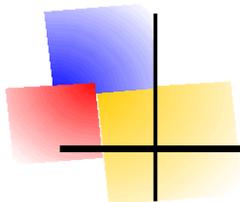
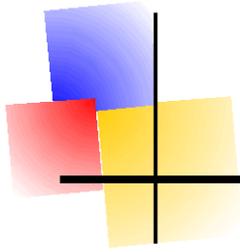


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# **Grandparent and Relative Caregiver Resource Guide**

*Resources for Grandparents and  
Relatives raising children across  
The Bluegrass Region*

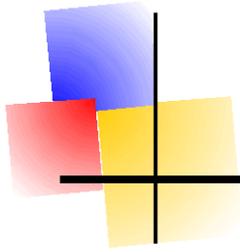




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# INTRODUCTION

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Dear Relative Caregiver,

By picking up this book, you are taking an important step! There are many agencies and resources that can help you and your child or children. We hope this guide will explain how each agency might help and how you can access their services.

As you take advantage of resources and information, we hope you will also take time to care for yourself and enjoy time with your children.

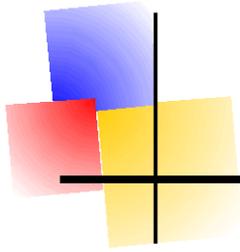
Keep up the good work!

## A Bit of Advice

Write down any questions you may have and bring your list of questions to the appointment.



Never assume that you will not qualify for a program or service. Even if you are not eligible for a particular program, your child may benefit. Always call if you have questions or need further information.



# Important Phone Numbers

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*Use this page to record important numbers. Keep this book handy so you can access these numbers when you need them.*

Emergency \_\_\_\_\_ 911

Poison Control \_\_\_\_\_ 1-800-222-1222

Child's Doctor \_\_\_\_\_

Child's School \_\_\_\_\_

Friends, Relatives, & \_\_\_\_\_

Neighbors \_\_\_\_\_

Caseworker \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

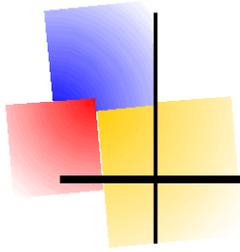
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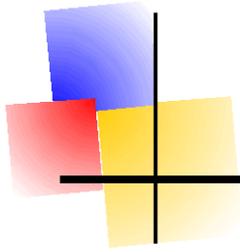


# Help Checklist

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Asking for help can be hard. Sometimes, you might not even be sure what to ask for! Check off the things on this list that would help you out. Then, when someone offers to lend a hand, take him or her up on the offer. And don't be afraid to ask for help from friends and family, either!

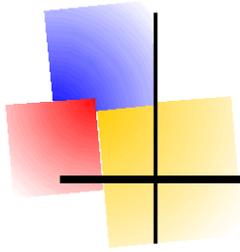
- An occasional babysitter.
- A neighbor or friend I can call in an emergency.
- More information on services and resources.
- Some time alone at home.
- Home or car repairs.
- School supplies.
- Help with house cleaning.
- Someone to ask how I am.
- Someone to take my child(ren) out for a fun afternoon.
- A prepared meal every now and then.
- A night out.



## Problem Solving Tips

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- ✓ Always ask any questions you might have. There are no irrelevant questions. If you don't understand the answer, ask for an explanation.
- ✓ Don't be afraid to ask for help when needed.
- ✓ If you have custody, take the custody papers with you everywhere. Make copies of them and keep them in your car, your purse, and your house.
- ✓ **Document. Document. Document.** Write down all dates, times, and events relating to the children or their parents. Keep a notebook handy at all times to jot down information as you are thinking of it. Do this even if things seem to be going fine at the time. This will be helpful if you have to go to court at a later date. You may be glad you wrote that note two years from now.
- ✓ Respond to all correspondence. Do not assume that the necessary information got to the appropriate person. If you are sent a letter, respond to the person who sent the letter. If you have a phone message, respond to the person who left the message, even if you have to call numerous times. Always leave a message so that the person knows you are trying to reach him or her.
- ✓ Attend a support group if possible. Meeting others who have been in a similar situation will give you the courage to get through the difficult days.
- ✓ Don't expect to always get an answer. Many people at the agencies you contact may not have dealt with your problem. When you get an answer that is unclear, ask someone else. Don't be afraid to ask to speak with a supervisor or someone at the state level.
- ✓ Be sure to give full, accurate information to everyone from whom you seek help. One small detail may change the answer completely.
- ✓ Ask for the full name, agency represented, and phone number from everyone with whom you discuss your situation. Ask for business cards. Record this information in your notebook.



