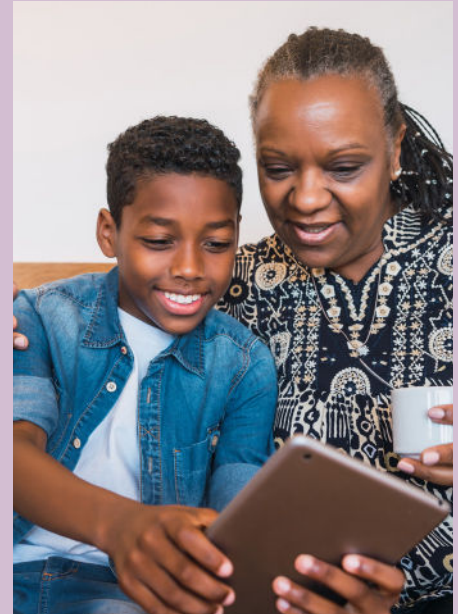
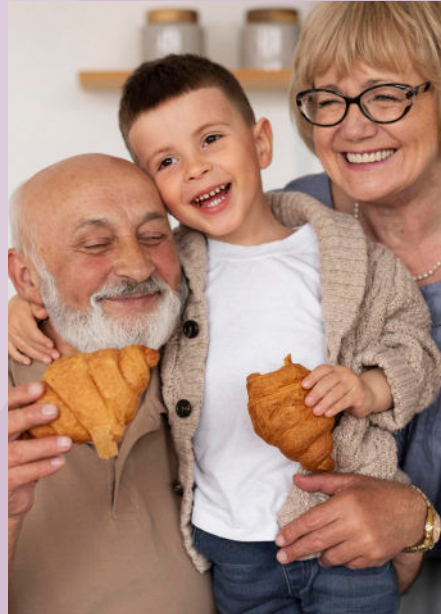


**GRANDFAMILIES & KINSHIP  
SUPPORT NETWORK**  
A National Technical Assistance Center



# Grandfamilies 101:

## What Professionals Partnering with Grandfamilies Need to Know



# Grandfamilies 101:

## What Professionals Partnering with Grandfamilies Need to Know

This 90-minute professional development experience provides a basic introduction to issues frequently facing grandfamilies and kin caregivers, with a focus on legal, educational, and financial needs. It is ideal for professionals who occasionally partner with grandfamilies and kinship families in their program or setting and would benefit from a greater understanding of the strengths and needs of these families. Organizations may wish to deliver the entire workshop in 90 minutes or use a modular approach to address each topic separately over the course of several meetings.

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## GRANDFAMILIES BY THE NUMBERS:

### 2.4 Million

**More than 2.4 million children in the U.S. are being raised by grandparents, other relatives, or close family friends with no parents present in the home.**<sup>1</sup> Kin caregivers may take on a primary caregiving role because of parental substance use, incarceration, domestic violence, deportation, mental or physical illness, or death. For the majority of families, the transition from relative to primary caregiver is informal and often has no clear dividing line. Many kin caregivers embark on this journey with little time to plan.

### 1 in 18

**About 1 in 18 children who are part of grandfamilies are inside the existing social services framework of foster care.** The other 17 are in grandfamilies that face a bewildering array of problems to solve with no formal support system. Both kin caregivers and the children in their care may struggle with the loss of the child's parent(s). Grandparents in particular may feel helpless, sad, or angry as they see and experience their adult child's struggles and/or their grandchild's grief over the separation from a parent they love. They may mourn the loss of retirement. Children raised in grandfamilies may also face challenges, sometimes complicated by early trauma they experienced before their grandparents or other kin stepped in.

**Children being raised by kin/grandfamily caregivers exhibit fewer behavioral/emotional challenges than those being raised by unrelated caregivers. But they often struggle with physical, behavioral, and emotional problems due to the difficult situations that caused them to move into their caregiver's home.**

Kin caregivers may lack legal authority to make decisions for the child, which can hinder their ability to take care of certain important tasks, such as school enrollment, medical treatment, and other health care. They may not know how to address the child's challenging behavior, or how to distinguish typical development from behavior that has its roots in developmental delay, disability, or trauma. They may have difficulty navigating and advocating for the child across multiple systems, without a point person to coordinate or advise. They may neglect their own self-care to focus on child-rearing issues that seem more pressing. They may feel isolated from their



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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gksnetwork.org/kinship-data/>

peers due to their family circumstances. Finally, they may worry about what will happen to the children in their care if they become too old or ill to care for them.

