made possible by a grant from



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"The judge asked me if I wanted to adopt my grandparents because they wanted to adopt me. I said 'yes' because I wanted to continue to live with them. The judge said 'Then please sign your name on this paper.' I was only four years old but I signed my name."

--Abby, age 5

INTRODUCTION

South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Inc., with a grant from United Way of Greater Fall River, has created this pamphlet and a DVD, both entitled, *Grandparents Raising Grandchildren*. These are available to the increasing number of grandparents in Southeastern Massachusetts who are raising their children's children. They have been distributed to the local Councils on Aging who should have them available. These grandparents are changing their lives completely when they unselfishly assume the responsibility of their grandchildren.

We dedicate the DVD and pamphlet to these grandparents to

1. reassure them that they are not alone and there is help available;
2. educate them to the multiplicity of agencies and organizations in Southeastern Massachusetts that are available to them for information and help; and
3. assist them in accessing these agencies and organizations.

When making contact with the agencies and organizations listed in this pamphlet, be sure to ask if they provide any other services that might be helpful to you and your grandchildren. Also, ask if there are other agencies or organizations that could be of help.

LEGAL INFORMATION

This is a good place to start if you have questions regarding benefits to which you and your grandchild may be entitled or if you believe that you may need representation in courts. Low-income grandparents may have access to free legal services. Others may need to contact a private attorney who specializes in family law.

South Coastal Counties Legal Services (SCCLS) Offices:

The amount of assistance available for grandparents from Legal Services Programs varies depending on any number of circumstance—funding, staffing, office priorities, etc., so there is no guarantee that you can obtain representation on any particular issue. Nevertheless, a call to your local Legal Services Program is likely to provide some information, assistance, and direction.

231 Main Street, Suite 201
Brockton, MA 02301
Telephone: 508-586-2110
1-800-244-8393

22 Bedford Street
Fall River, MA 02720
Telephone: 508-676-6265
1-800-287-3777

460 West Main Street
Hyannis, MA 02601
Telephone: 508-775-7020
1-800-742-4107

21 South Sixth Street
New Bedford, MA 02740
Telephone: 508-979-7150
1-800-929-9721

PROBATE COURT

Most Probate Courts offer some opportunity to consult with a volunteer private attorney, a so-called “Lawyer of the Day,” who can advise and assist in filling out forms, etc. Availability varies from court to court, so check with the clerk’s office in your county of residence for further information.

Barnstable Probate & Family Court

3195 Main Street
Barnstable, MA 02630
Telephone: 508-362-2511

Bristol County Probate & Family Court

21 Father Devalles Blvd.
Fall River, MA 02723
Telephone: 508-672-4669

Dukes County Probate & Family Court

81 Main Street
Edgartown, MA 02539
Telephone: 508-627-4703

Nantucket Probate & Family Court

16 Broad Street
Nantucket, MA 02554
Telephone: 508-228-2669

Plymouth Probate & Family Court

Plymouth, MA 02361
Telephone: 508-747-6204

Brockton Office

215 Main Street

Brockton, MA 02303

Telephone: 508-897-5400

**Massachusetts Bar Association Lawyer
Referral Program**

Telephone: 617-654-0400

1-866-627-7577

**New Center for Legal Advocacy
(NCLA) Offices:**

257 Main Street Ext

Plymouth, MA 02360

Telephone: 508-749-2777

1-800-585-4933

257 Union Street

New Bedford, MA 02740

Telephone: 508-979-7160

1-800-244-9023

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (DCF)
FORMERLY DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES (DSS)**

DCF places children with grandparents or other family members when it has become necessary to take custody of the children because of abuse, neglect or family crisis that would put children at risk. If this is the situation, placing a child with grandparents is known as a “kinship” placement.

The grandparents are then entitled to financial assistance, health insurance and

For more information

other services from DCF regardless of the caretaker income. However, the children must be in the legal custody of DCF to receive this help, even while they are living with grandparents.

DCF Central Office

Boston, MA
617-748-2000

**To report child abuse and neglect:
Child-At-Risk-Hotline
1-800-792-5200**

Southeast Regional Office

141 Main Street
Brockton, MA 02401
Telephone: 508-894-3700

Attleboro Area Office

67 Mechanic Street
Telephone: 508-431-9500
1-800-441-3143

Brockton Area Office

110 Mulberry Street
Telephone: 508-588-2281

Cape Cod/Hyannis Area Office

500 Main Street
Telephone: 508-760-0200
1-800-352-0711

Fall River Area Office

1567 North Main Street
Telephone: 508-235-9800

New Bedford Area Office

100 North Front Street
Telephone: 508-910-1000

Plymouth Area Office
61 Industrial Park Road
Telephone: 508-732-6200

DCF Website: www.mass.gov/dcf

EDUCATION

Grandparents will want to know the status of their grandchild's education. Whether the child is changing schools or not, the first person to contact would be the guidance counselor at both the new school and the previous one. She should be a source of much help to you now and in the future.