# Web Resources for Grandparents

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**AARP Grandparent News**

[www.aarp.org/relationships/grandparenting/](http://www.aarp.org/relationships/grandparenting/)

**Foundation for Grandparenting**

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

**Generations United**

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

**National Committee of Grandparents for  
Children's Rights**

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

**Parent Again**

<http://www.grandparents.com/family-and-relationships/caring-for-children/whenyoureaparentagain>

**Grandsplace**

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

**Grandfamilies State Law & Policy Resource Center**

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

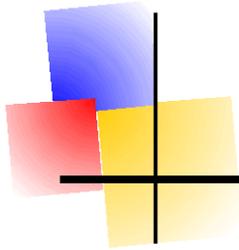
**Benefits Check Up**

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

**Family Legal Help**

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

*This list is not exhaustive, nor should it be considered an endorsement of any kind. This list is for informational purposes only.*



# HEALTH RESOURCES

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*Every county has a health department that offers most of the medical services you and your child will need. The Health Department is a valuable resource in helping to get your child the up-to-date immunizations he or she will need to enroll in school. Most health departments have other helpful programs—Ask what is available in your area. The Health Department operates on a sliding fee scale based on income.*

## **For more information:**



**Call (859) 252-2371 in  
Lexington or (502) 564-3970  
Statewide**



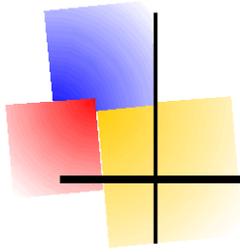
**Visit [www.chfs.ky.gov/dph/](http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dph/)**

## **A Bit of Advice**

Try to obtain the papers you need prior to scheduling an appointment. This will keep you from wasting your time, as well as the agency's time in case there is a problem locating the information or receiving it through the mail.



The Kentucky Cabinet for Families and Children has an Ombudsman who answers questions about programs, investigates consumer complaints, and recommends corrective action. Call 1-800-372-2973 for help.



# Medicaid

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## What is it?

Medicaid is an assistance program that provides complete health care coverage for low income children and their parents, guardians, and caretakers, SSI recipients, children in foster care, pregnant women and certain aged, blind and disabled individuals.

## Am I Eligible?

If your child is eligible for K-TAP benefits, he or she may be eligible for Medicaid, or a "Medical Card." You do not have to have legal custody of the child to apply for benefits, but you must be a relative. You may apply for this benefit without applying for K-TAP or other services. This benefit is based on the income of the child alone if he or she is without a parent in the house. Relative caregiver income is exempt. As with K-TAP, you must comply with Medical Support Enforcement to help recover medical expenses that the state must pay out for the child.

## How Do I Apply?

Call your local DCBS office (see page 13) and schedule an appointment. You will have to provide them with the following information:

- Proof of your relationship to the child
- Information about the parents
- Verification of household size and names
- Verification of child income and resources
- Social Security card, if already issued

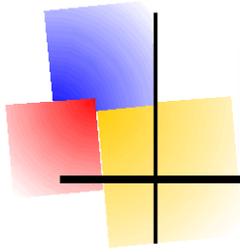
### For more information:

 Call 1-800-635-2570

•  Visit [www.chfs.ky.gov/dms](http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dms)

Medical Support  
Enforcement

*You will be expected to cooperate with the state in locating the parents so that medical support may be collected. This is to offset the state's costs in providing care.*



# Medicaid Managed Care

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## **For more information:**

[Kentucky Medicaid Managed Care](#) or [Kentucky Medicaid Program](#)

Kentucky Medicaid Managed Care Hotline, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern Time, Mon.-Fri.

Telephone: 1 (855) 446-1245

## **MCO Contacts for Members and Providers**

- Aetna Better Health Of Kentucky  
<http://www.aetnabetterhealth.com/kentucky> (serving Medicaid enrollees outside the Passport region)  
Telephone: 1 (855) 300-5528
- [Kentucky Spirit Health Plan](#) (serving Medicaid enrollees outside the Passport region)  
Telephone: 1 (866) 643-3153
- [WellCare of Kentucky](#) (serving Medicaid enrollees outside the Passport region)  
Telephone: 1 (877) 389-9457



## What is it?

KCHIP, the Kentucky Children's Health Insurance Program, is a federally funded program which provides free or low cost health insurance for Kentucky's children. The income limits for KCHIP are more generous than those for Medicaid. KCHIP covers children whose family income is too high for Medicaid but too low to afford private health insurance.