**Children in kinship families fare better on standardized tests (math and reading)<sup>2</sup> and other measures of well-being than children in non-relative foster care.<sup>3</sup>** Despite the many challenges faced by kin caregivers in a primary caregiving role, it's important to highlight and articulate the strengths of grandfamilies. Children who are raised by relatives enjoy more stability in their living arrangements compared to peers in traditional foster care placements. They are also less likely to report mental health challenges compared to children in traditional foster care arrangements.<sup>4</sup> Relative caregivers report that their role gives them a sense of purpose in life, keeps them active, and helps them to learn new things.<sup>5</sup>

### **A Note on Terminology**

*In this workshop, we use the terms “grandfamilies” and “kinship families” interchangeably to refer to families in which children are raised by relatives other than their parents. Also included are close family friends (“fictive kin”) who step in as caregivers.*

*An important note: Most kin caregivers don't use these terms to describe their relationships with the children in their care. Most describe the task in the simplest terms—“raising my grandkids” or “raising my nephews” or “taking care of my best friend’s daughter.”*

## **LEARNING GOALS**

Workshop participants will:

- 1** Recognize how common it is for grandparents/kin to be the primary caregivers for children and teens
- 2** Understand grandfamilies' most pressing issues
- 3** Identify resources to help grandfamilies address needs in these areas:
  - Legal
  - Educational
  - Financial

<sup>2</sup> [Washington et al, 2021.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Winokur, et. al.](#)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gu.org/resources/children-thrive-in-grandfamilies/>

<sup>5</sup> Personal email from Jennifer Crittenden, PhD, MSW, October 24, 2020

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## AGENDA

1. **Getting to Know Grandfamilies** (20 minutes)
2. **Legal Options** (20 minutes)
3. **Educational Support** (20 minutes)
4. **Financial Assistance** (20 minutes)
5. **Wrap-Up** (10 minutes)
6. **[Optional] Jeopardy! Review**

## MATERIALS

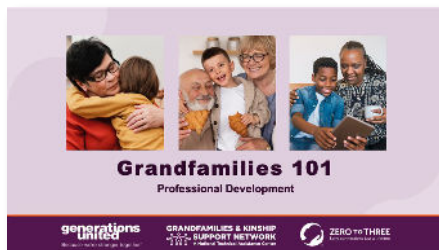
- Name tags and markers
- Chart paper (or whiteboard) and marker
- **Handout 1: Resources for Organizations**
- **Handout 2: Resources for Grandfamilies**
- **Facilitator Resource 1: Jeopardy! Review**

## PREPARATION

- Review PowerPoint slides and arrange for viewing.
- Preview the three Grandfamilies 101 videos. Arrange a means for viewing.
- Cue up the videos to the start times as noted in the facilitator's notes below.
- Make copies of **Handouts 1** and **2** for each participant.
- [Optional] If you wish to review the training content with staff following the workshop, we have included an optional Jeopardy! activity. To do this, create a version of Jeopardy! using the clues and answers found in **Facilitator Resource 1** using chart paper or tools found online.

# WORKSHOP FACILITATION

## Activity 1 | Getting to Know Grandfamilies (15 minutes)



### Show Slide 1:

- **Welcome participants to the group.** Say something like:  
*This workshop is designed for anyone who serves grandfamilies as part of their work with [agency/organization name]. In a moment, we'll talk about who's in the room, the kind of work you do, and why you're here.*



### Show Slide 2:

- But first, what do we mean when we use the term **grandfamily**?
  - The terms **“grandfamily”** and **“kinship family”** are used interchangeably to describe families where grandparents, other relatives, or close family friends are raising children because their parents cannot.
  - Those in the “close family friends” category are sometimes described as fictive kin, that is, family-like without being related by adoption, blood, or marriage. If you're a child, fictive kin could be your mom's best friend since grade school, or the family friend you call your auntie, or even your teacher or a neighbor. To be considered a grandfamily or kinship family, you must be living with this person full-time, without either of your parents.
  - Most families don't use any of these terms, often describing their relationship more simply— “raising my grandkids” or “raising my nephew.”
  - The term **grandfamily** is intended to be inclusive, which makes it difficult to find a good term for the children in the relationship. “Grandchild” doesn't apply if the adult in the relationship is not a grandparent. A grandfamily or kin caregiver is the adult in the relationship – whether a grandparent, an aunt, an uncle, a cousin, a friend, or another important person with a relationship to the family or the child.
  - In today's training, we use the generic term “the child” or “the children” to keep things simple.

**Who Are You?**

How frequently do you connect with kinship and grandfamilies?

In what capacity?

- Courts
- Public benefits offices
- Schools or other organizations serving youth
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Family Resource Centers
- Food pantries
- Community-based or cultural organizations
- Faith-based organizations




### Show Slide 3:

- **Continue:** If your organization serves families, chances are good your clients include grandfamilies.
- Using a show of hands or an online poll or chat, ask participants to identify:
  - How frequently they interact with grandfamilies
  - The type of services they have provided to grandfamilies

**Who Are We?**

**GRANDFAMILIES & KINSHIP SUPPORT NETWORK**  
A National Technical Assistance Center

We provide information and assistance to state, tribal, and territorial government agencies and non-profit organizations that serve kinship families.