If your grandchild has "special needs," it is even more important to contact the guidance counselor. If the child has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) because of his special needs, the guidance counselor should refer you to the Director of Special Needs in that school or school district.

Department of Education
Malden, MA
Telephone: 781-338-6854
Website: www.doc.mass.edu

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE

Massachusetts Department of
Transitional Assistance
600 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02111
Telephone: 617-348-8500

Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children -- This is the Massachusetts department that provides monthly cash grants to families based on income, number of people in the family, assets, and other categorical requirements.

Emergency Aid to Elderly, Disabled, and Children can be obtained at DTA.

Food Stamps may also be available to purchase food through an Electronic Benefit Transfer card, even if you are not eligible for direct cash grants

Other assistance is available:

Mass Health (medical assistance which is provided through the Division of Medical Assistance)

Fuel Assistance is direct payment of heating bills for eligible homeowners and renters through the Department of Housing and Community Development.
(1-800-632-8175)

Weatherization is assistance which provides items/services to help make your home more energy efficient, through the Department of Housing and Community Development (1-800-632-8175)

WIC Program (Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program) This nutritional program is primarily for eligible children under the age of five, pregnant and postpartum women. It offers checks for nutritional food items.
Telephone: (1-800-WIC-1007)

**Contact your local Massachusetts
Department of Transitional Assistance**

Hyannis DTA

77 High School Road Extension

Telephone: 508-862-6600

1-800-295-8318

Plymouth DTA

61 Industrial Park Road

Telephone: 508-732-3100

1-888-839-2280

New Bedford DTA

160 West Rodney French Blvd.

Telephone: 508-961-2000

1-888-232-2002

Fall River DTA

1567 North Main Street

Telephone: 508-646-6200

1-800-529-1599

Taunton DTA

21 Spring Street

Telephone: 508-884-9530

Brockton DTA

75 Commercial Street

Telephone: 508-895-7000

DTA Website: www.mass.gov/dta

**SOCIAL SECURITY
ADMINISTRATION
(FEDERAL AGENCY)**

Social Security has different programs with different eligibility for each program.

Social Security Retirement Income—
Grandparent must be over 62 years and have

worked the required number of quarters. They will receive a monthly income check and be eligible for Medicare if they are over 65 years.

Social Security Disability Income (SSDI)—A monthly check may be sent to a disabled individual or an approved relation of the individual. He may also be eligible for Medicare.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)—A monthly check will be sent to qualified individuals who are age 65 or older or blind or disabled.

Almost every town of medium size or larger has a Social Security Office. For more information, consult your local telephone directory or telephone:

Social Security Administration

1-800-772-1213

You may also use the computer:

Social Security Website

www.socialsecurity.gov

MASSACHUSETTS OFFICE OF ELDER AFFAIRS (EOEA)

EOEA is the state agency that offers many programs and services through the Area Agencies on Aging, municipal Councils on Aging and other agencies that serve senior citizens age sixty (60) and over. Eligibility for some services can be based on income and/or need.

One of the most important services for grandparents raising grandchildren

would be the Massachusetts Grandparent Resource Network. This program provides information on local support groups and other resources for grandparents (and other kin) who are raising grandchildren.

Information about the Grandparent Resource Network can be obtained through 1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-872-0166) or your local Council on Aging. Other programs or services include:

Information and Referral

Home Care Program

Nutrition Program

Health Insurance Counseling Program (SHINE)

Prescription Advantage

Protective Services

Elder-At-Risk Program

Guardianship

Money Management Program

Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

Assisted Living Ombudsman Program

Community Care Ombudsman Program

Senior Employment and Volunteer

Services

MASSACHUSETTS GRANDPARENT RESOURCE NETWORK

TELEPHONE: 617-727-7750

1-800-243-4636

Almost every town and city in Massachusetts has a Council on Aging and may be contacted by finding the telephone number in your local telephone directory or by telephoning your local town or city hall.

Also, you may identify your local Council on Aging by telephoning:

Executive Office of Elder Affairs
One Ashburton Place
5th Floor (The McCormack Building)
Boston, MA 02108
Telephone: 617-727-7750
1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-243-4636)

Elder Abuse Hotline
1-800-922-2275

Bristol Elder Services, Inc.
182 North Main Street
Fall River, MA 02720
Telephone: 508-675-2101
1-800-427-2101

Elder Services of Cape Cod and the
Islands, Inc.
6A Route 134
South Dennis, MA 02660
Telephone: 508-394-3712
1-888-394-0608

Old Colony Elderly Services, Inc.
144 Main Street
Brockton, MA 02301
Telephone: 506-584-1561
1-800-242-0-246

Coastline Elderly Services, Inc.
1646 Purchase Street
New Bedford, MA 02740
Telephone: 508-999-6400

Website: www.800AGEINFO.com

CHILD CARE

If your grandchild is an infant or preschooler, you may be interested in some form of child care. You might want to consider this option, even if you are at home and not employed.