## Am I Eligible?

If the child you are raising already has health insurance or Medicaid, you do not need to apply. A child should be considered for this program regardless of the relative caregiver's income. It is not necessary to have legal custody of a child to apply for this benefit and you may apply without applying for other services. As with K-TAP and Medicaid, the state will seek out the child's parents for financial support.

## How Do I Apply?

Call or visit your local DCBS office (see page 13), call the toll-free number below to request an application, or download one from the KCHIP website. Once all information is received, you will receive a letter telling you whether or not your child has been approved. If your child is approved, you may owe a monthly premium. The approval letter will state how much you owe and you will receive a bill in the mail.

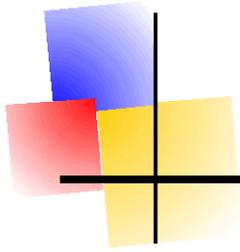
### For more information:



Call 1-877-KCHIP-18



Visit [www.kidshealth.ky.gov](http://www.kidshealth.ky.gov)



## **What is it?**

The mission of the Bluegrass.org is to assist individuals and families in the enhancement of their emotional, mental and physical well-being by providing mental health, mental retardation/developmental disabilities and substance abuse services.

Bluegrass.org recognizes their responsibility to serve those who have limited options for meeting their needs. The Board plans communities, develops innovative programs to respond rapidly to needs and, as appropriate, helps influence community priorities to ensure that individual and community service gaps are addressed.

## **Am I Eligible?**

Bluegrass.org offers a variety of programs and services throughout the Region. If you or your child has a need, call the Administrative Office or the Client Service Center for services in your area.

### **For more information:**



**Administrative Office (859) 253-1686**

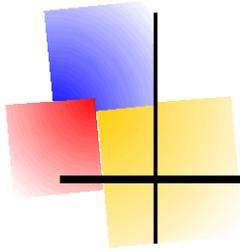
**Customer Service Department and Crisis Line**

**(800) 928-8000**



**Visit [www.bluegrass.org](http://www.bluegrass.org)**

**For counties outside of the Bluegrass area, visit [www.bluegrass.org/contact/contacts.shtml](http://www.bluegrass.org/contact/contacts.shtml) and search for county contact information.**



# Prevent Blindness America

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## What is it?

Healthy Eyes Eyeglass Program provides eyeglasses to children and adults who qualify.

## How Do I Apply?

Call the number below for an application.

You must provide written documentation of income status; this may include a copy of your w-2 form, paycheck stub for one pay period, letter from employer stating wages/salary, food stamps award letter, disability award letter, documentation from Kentucky Department of Human Services, or a letter from your school nurse/administrator stating student qualifies for free/reduced lunch, or other similar documentation.

If the child or adult applying qualifies for services, a voucher will be sent to you. In the event that the applicant does not qualify or additional information is needed, the office will contact you to discuss matters further.

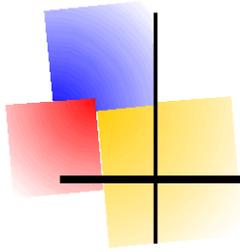
## For more information/application:



**Call (800) 828-1179**



**[www.preventblindness.org](http://www.preventblindness.org)**



# FINANCIAL RESOURCES

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## Department for Community Based Services

DCBS services are administered through a network of nine service regions and offices in each of Kentucky's 120 counties. In addition, DCBS uses a network of contract officials to deliver services, such as child care. The provision of services is enhanced through a close relationship and coordination with local community partners.

The department provides family support; child care; child and adult protection; eligibility determinations for Medicaid and food benefits; and administration of an energy cost assistance program.

## A Bit of Advice

When you call to schedule an appointment, ask what documents and identification you will need to bring.



If you are unable to go to the Department of Community Based Services (DCBS) in person, call the office and explain your situation. The office may be able to offer you different options.



## What is it?

K-TAP stands for Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program. This program provides financial and medical assistance to needy dependent children in Kentucky and the parents or relatives with whom the children are living.

## Am I Eligible?

If you are raising a child without the presence of a parent, the child is eligible for the benefits based on his or her own income. Your income does not matter. However, if the parent also lives in the home, the parent's income is counted to determine whether the child will receive the benefit. If your income falls within the guidelines, you may apply to receive benefits for yourself, as well. You must supply the DCBS office with verification of your own income. You must also work with the Division of Child Support as they attempt to locate the child's parents and have them pay a reasonable amount of child support. This offsets some of the benefits your child will be receiving.

## How Do I Apply?

In order to receive K-TAP benefits, you should contact the DCBS Family Support number (855) 306-8959 and find out when applications are taken, whether or not you need an appointment, and what you should bring to the appointment.