[www.GKSNetwork.org](http://www.GKSNetwork.org)




### Show Slide 4:

- Describe the Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network, making the following points:
 

This learning experience was created by the Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network, in partnership with non-profit ZERO TO THREE. The Network is a national technical assistance center that launched as a project of non-profit Generations United in 2021. Its mission is to support **organizations** that serve kin caregivers. You can access their resources in several ways:

  - Find them online at [GKSNetwork.org](http://GKSNetwork.org), where you'll find print materials, webinars, and videos searchable by topic.
  - Sign up for their monthly newsletter.
  - Ask a question about anything affecting the grandfamilies you serve.
  - **GrandFacts** fact sheets are a good place to start. They provide information on resources by state, and some territories and tribal nations.
  - You can also find links to **Kinship Navigator Programs**. These programs offer information, referral, and follow-up services to caregivers and link them to the benefits and services that they and the children need. Not all states, territories or tribes have these programs, but many do, and you'll find links on the Network website.
  - All Network resources are free. Contact information is provided in **Handout 1**, which has links to supplementary resources for all topics discussed in this training.



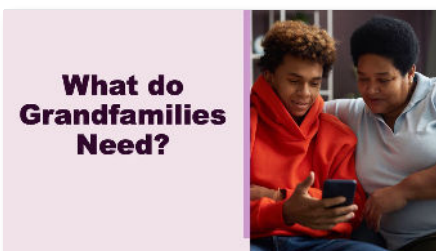
### Show Slide 5:

- **Continue:** For many of you, service to grandfamilies is not your primary job description. Families might come to you for one thing—to participate in a home visiting program or to apply for a housing subsidy. As you get to know them better, you might discover that they face a host of other challenges. *You can be the person who provides a warm handoff to the people and institutions that can help.*
- Share the learning goals found on Slide 5.



### Show Slide 6:

- Let's attach some numbers to our image of grandfamilies.
  - There are 2.4 million children in the U.S. being cared for by a grandparent, another relative, or a close family friend.
  - We recognize those families when we see them in the foster care system. But for every child in a grandfamily in foster care (the tip of the iceberg), there are 17 children in grandfamilies trying to manage on their own (below the surface where they're hard to identify).

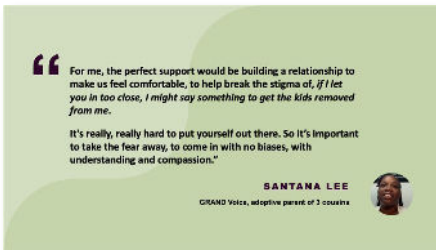


### Show Slide 7:

- Compared to children in non-relative care, children being raised by relatives enjoy more stability and are more likely to maintain connections with their siblings, their cultural heritage, and their community.<sup>6</sup> Offering this sense of stability and family connection to a child whose parent is unable to care for them is a tremendous gift.
- Let's talk about how you can support caregivers in that work.

<sup>6</sup> Generations United, 2023. Fact Sheet: Children Thrive in Grandfamilies. <https://www.gu.org/resources/children-thrive-in-grandfamilies/>





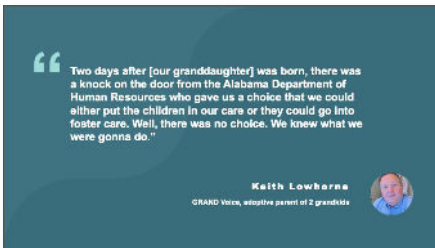
### Show Slide 8:

- **Say:** *In this workshop, you'll hear from kin caregivers concerning their own lived experiences. They are members of Generations United's GRAND Voices, which include caregiver advocates from all over the country. Let's start with Santana Lee, who raised 3 cousins, beginning when she was 27 and already had kids of her own.*
- **Read:** *For me, the perfect support would be building a relationship to make us feel comfortable, to help break the stigma of, if I let you in too close, I might say something to get the kids removed from me.*  
*It's really, really hard to put yourself out there. So it's important to take the fear away, to come in with no biases, with understanding and compassion.*
- **Ask** the group what stands out for them. If it's not mentioned, note Santana's fear of having the kids taken away and her wish for a supportive relationship (with case-workers, for example) that helps remove that fear.



