



For more information, Dial 2-1-1 or 1-800-505-1000  
[www.childcareinfo.org](http://www.childcareinfo.org)

### **Custodial Grandparents and Relatives**

The information provided was taken from the 1999 *Connecticut Resource Guide for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren*, published by the American Association for Retired Persons' (AARP) Grandparent Information Center. For more information, call 1-866-295-7279.

#### **Immediate Temporary Custody**

A child is given to a custodial relative when returning the child to the parental home would place the child at risk of serious injury. To obtain temporary custody of a grandchild or other dependent relative, an application must be filed to the probate court, and a hearing is usually granted within 30 days. Once granted, temporary custody is held for 5 business days after which time the court will hold a second hearing with notice to all parties.

#### **Standby Guardianship**

Standby guardianship occurs when the parent(s) sign a probate court document stating their consent to have the grandparent or relative take guardianship of the child. This happens when a major event occurs such that the parents cannot care for the child due to physical or mental disability, imprisonment for up to a year, residence in a drug or treatment program, or other absence from the home.

#### **Guardianship**

The probate court will ask the Department of Children and Families (DCF), to investigate and determine the physical, mental, social, and financial conditions of the parents and the grandparents or relatives applying for guardianship. The court will issue an order removing the parents as guardians and appointing the applicant as guardian in their place. More information can be found at the DCF website, [www.state.ct.us](http://www.state.ct.us).

## **Co-guardians**

If the child has only one parent, the grandparent or relative can become a **co-guardian**. This means sharing the legal responsibility for the care of the child with the parent. As with guardianship the court will grant co-guardianship after a DCF investigation and hearing.

## **Adopting a grandchild or other relative**

A grandparent or relative may consider adopting a child if they want to take complete and permanent responsibility for the child and eliminate the possibility that the child's birth parents, if alive, will ever be able to legally re-obtain custody. Adoption should not be considered if the child may reunite with birth parents, or if grandparents can only care for the child temporarily.

## **Resources for custodial grandparents and relatives**

**The Children's Defense Fund (CDF)** has a Connecticut State Fact Sheet of resources available online at its website for grandparents and other relatives raising children. There are also four guides for grandparents and other relative caregivers:

- *Child Care and Early Education Programs*
- *Food and Nutrition Programs*
- *Health Insurance for Children*
- *Raising Children with Disabilities*

Single copies of these booklets are available by contacting the Children's Defense Fund or by downloading them at: [www.childrensdefensefund.org](http://www.childrensdefensefund.org).

Also, see the "Connecticut Resources Guide for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren" for help that is available for custodial grandparents or relatives. Included are:

- A. Child Care** – The Department of Social Services (DSS) offers a Child Care subsidy program to help pay for child care. This program is called Care 4 Kids. They can be reached at 1-888-214-5437.

- B. Education** – A child with a special need can get special educational services from his/her school district. Requests and evaluations will be conducted by a Planning Placement Team (PPT). The PPT will write up an Individual Education Plan (IEP) describing the program and services the child will receive. Children under 3 with developmental delays may be eligible for early intervention services through Connecticut's *Birth to Three* program. For more information, call *Child Development Infoline* at 1-800-505-7000.
- C. Financial Assistance: TFA** – Any relative who has a child living with them can receive Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA), for the child only, regardless of the relative's income or assets.
- D. Financial Assistance: Kinship Fund** – Grants of \$250 per child, or \$500 for more than one child, are available to custodial relatives who are awarded guardianship by the Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, New London, Norwich, or Waterbury probate courts. The money must be used for the child's needs, not the needs of the family.
- E. Financial Assistance: Subsidized Guardianship Program** – This program provides a financial subsidy for DCF committed children who are being cared for by a blood relative. The purpose of the program is to provide a permanent plan for children when they have been placed with relative caregivers and they cannot return home. If the goal is to reunite the child with his/her parent, the relative caregiver is not eligible for this program.
- F. Food Programs** – Programs for adults include food stamps (through DSS –income restrictions), emergency food assistance (through town social service agencies and departments), as well as the Elderly Nutrition Program for persons ages 60 and older. Programs for children include school lunch/breakfast programs for students (contact the local school) and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) which provides food checks for pregnant women and provides free lunches (and breakfasts at some sites) at parks, schools, churches, and other locations throughout Connecticut

during the summer. The WIC website is:  
[www.dph.state.ct.us/bch/wic/fam\\_localoffices.htm](http://www.dph.state.ct.us/bch/wic/fam_localoffices.htm)

- G. Health Care** – All children in Connecticut may be eligible for health insurance under the *Health Care for Uninsured Kids and Youth (HUSKY)* program. Some custodial relatives are also eligible. Children with a chronic, organic disabling condition may receive services through the Connecticut Children with Special Health Care Needs Program. Also, the child's school may have a school-based health center, which provides many services at no cost. Call 1-877-CTHUSKY for more information or visit them on the web at [www.huskyhealth.com](http://www.huskyhealth.com).
- H. Legal Services** – Legal service agencies throughout Connecticut provide free legal help to low income households for civil legal matters including children and family, financial assistance benefits, housing, and medical coverage. Contact 2-1-1 Infoline for more information on legal services.
- I. Social and Mental Health Services** – 2-1-1 Infoline offers information on local agencies that provide help with issues such as alcohol and drugs, depression, and stress. 2-1-1 Infoline can also give information on youth services like counseling, employment, and other programs for children and teens.
- J. Grandparent Support Groups** – For referrals to a support group for grandparents raising grandchildren, call 2-1-1 Infoline or the Grandparent Support Program (GAPS) of DSS' Elderly Division.
- K. Tax Credit** – The Earned Income Credit (EIC) is a federal tax credit for low to moderate-income working people. Workers who are raising children, grandchildren, stepchildren, adopted children, or foster children are eligible to qualify for a larger tax credit if the child has lived with them for at least six months (or a full year for foster children). For more information on the tax credit call 2-1-1 Infoline.

**To learn of programs in your community that support grandparents raising grandchildren, contact 2-1-1.**