Plan to spend about 1 to 1 ½ hours during this initial visit. Be sure to state whether you are applying for yourself and the child or for the child only during your initial conversation so you are assigned to the correct caseworker.

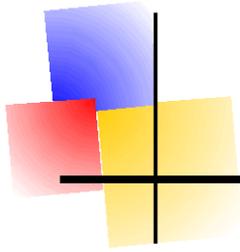
### For more information:



Call (855) 306-8959



Visit [www.chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dfs/KTAP](http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dfs/KTAP)



# Kinship Care Program

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## What is it?

Kinship Care allows the placement of an abused, neglected, or orphaned child with an approved relative rather than being placed in foster care. Services to the relative caregiver can include a child care subsidy, respite, family counseling, parenting training, support group referral, monthly financial support, and a one-time start-up bonus to be used for clothing, school supplies, additional furniture, or a deposit on a larger apartment.

## Am I Eligible?

To be eligible for this program, you must be related to the child by blood, marriage or adoption. You must pass a criminal check and have a stable home environment, as observed through a home evaluation. The child must also be removed or at risk for being removed from the home as a result of neglect, abuse, or the death of both parents. You will be expected to pursue permanent custody of the child if you take part in this program.

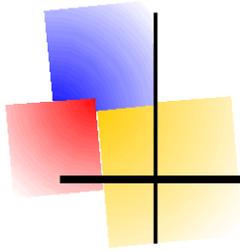
## How Do I Apply?

If the child has already been removed from the house by the Cabinet, contact the DCBS Family Support number and speak with a social worker in the Division of Protection and Permanency, or speak to a case worker in the Division of Family Support.

### For more information:

 Call (855) 306-8959

 Visit [www.chfs.ky.gov](http://www.chfs.ky.gov)



# Kentucky Family Caregiver Program

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## What is it?

Grandparents of any age who meet financial guidelines and are not receiving Kinship Care can receive financial assistance or supportive services that may include: information about services that are available, assistance in gaining access to services, individual counseling, support groups and caregiver training. Financial Assistance may be used for many different things, as authorized by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

## Am I Eligible?

In order to qualify for the program, grandparents must be related by blood, through marriage, or adoption and must be the primary caregiver of the child. The child's parent may not live in the home. The grandparent can not be receiving a monthly payment for Kinship Care and must have an annual income that does not exceed 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

## How Do I Apply?

In order to receive Kentucky Family Caregiver Benefits, you must first submit an application, which can be obtained by calling the numbers below. Along with the application, the program requires that you provide documentation of ALL annual household income, a listing of all people residing in the home, proof of residency stating that you live in the county in which you apply, information about the physical health of both the grandparent and the grandchild, a list of requested needs, and other forms as needed by the program.

### For more information:

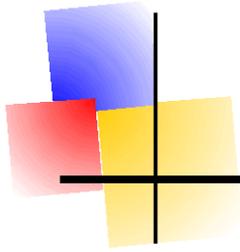


**In the Bluegrass call (502) 564-6930**

**Or Toll-free 866-665-7921**



**[www.chfs.ky.gov/dail/familycaregiver](http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dail/familycaregiver)**



# Social Security Benefits

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## What is it?

Your child may be eligible for benefits from Social Security in a variety of ways:

- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI):** Your child (birth to age 18 or 22 if regularly attending school) may qualify for SSI if he or she has a disability that severely limits his or her activities, the condition has lasted or is expected to last for at least a year, and the child has little or no income or resources.
- **Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI):** SSDI provides monthly benefits to disabled workers who have earned sufficient credits by working to be insured under Social Security. These benefits may also be paid to disabled widows or adult children disabled before age 22.
- **Retirement Benefits:** If you have a dependent child and receive Social Security retirement benefits, your child may receive a monthly payment up to one half of your retirement benefit amount. The child must be unmarried and under the age of 18 (19 if in school) or disabled.

## How Do I Apply?

To apply for any of these benefits, you will want to arrange a phone or in-person appointment. When you set up the appointment, ask what information and documents you will need to bring.

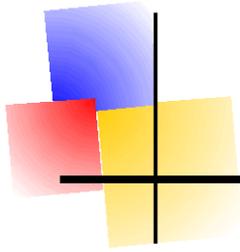
### For more information:



**Call 1-800-772-1213, Monday- Friday, 7 AM- 7 PM**



**Visit [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)**



# NUTRITION

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## What is a "Healthy Diet"?

The FDA dietary guidelines describe a **healthy diet** as one that

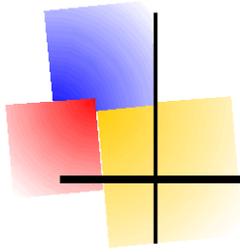
- Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products;
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts; and
- Is low in saturated fats, *trans* fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.