### Show Slide 9:

- **Ask:** *What are some of the circumstances under which a parent might be unable to care for a child?*
- **List answers.** [Answers may include challenges such as parental substance use, incarceration, domestic violence, mental or physical illness, or death.] Add items not mentioned.
- **Ask:** *As children transition to a kinship family, what do you imagine is the emotional impact of this new family relationship on them?*
- **List answers.** [Children may be traumatized by previous abuse and neglect, or by the separation from their parent. They may not know their grandparents or family members well. They may have joined their new household without warning, leaving behind all that's familiar: school, neighborhood, home, friends, and family pets. They may feel tremendous loyalty to their parents, or be angry with them, or both. They may be withdrawn, or act out, or blame the new caregiver for all that's happened. At some level, they may feel relieved to live in a stable and caring environment, but that's not always evident.] Add items not mentioned.



## Show Slide 10:

- **Introduce** Keith Lowhorne's quote: Here's how one grandfather describes the experience of being asked to take on the care of two young grandchildren, both born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome.
- **Read:** *Two days after [our granddaughter] was born, there was a knock on the door from the Alabama Department of Human Resources who gave us a choice that we could either put the children in our care or they could go into foster care. Well, there was no choice. We knew what we were gonna do.*
- **Ask:** *What's the emotional impact on kin caregivers of unexpectedly taking on the care of the child?*
- **List answers.** [These may include shock at the change in their future plans and lifestyle; ambivalence and resentment about their unexpected role; worry about their ability to take on this task; concern about the child's needs; overwhelm at navigating new systems; financial concerns; and love, relief, and joy that the child is safe in their care.]

Grandparents may have additional feelings regarding their grandchild's parent: guilt, shame, or embarrassment that they cannot parent; grief over their adult child's life choices and the loss of their own role as a grandparent; and/or concern that they're betraying their adult child by assuming the care of their grandchild.<sup>7</sup>]

Add items not mentioned.

- **Conclude:** *For kin caregivers and the children they're caring for, becoming a grandfamily is a life-changing event, one that often feels overwhelming. They need empathy and compassion from the organizations they're interacting with and deserve support and guidance as they work to meet their grandchild's needs and adjust to drastically changing circumstances in their family.*

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<sup>7</sup> Navigating the relationship with your adult child.

<https://www.gksnetwork.org/resources/navigating-the-relationship-with-your-adult-child/>

## Activity 2 | Legal Options (20 minutes)



### Show Slide 11:

- **Say:** *Grandfamilies need practical support, too. Legal options, educational support, and financial assistance are among the needs most frequently mentioned.*



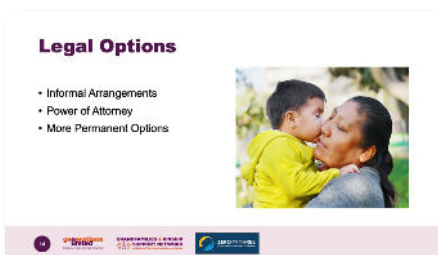
### Show Slide 12:

- **Say:** *Legal questions are often front and center among kin caregivers' concerns. What do you think they might be wondering? (Take several responses.)*



### Show Slide 13:

- **Explain:** *Many kin caregivers experience legal arrangements as a balancing act—hoping for a way to provide a stable environment for the child without angering the child's parent or closing the door on a role for the parent. Grandfamily caregivers might want to allow the relationship to remain legally flexible but worry that the child might be taken away by a parent, another relative, or even the child welfare system.*



### Show Slide 14:

- Let's take a look at a short video that describes three different legal options that grandfamilies might consider. As you watch, think about the advantages and disadvantages of each. We'll discuss these after viewing.



### Show Slide 15:

- Play the “Legal Assistance” video.

Type of Arrangement	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Informal Arrangement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doesn't require parental involvement</li> <li>In some places, school enrollment and health care can be accessed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaves kin caregivers in a vulnerable position if parents want to resume caregiving</li> <li>In some places, school enrollment and health care can be challenging to access</li> </ul>
<b>Power of Attorney</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes the parents' legal directives clear and can be done without a lawyer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires parental cooperation and can be revoked at any time</li> <li>Is often time limited</li> </ul>
<b>Guardianship/Adoption</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides long-term stability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usually requires a lawyer and can be expensive</li> <li>Adoption terminates parental rights, which may also make kin caregivers ineligible for assistance like child-only TANF</li> <li>On the other hand, adoption may be the only vehicle for a child to access their kin's private health insurance and any veteran's benefits</li> </ul>

### Show Slides 16-19:

- **Ask:** *What struck you as you were listening to the legal options available to grandfamilies?* [Affirm that it's complicated and that expert help is often needed. Stress that staff without that legal expertise are not responsible for making recommendations to grandfamilies. Rather, they can validate the complexity involved and can provide grandfamilies with a connection to someone who can help.]
- **Ask** the group to share the advantages/disadvantages of each legal option. Click the slide after each option is discussed to reveal the suggested answers. [Suggested answers below.]