Early childhood education gives your grandchild a head start in her education and also gives you some respite from the demands of raising young children.

Comprehensive information may be obtained by contacting the following:

Community Care for Kids

1309 Hancock Street

Quincy, MA 02169

Telephone: 1-800-637-2011

Child Care Network of Cape Cod and Islands

115 Enterprise Road

Hyannis, MA 02601

Telephone: 508-778-9470 ex 222

1-888-530-2430

Website: www.childcarenetwork.cc

Child Care Works

105 William Street, 4th Floor

New Bedford, MA 02740

Telephone: 508-999-9930

1-800-338-1717

Home Health and Child Care Services

15 Jonathan Drive, P.O.Box 640

Brockton, MA 02403

Telephone: 508-588-6070

HOUSING

If appropriate and affordable housing is a problem for you when your grandchildren come into your custody or if you are already on housing assistance, you should immediately contact your local housing authority. Almost every city or town has a housing authority that would be known to your local officials.

If you cannot afford a larger home on the open market, there are options available for subsidized housing. There are qualification requirements. Waiting lists can be long, so the sooner you contact your housing authority, the sooner you will have adequate housing.

For assistance in a housing search and/or counseling, contact the following Regional Housing Agencies:

Housing Assistance Corp.

460 West Main Street

Hyannis, MA 02601

Telephone: 508-771-5400

Serves Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket
Counties

South Shore Housing Development Corp.

169 Summer Street

Kingston, MA 02364

Telephone: 781-422-4200

Serves Plymouth and Bristol Counties

THE ARC OF MASSACHUSETTS

This non-profit organization serves Americans with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Arc offers many services and supports such as early intervention, health care, and a free and appropriate education. Arc also offers many support groups and services, including, in some areas, a support group for grandparents raising grandchildren.

For adults, services include preparation for employment, job placement, independent living, skill training, leisure and recreation, activities and any other supports needed, including emergency financial assistance.

For more information:

The Arc of Massachusetts
217 South Street
Waltham, MA 02453-2710
Telephone: 781-891-6270

Local chapters will offer more information about specific services in your area.

Brockton Area Arc
1250 West Chestnut Street
Brockton, MA 02301
Telephone: 508-583-8030
Website: www.BrocktonAreaArc.org

The Arc of Cape Cod
P.O. Box 428
171 Main Street
Hyannis, MA 02601
Telephone: 508-790-3667
Website: www.arcofcapecod.org

The Arc of Greater Fall River
P.O. Box 1943
405 Pleasant Street
Fall River, MA 02722
Telephone: 508-679-0001

The Arc of Northern Bristol County
141 Park Street
Attleboro, MA 02703
Telephone: 508-226-1445
Website: www.arcnbc.org

The Arc of Greater Plymouth
Cordage Park Commerce
10 Cordage Park Circle, Suite 208
Plymouth, MA 02360
Telephone: 508-732-9292
Website: www.thearcofgp.org

The Arc of the South Shore
371 Rivers Street
N. Weymouth, MA 02191
Telephone: 781-335-3023
Website: www.southshorearc.org

OTHER RESOURCES

There are many resources—local, state and federal—that are available to grandparents raising grandchildren. Some may not meet your needs; others will prove to be invaluable. You need to contact any that you believe may have something to offer you and/or your grandchildren. Meeting the needs of both grandparents and grandchildren are of equal concern.

This is a major responsibility that you have assumed. It is not an easy one. There have been many societal changes since your own

children were young. One of the means of bridging this gap is through the help of agencies and organizations that recognize the tough job that you are doing and can make it a little easier for you.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

AARP Grandparents Information Center

Telephone: 202-434-2296

Website: www.aarp.org/family

GrandsPlace

This is a website specific to grandparents caring for their grandchildren. It has many links to other websites and many helpful resources for grandparents.

Website: <http://grandplace.com>

Grandparents.com

This is a marketing website but has some good ideas. Give it a try if you have the time.

Website: www.Grandparents.com

"I am a grandmother raising my three grandchildren. Even though it is very hard with two of my grandchildren with serious disabilities, I would not have it any other way.

--Anne, grandmother

South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Inc.
460 W. Main Street
Hyannis, MA 02601

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