*From [www.choosemyplate.com](http://www.choosemyplate.com)*

## A Bit of Advice

When applying for Food Stamps, bring the following items with you:

- Proof of income for the past two months
- Social Security cards for each family member
- Statement providing the amount of rent or mortgage from the landlord or a bank.
- Statement listing all household members from the landlord or a neighbor
- Utility bill for the last two months



# Food Stamps

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## What is it?

The Food Stamp program is a federal/state funded program to help low-income families buy the food they need to stay healthy. If your household is approved, you will receive an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card and benefits will be deposited into an account each month. You will use the EBT card and a pin number to access the food stamp account.

## Am I Eligible?

For this assistance program, the entire household must meet eligibility requirements and provide proof of their statements about household circumstances. Because children cannot be counted as a separate family unit, all combined income coming into the household needs to fall below the limits. The program is available to all eligible households regardless of the age of the children. Generally, household members between ages 16 and 60 are expected to work, but there are some exceptions. You do not need to have custody of the child to apply for this program. The amount of benefits a household receives is based upon the number of individuals in the household and the household income after allowable deductions such as rent, utilities, and babysitting expenses.

## How Do I Apply?

Call or visit your local DCBS office (see page 13). You will need to bring information about the combined resources of your household and any sources of income for the household.

### For more information:



Call 502-564-7050



Visit [www.chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dfs/foodstampsebt](http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dfs/foodstampsebt)



## What is it?

WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) is a short-term supplemental nutritional program that helps families' access healthy foods. Those that qualify for services are expectant mothers, new mothers and/or infants and children under the age of 5. You must have custody of the child for him or her to be eligible for this resource.

## Am I Eligible?

There is an income guideline for WIC, but the guidelines are more generous than many other programs. WIC does not use the same standards as other agencies, so you need to call to find out whether your grandchild qualifies. This program does not work with the Child Support Enforcement Offices, so they will not attempt to contact the parents for reimbursement. You should plan to bring proof of the child's identification, household income, and proof of residency. You should also bring information about any other benefits the child or your household is receiving.

## How Do I Apply?

There are WIC offices located in each county. To find out where the office is located in your county, call the Health Department (see page 8) for the phone number. You will call the WIC office to schedule an appointment. At that time, tell them that you will be applying for your grandchild or relative. They will be able to provide you with all of the information you need to apply.

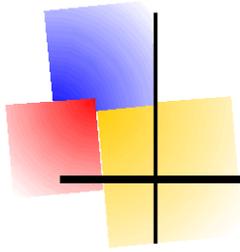
### For more information:



**Call 502-564-3827 or 1-800-462-6122**



**[www.chfs.ky.gov/dph/mch/ns/wic](http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dph/mch/ns/wic)**



# IDENTIFICATION

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## Keeping your Identity Safe

Do not carry your Social Security Card with you, except when needed.

Ask these questions of anyone requesting your Social Security Number:

*Why do you need my Social Security number?  
How will my Social Security number be used?  
How do you protect my Social Security number from being stolen?*

*What will happen if I don't give you my Social Security number?*

Whenever possible, ask that agencies and organizations refrain from using your Social Security number.

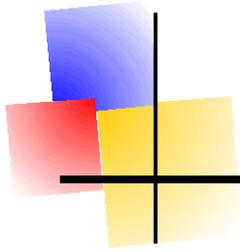
*<http://consumer.gov/>*

## A Bit of Advice

If you are applying for any assistance programs, but have not yet received a social security card for your grandchild, take a statement from the Social Security Office reporting that you have applied.



Many places will not accept a photocopy of a birth certificate. Be sure you have an original copy on hand. If the child was born out of state, you will need to call that state to request the birth certificate. The Office of Vital Statistics can give you the phone number of the agency you will need to contact.



# Social Security Number

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## What is it?

Your child will need a Social Security Number for you to claim him or her as a dependent on your income tax returns, to obtain medical coverage for the child, and to apply for government services for the child, among other things.

## How Do I Apply?

- Complete an Application for a Social Security Card
- Show original documents proving the child's:
  - US Citizenship
  - Age, and
  - Identity
- Documents proving your identity

Social Security will need to verify the child's birth record. You should bring the child's mother's (maiden) name and father's name, if listed on the birth certificate, the child's city and state of birth, and your relationship to the child. **Bring only original documents—no copies.** If your child is 12 or older, he or she must appear at the Social Security Office for an interview.