Type of Arrangement	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Informal Arrangement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doesn't require parental involvement</li> <li>In some places, school enrollment and health care can be accessed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaves kin caregivers in a vulnerable position if parents want to resume caregiving</li> <li>In some places, school enrollment and/or health care can be challenging to access</li> </ul>
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- Ask participants to refer to **Handout 2** and point out the organization of the pages. In the left-hand column on each page, there are tasks grandfamilies may need to complete. In the column on the right, space has been provided to list local organizations that can help.
- Go to <https://www.gksnetwork.org/grandfacts-fact-sheets/> to navigate to the pages for your state, territory, or tribe and explore the resources found. You can also ask participants if they know of other local resources not on the GrandFacts resource. [If time permits, encourage participants to use the **GrandFacts** fact sheet for your area to list legal resources in the right-hand column of **Handout 2**.]

## Activity 3 | Educational Support (20 minutes)

### Educational Support



### Show Slide 20:

- **Say:** *Kin caregivers worry about children's success in school, just as parents do, with a few extra layers of concern. They may fear judgment of their family's situation. Older kin caregivers may doubt their ability to adapt to the latest educational trends—use of technology, or how a particular subject is taught, or expectations for homework.*

### Questions About School

- How do I enroll my grandchild (niece, cousin, family friend) in school?
- How and to whom do I disclose my relationship to this child?
- It's been so long since I've been in school or had kids in school. What do I need to know?
- The child I'm caring for has been through a lot. How do I make sure they're developing as they should, and what support is available if they're not?



### Show Slide 21:

- Let's talk through some of the most commonly asked questions by grandfamilies. As we move through these questions, please share your own experiences in supporting grandfamilies or foster families.
  - **How do I enroll my grandchild (niece, cousin, family friend) in school?**

Rules vary from one location to another. The best guidance is to call your local school and find out how to do this.

- **How and to whom do I disclose my relationship to this child?**

Kin caregivers should identify a staff member with whom they can discuss their relationship to the child in their care, and that person can convey this information to other staff as needed. In middle or high school, this is often the principal or guidance counselor. In elementary school, it might be the child's classroom teacher or school counselor. Kin caregivers can say as much or as little as they want concerning how the child joined their family, but it's often best to say something. Children who have been separated from their parents and are adjusting to a new family system may be under considerable stress that may be communicated through behaviors in the classroom. School staff can provide support and services to children (if needed/desired) and may also connect grandfamilies with additional community resources.

- **It's been so long since I've been in school or had kids in school. What do I need to know?**

This is a great reason for grandfamilies to identify themselves and raise any educational questions or concerns. Kin caregivers may feel ill-equipped to use technology to fill out a form or communicate with a child's teacher, lack Internet access, or feel stumped in offering homework help. These are all areas where classroom teachers or school counselors can provide support.



### Show Slide 22:

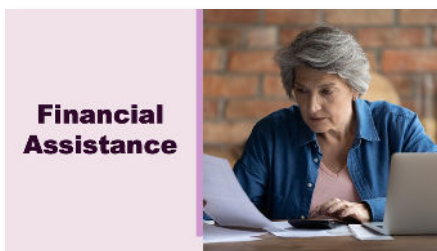
- **Say:** *Finally, kin caregivers often have questions about developmental delays and educational support that might be needed. Our next video, “Educational Support and Services” addresses those issues. Let’s watch a few sections of it together.*
- **View the Early Screening and Early Intervention sections together, from 1:19 to 2:03.**

**Ask:** *What, if anything, was a surprise in this section? Is there anything you’d add based on your experience?*

- **Say:** *Once a child turns 3, they are eligible for special education services through the school district, and this is covered in more detail in the next section of the video. We’re skipping this today due to time constraints, but you can return to it whenever you’d like. If you’d like to review the entire video or any of the videos shared today, you’ll find a link in **Handout 1**.*

- **Say:** Finally, kin caregivers are often called on to advocate for kids throughout their schooling. It's an art and a skill that they can learn and share with each other.
- **View** a portion of the **Advocacy** section together, from 4:13 to 5:05.
- **Ask:** *What ideas did this video spark for supporting kin caregivers in advocating for their children's education?*
- **Conclude:** *As a trusted advisor, you can help grandfamilies understand the educational system and connect with experts who can help them find support for the children in their care.*
- [If time permits, return to the **GrandFacts** fact sheet for your area and list educational resources in the right-hand column of **Handout 2.**]

## Activity 4 | Financial Assistance (20 minutes)



### Show Slide 23:

- **Say:** *Finally, there's the financial aspect of becoming a grandfamily. You may have heard about monthly stipends for grandfamilies or a state funding college tuition for young adults in grandfamilies. These statements are likely true, but often only if the children are in foster care and their kin caregivers are licensed or approved.*



### Show Slide 24:

- **Say:** *We're returning to this photo as a reminder that the vast majority of grandfamilies—the part of the iceberg we can't see—are not part of the foster care system. While those inside the foster care system may get a monthly stipend for each child in their care, those outside that system often receive little or no help.*
- **Ask:** *What are some child-rearing expenses that kin caregivers are responsible for? (Document these on a whiteboard or chart paper.)*



### Show Slide 25:

- **Introduce the “Financial Assistance” video:** *In this final video, kin caregivers from GRAND Voices describe the child-rearing expenses they were suddenly responsible for, and how it felt to face those demands with little time to prepare. Guidance is provided on the supports available for different types of expenses and at different household incomes.*
- **Note:** the video includes the following topics:
  - Food (2:11)
  - Housing (3:20)
  - Healthcare (5:22)
  - Other (6:34)

If you’re short of time, you may wish to choose the sections of the video that will most resonate with the participants in your group.



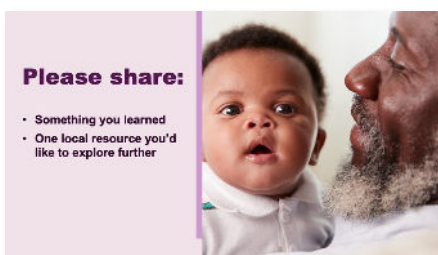
### Show Slide 26:

- **Say:** *Let’s take a look at two case studies of grandfamilies you might be serving in some other capacity when you discover that they need financial help. Based on their circumstances, what sort of referrals might you offer?*
- **Read** the case studies aloud.
  - Stacia is 40 years old and caring for a niece and nephew, an infant and a toddler. She’s been unable to work due to lack of child care and is struggling financially. What referrals might you make to assist her?
  - Tanya is 57 and caring for three grandchildren, ages 2, 3, and 7, who were brought to her home in the middle of the night. She’s a teacher and lives in a comfortable one-bedroom apartment. What referrals might you make to assist her?
- **Assign participants to two groups**, one to consider each case. Ask them to think about what resources families might be eligible for and discuss what referrals they’d make. Offer these prompts if needed:
  - WIC
  - SNAP
  - TANF
  - Child-only TANF
  - Section 8
  - Medicaid or CHIP
  - Community resources



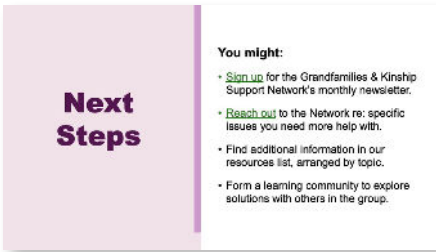
- **Reconvene the class** and ask each group to share the referrals they'd make and why.
  - Note that since Stacia has no income, she might be eligible for government assistance like WIC, SNAP, and TANF to address the children's immediate needs. The children might also be eligible for Medicaid or CHIP as well as various community resources.
  - Tanya is unlikely to be eligible for WIC, SNAP, TANF, or Section 8 due to the income requirements for those programs. Child-only TANF and Medicaid or CHIP may be possibilities, depending on where she lives. Tanya might need assistance in finding a larger apartment and/or community-based assistance for food and other needs.
  - Remind participants that understanding the eligibility requirements for various programs helps professionals make appropriate referrals for grandfamilies.
- [If time permits, encourage participants to use the **GrandFacts** fact sheet for your area to list financial resources in the right-hand column of **Handout 2**.]

## Activity 5 | Wrap-Up (10 minutes)



### Show Slide 27:

- **Say:** *Grandfamilies have to connect with a wide variety of offices, systems, and professionals as they adjust to caring for the child in their life. Each of you has a profound opportunity to ensure this is a successful and supported adjustment—one in which they receive both the tangible help and the emotional support they need and deserve.*
- Ask participants to turn to the person next to them and share:
  - One thing they learned today
  - One resource they'd like to explore further



### Show Slide 28:

- **Reconvene the group** and thank them for participating. Encourage them to use the resources provided, and to reach out to you and to one another as they continue their support of the kin caregivers they encounter in the course of their work.



### Show Slide 29 and 30:

- The credits pages



## Activity 6 [Optional] Jeopardy! Review

Legal Eagles	School	Food	Medical +	Housing +
50	50	50	50	50
100	100	100	100	100
150	150	150	150	150
200	200	200	200	200
250	250	250	250	250

You can use the questions and answers provided in **Facilitator Resource 1** to review key learnings. Questions are arranged in a grid as shown. Topics are listed across the top, and points are assigned according to the difficulty of the question, with more difficult questions toward the bottom. To begin, a team selects a category and level of difficulty, then answers the question associated with that box, for example, “I’ll take Food for 150.” (Questions are revealed only after a box has been chosen.) Play alternates between teams and ends when all questions have been answered. The team with the most points wins.