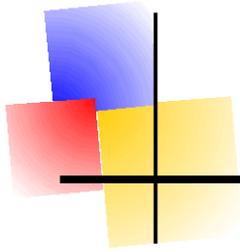
### For more information:



Call 1-800-772-1213, Monday- Friday, 7 AM- 7 PM



Visit [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)



# Birth Certificates

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## How Do I Apply?

- **In Person:** Go to the Office of Vital Statistics: 275 East Main Street, Frankfort, KY 40621. The Office, located on the first floor, is open Monday through Friday at 8 AM. You should arrive prior to 3:30 PM. In some cases, a wait time of one hour is possible.
- **By Mail:** Obtain an application from your local Health Department, or write the information on a sheet of paper and mail to: Office of Vital Statistics, 275 E. Main Street- 1E-A, Frankfort, KY 40621. Include a \$10 check made out to Kentucky State Treasury.
- **By Phone:** Call 502-564-4212. You will need to pay with a credit card and will be charged a \$5 handling fee in addition to the \$10 charge for the certificate. You may receive your certificate within one week.
- **Online:** Visit <http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/vital/birthcert.htm> (you may be charged an additional fee for ordering on the internet.)

You will need the following information:

- Full name at birth of the person for whom the certificate is requested
- Month, day, and year of birth
- County of birth
- Mother's maiden name
- Father's name
- Name, address, and phone number where the certificate is to be mailed

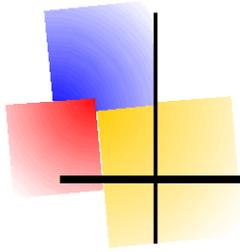
### For more information:



Call (800) 241-8322



Visit [www.chfs.ky.gov/dph/vital/birthcert](http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dph/vital/birthcert)



# LEGAL ASSISTANCE

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Free legal advice for older Kentuckians.

## **UK Legal Clinic**

**(859) 257-4692**

<http://law.uky.edu/academics/legal-clinic>

Free legal assistance to low-income seniors.

## **Legal Aid of the Bluegrass**

**1-800-928-4556**

**(859) 431-8200**

<http://www.lablaw.org/home/>

Provides legal counsel in civil cases for persons with low income; Coordinates Senior Benefits Counseling Program.

## **Fayette County Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service**

**(859) 225-9897**

[www.fcba.com](http://www.fcba.com)

Free referral to an attorney who is qualified to handle your legal problem.

## **Kentucky Bar Association**

**(502) 564-3795**

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

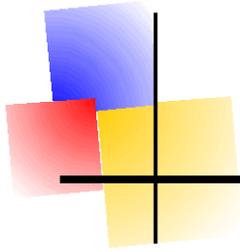
## **A Bit of Advice**

It is very important to educate yourself regarding the type of custody you have and the reason why you have received custody. Ask your attorney to discuss the terms with you and ask any questions you may have.



Every non-parent caring for a child should consider obtaining guardianship regardless of the circumstances.

This will give you protection in case the child needs medical attention and you cannot locate the parent(s).



# Guardianship

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Guardianship is a legal procedure in Kentucky that gives a grandparent or relative legal authority to take a child for medical care and to sign for school-related activities. (But, the parents cannot take the child away from your home without first going to court and obtaining permission.) The parents are still responsible for the financial support of the child and may be ordered to pay child support. This does not suspend any of the parents' rights.

To file for guardianship, you need to go to District Court and file a petition for guardianship. At this time, you will be assigned a court date. If the child's parent(s) will not be in Court for the guardianship hearing, you must provide a notarized letter from one or both parents stating that you are caring for the child, **or** a certified letter sent to each parent's last known address telling them of the court date and the reason for it. **This must be done prior to the court granting any guardianship.** The judge will make the decision on whether or not to grant guardianship. A grandparent can file for this procedure without an attorney. There is a fee to file this form, as well as court costs. If you cannot afford to pay these fees, ask about an "in forma pauperis" statement at the time you file. If you qualify for "in forma pauperis" the above fees will be waived.

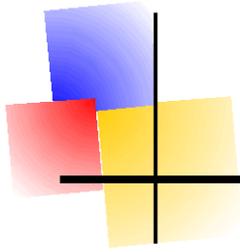
**The benefit of obtaining guardianship is that you can authorize medical treatment for the child, enroll him or her in school, and apply for public assistance on behalf of the child without terminating the parents' rights.** The parents can revoke permission for guardianship. If you are considering guardianship, call the courthouse in your county and ask where to file. The local county attorney will usually assist you in this process.

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## A Bit of Advice

Finding the right attorney can be a difficult task. One of the best ways is word of mouth— ask others if they can recommend someone.