# Handout 1: Resources by Topic

## GENERAL

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- **Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network – GKSNetwork.org**  
Videos, webinars, and print resources. Sign up for a monthly [newsletter](#) and ask a [question](#) about something your organization is struggling with.
  - **GrandFacts Fact Sheets**  
<https://www.gksnetwork.org/grandfacts-fact-sheets/>
  - **Kinship Navigators**, by state  
<https://www.gksnetwork.org/resources/kinship-navigator-programs-around-the-united-states/>
- **Grandfamilies 101 Professional Development Resources**  
<https://www.zerotothree.org/resource/grandfamilies101/>

## EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

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- **Navigating the Relationship with Your Adult Child** (for grandparents)  
<https://www.gksnetwork.org/resources/navigating-the-relationship-with-your-adult-child/>

## LEGAL

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- **Legal Options for Grandfamilies & Kin Caregivers**  
<https://www.gksnetwork.org/resources/legal-options/>
- **Webinar and Fillable Training Template** <https://www.gksnetwork.org/events/legal-relationship-and-public-benefits-for-kinship-grandfamilies/>
- **Legal charts comparing adoption and guardianship for kinship foster care**  
<https://www.gu.org/resources/adoption-and-guardianship-for-children-in-kinship-foster-care/>
- **Planning for the What-Ifs**  
<https://www.gksnetwork.org/resources/planning-for-the-what-ifs/>

## EDUCATIONAL

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- **A Grandparent's and Relative's Guide to Raising Children with Disabilities**  
<https://www.gu.org/resources/grand-resources/>
- **Getting the Child You Love the Educational Support They Need**  
<https://www.gksnetwork.org/resources/getting-the-child-you-love-the-educational-support-they-need/>

## NUTRITION AND INCOME SUPPORTS

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- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**  
<https://www.gksnetwork.org/resources/snap-facts/>
- **WIC**  
<https://www.gksnetwork.org/resources/kinship-grandfamilies-and-wic/>
- **School Meals**  
<https://www.gksnetwork.org/resources/school-breakfast-and-lunch-programs-for-grandfamilies-and-kinship-families/>
- **TANF**  
<https://www.gu.org/app/uploads/2023/04/GU-TANF-Resource.pdf>

## Handout 2: Resources for Grandfamilies

When a child joins a grandfamily, their caregiver often has little time to prepare. Kin caregivers are learning as they go, “building the plane as they fly.”


Put a check mark next to the topics that are issues for your family. Put a star next to the topic you want to tackle first. Very often, you have to make more than one call to get the help you need. Use a notebook to keep track of the details. Each time you speak to a service provider or agency, note down the following:


- The agencies you are working with
- The date, the name, and title of the contact person (and their phone number/email)
- What you requested or need
- Notes about what was discussed
- Steps needed to follow up

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Legal Issues</b>	<b>Where to Get Help</b>
Know your rights (and the rights of the child’s parents) in your area.	
Determine what custody arrangement works best for your family. (Legal options vary.)	
Make a plan for the child’s care should you become unable to provide care.	


<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Housing Issues</b>	<b>Where to Get Help</b>
Ask about affordable housing opportunities for grandparents and other relatives raising children if your living situation does not allow young children or if your apartment is too small to include children.	


<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Financial Issues</b>	<b>Where to Get Help</b>
Find out what assistance the child may be eligible to receive; for example, the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program, WIC, SNAP, or TANF (child-only).	

 <b>Education Issues</b>	<b>Where to Get Help</b>
<p>Consider asking for an early intervention evaluation for a child under age 3 whose speech, learning, or development may be delayed. These evaluations are free.</p>	
<p>Consider seeking a special education evaluation for children over the age of 3 whose speech, learning, or development may be delayed. These evaluations are free.</p>	
<p>Find a safe and high-quality child care or preschool setting for children under age 5. Ask about scholarships or reduced/sliding rates.</p>	
<p>Determine if the child may be eligible for enrollment in Early Head Start or Head Start.</p>	
<p>Register the child for school or universal pre-K, if offered by your school district.</p>	
<p>Find reliable after-school care for the child, if needed. Ask about scholarships or reduced/sliding rates.</p>	
<p>Look into recreation programs (sports, hobbies like dance or art classes, etc.) for the child. Ask about scholarships or reduced/sliding rates.</p>	

 <b>Counseling Issues (Child)</b>	<b>Where to Get Help</b>
<p>Get support for children as they cope with separation from their parent and adjustment to their grandfamily. The child's health care provider may have referrals to mental health counselors who have experience working with children. Ask about reduced/sliding rates if not covered by insurance.</p>	

 <b>Counseling Issues (You)</b>	<b>Where to Get Help</b>
<p>Get support for yourself. Talking to someone who can help with feelings of anger, sadness, or being overwhelmed can benefit both you and the child in your care.</p>	

 <b>Medical Issues</b>	<b>Where to Get Help</b>
<p>Get health insurance for the child (Medicaid, CHIP, or private insurance).</p>	
<p>Find a pediatric health care provider and dentist.</p>	
<p>If possible, obtain the child’s vaccination and other health records.</p>	
<p>Ensure the child’s well-child visits are up to date. Share any worrying behaviors that you may have started seeing since the child came to live with you (bedwetting after having been toilet trained; aggression; frequent, intense tantrums, etc.).</p>	
<p>Continue your own regular medical care, including preventive care visits. Ask a reliable medical provider about any new symptoms or concerns.</p>	

 <b>Self-Care Issues</b>	<b>Where to Get Help</b>
<p>Prioritize your own emotional and physical health through rest, respite, diet, exercise, and regular check-ups.</p>	
<p>Make time to do fun and restorative things that are just for you. Remember that taking care of yourself gives you the energy to care for children.</p>	

## Facilitator Resource 1: Jeopardy! Review

Create a Jeopardy board with the following categories and questions. To create your board, use chart paper or one of the tools available online. Questions should be hidden from view until a category/clue value has been selected. An answer key is provided on the next page.

	<b>LEGAL EAGLES</b>	<b>BACK TO SCHOOL</b>	<b>FOOD</b>	<b>HEALTH &amp; MORE</b>	<b>HOUSING &amp; MORE</b>
<b>\$50</b>	Who has parental rights when kin begin raising a child without child welfare or court involvement?	A kin caregiver has concerns about the development of the toddler in their care. What would you advise?	What federal program provides food staples to low-income pregnant women & young children?	What legal documents might be needed to make an appointment at the pediatrician's office?	What are some restrictions that might make it difficult for a grandfamily to stay in current housing?
<b>\$100</b>	What family documents might be used to enroll a child in school?	What in a family's history might alert a kin caregiver to a possible need for extra educational support?	What federal program provides low-income families with a debit card to purchase food?	TRUE OR FALSE: Kin caregivers must add children to their employers' insurance plan.	What is Section 8?
<b>\$150</b>	What law makes it easier to enroll an "unaccompanied youth" in school?	How might collaborating with a school help a grandfamily?	What determines a family's eligibility for SNAP?	What federal programs provide health insurance assistance for grandfamilies?	Why might it be difficult to find housing even with a Section 8 voucher?
<b>\$200</b>	What type of legal document might give a kin caregiver temporary authority to act on a child's behalf?	TRUE OR FALSE: Kin caregivers may participate in educational decisions for the children in their care.	What are some essential items that can't be purchased with SNAP?	Where might a family go to find help obtaining Medicaid or CHIP assistance?	What federal program might assist with a one-time expense, like a crib?
<b>\$250</b>	What legal action terminates parental rights?	A child has been designated as eligible for special education, but still struggles in school. What would you advise?	Where would you send a family for food assistance if their income is too high to qualify for SNAP or WIC?	A struggling parent has just dropped their children off at their grandparents' house for an indefinite stay. What help might the grandparents need?	What's the difference between TANF family grants and TANF child-only?

## Answer Key

	LEGAL EAGLES	BACK TO SCHOOL	FOOD	HEALTH & MORE	HOUSING & MORE
\$50	Parents retain legal rights and responsibilities in virtually all kinship care arrangements with the exception of adoption	Free evaluations are available for all children through the local school district's "Child Find" program	WIC	Informally, a birth certificate or tax records; a Power of Attorney; some states have a health care consent form	Restrictions on allowing children in retirement communities and/or on the number of people per unit in government housing and in private leases
\$100	Birth certificate, tax records; some states have an educational consent form	Substance use during pregnancy; a difficult pregnancy or birth; trauma, neglect, or abuse.	SNAP	FALSE: Though children may be enrolled in a kin caregivers' plan, Medicaid or CHIP may be cheaper options.	Housing assistance for low-income families
\$150	McKinney-Vento Act	Family might be put in touch with additional resources; child might be provided with extra support	Family income	Medicaid and CHIP	Limited low-income housing; landlords unwilling to accept Section 8 vouchers
\$200	Power of Attorney	TRUE	Non-food items like laundry detergent, diapers, and tampons & other period products	Call 1-800-HELP KIDS	TANF
\$250	Adoption	A meeting with the school to discuss what's happening and what changes need to be made (revisiting the IEP)	Local food bank	Immediate needs like bedding and clothing; counseling; help accessing health care and educational services; advice on legal, educational, and financial issues	Child-only in almost all states considers only the child's "income"