Prior to selecting an attorney, ask if he/she frequently practices family law. You want an attorney who is familiar with family law and who has previously brought such cases before the local court.



# De Facto Custodian

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The 1998 General Assembly passed a bill (SB205) that offers a whole new approach to acquiring custody. If your grandchild has been living with you for a full year and you have been providing for the child's physical, financial, and emotional needs, you may be named a "de facto custodian." The court needs to see "clear and convincing evidence" that you have been the child's primary caregiver and financial supporter for that year. The time needs to be only six months if the child is under the age of three. The one year period also holds for a child of any age placed with you by the Cabinet. Being declared a "de facto custodian" gives you the same standing in a custody hearing as a parent would have.

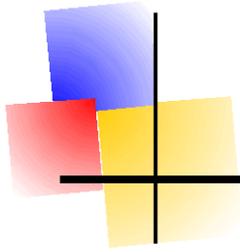
A "de facto custodian" can go to court and petition for temporary or permanent custody of a child without proving anything about the fitness of a parent. The court must regard this request just as they would a request of a father or mother in a divorce or custody case. The judge must look at all the circumstances and determine why the child has been living with the grandparent and what the relationships are between the parties. Just as in a divorce or custody case, the judge may award joint custody between parents and grandparents, or give custody to only one party. Whatever the decision, it must be made "in the best interest of the child."

If you want to seek "de facto custodian" status, you must document everything you do for the child and document all of the contacts the parent has with the child. Keep good records of your expenditures and any money the parent provides, as well. This can be a complex process—you will need the assistance of an attorney.

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## **A Bit of Advice**

When you discuss the fee with the attorney, ask for a reduced fee if you are unable to afford the price. Each attorney sets his or her own fees, and you may be able to negotiate this if you state your concerns. This is not always the case, but it never hurts to ask!



# Custody Temporary and Permanent

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## Temporary Custody

Temporary custody is much different from guardianship in that the parental rights of the natural parent have been suspended (not terminated), and you must assume the legal rights and obligations that accompany full-time care of the child. It is much more difficult to obtain temporary custody than to obtain guardianship. An attorney is recommended to petition the court for custody. **CUSTODY CAN ONLY BE GRANTED TO YOU FROM A JUDGE IN A COURT OF LAW.**

To obtain temporary custody, the parent can voluntarily allow you to take custody, or you can report evidence of abuse, neglect, or abandonment. If you are granted temporary custody, you can lose this right only through a court action as well. This means that the parent cannot ask or demand that you give back custody of the child. A change of custody can only occur in court.

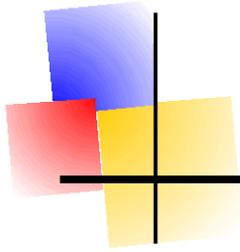
Temporary custody is viewed as temporary because the Court is hoping to return the child to the custody of the parents at a future date, but this is not always the case. The child can remain in your custody until he or she is eighteen years of age on a temporary custody order.

## Permanent Custody

Permanent custody is one step further than temporary custody in that you have a greater sense of security that the parent will not petition the court and regain custody.

Custody is determined by the Court in the best interest of the child. If the relative is already the “defacto custodian,” obtaining permanent custody is not difficult. If the relative does not have “defacto custody” status, obtaining permanent custody can be difficult and time consuming. Part of the process involves proving to the Court that the parent is unfit.

**Whatever circumstances you find yourself in, it is best to protect yourself and obtain an attorney from the start.**



# Adoption

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Adoption is the legal recognition of an individual as the child's parent. This process terminates all natural parental rights, including the right to visitation as well as all financial obligations to the child. The adoptive parents assume all of these rights as well as responsibilities. Adoption is the only way you can guarantee that the biological parent(s) will never regain custody.

Pursuing adoption can be very difficult. Because adoption is permanent, there will be many opportunities given to the parent to be reunited with the child, especially if the parent is contesting the process. To allow for adoption, the parent must voluntarily terminate his or her own rights or be proven unfit, and the Court must then legally recognize the termination.

Another thing to consider is that you may lose some of the financial benefits you receive with other types of custody. It is important that you decide why it is you are seeking adoption and discuss the laws with an attorney before you make your final decision.

Every situation has different circumstances, so it is important that you discuss your particular story with an attorney. You must have an attorney to file for adoption, as all legal steps must be taken. Also be sure to discuss any financial concerns prior to filing for adoption. This can save you much time and frustration later!

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## **A Bit of Advice**

Carefully think about what is in the child's best interest. Taking the child's parents to court can be a difficult and emotionally challenging experience for everyone, including the child. Consult an attorney to discuss all of your options.



***For more Information about Education or School Registration, call the Kentucky Department of Education at 800-KDE-5372 or 502-564-4770.***

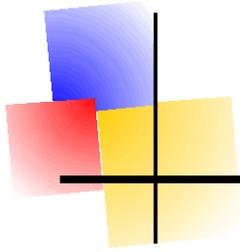
### **Family Resource and Youth Services Centers**

Family Resource & Youth Services Centers (FRYSCs) are a part of 1,100 schools in Kentucky. These centers are designed to help the student succeed by providing assistance to the student and family in accessing community resources and providing programs within the school.

Resource Center staff can direct you to programs that you might not otherwise know about, such as help with clothing, food banks, child care, health care, support groups and parenting programs.

Grandparents and relative caregivers can receive help from FRYSCs even if the child is not enrolled in school yet (such as infants, toddlers and preschoolers).

Call your local elementary, middle, or high school and ask for the Family Resource Center (elementary) or Youth Services Center (middle/high school), or call the school district's main office to find out how to contact the FRYSC for your area.



# School Enrollment

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## Who Should I Call?

To enroll a child in school, the first step is to call the school in your district and schedule an appointment to meet with them. To find out which school is in your district, call the Board of Education Located in your County.

## Are there Special Requirements?

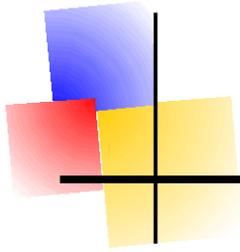
In Kentucky, children between the ages of 6 and 16 are required to attend school. Children younger than school age may be eligible for an Early Start Program, Head Start Program, or a Primary School Program, depending on the child's age and family situation.

Registration for school, or any of these early intervention programs, is handled at the child's assigned school.

*You must have legal guardianship or custody to enroll a child in school.* The school will need a copy of the court documents granting you guardianship or custody of the child. If you do not have guardianship or custody, talk with the school and explain the situation to them.

## What Should I Bring?

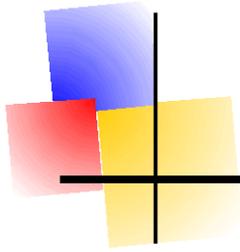
- ✓ An official copy of the child's birth certificate and Social Security card.
- ✓ A copy of the child's immunization records and last physical.
- ✓ Documentation from the previous school if child has attended another school.
- ✓ An official copy of guardianship or custody papers, or proof that a request has been filed.
- ✓ Some schools may require a TB skin test.



## Tips for School Success

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-  When you meet with the principal, teachers, and counselor for the first time, ask about programs they have that could be of benefit to your child or to you. Many schools have after or before school programs that you can take advantage of.
-  Develop a relationship with your child's school, especially the teachers and counselors. Ask any questions you might have, especially regarding the child's homework or classwork.
-  If possible, attend all special events at your child's school. This will help the child "fit in" with the new surroundings.
-  Communicate any changes in the child's routine with the school—especially the teacher. This helps the teacher recognize what he or she needs to do to foster success.
-  As whether there are other relative caregivers who have children in the same school. You may be able to exchange favors with other grandparents who are in the same boat.
-  Request that the school notify you if there are changes in the child's behavior or schoolwork. Communicate with the teachers about who will be signing notes sent home from school.
-  If you are having problems at home, talk to the teachers and counselors for suggestions or resources you can utilize.
-  If you are having problems with a teacher, talk with the school counselor or the teacher to find a solution for getting along.
-  If your child wants to participate in after-school activities, ask about any provisions the school may have for transportation home or scholarships that may cover activity fees.
-  Tuition is waived for foster and adopted children at Kentucky public colleges and universities. For more information, call 1-800-232-5437.



# CHILD PROTECTION

## Fayette County Emergency Resources

Division of Police.....911  
..... or 258-3600

Bluegrass Domestic .....233-0657  
Violence Program  
Crisis Hotline 800-544-2022

National Domestic Violence Hotline  
1-800-799-SAFE

District Court Clerk—  
Protective Orders  
Weekdays.....246-2248  
Weekends/After Hrs....246-2228

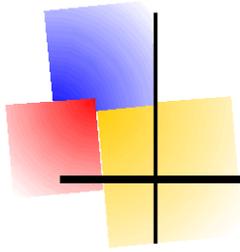
Sheriff's Office.....252-1771

### A Bit of Advice

*If you or your children have been threatened or assaulted, you can request a protective order 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.*



*Keep your protective order on you at all times. You may also wish to give a copy to a family member or friend and your child's school. Inform those around you that you have a protective order in effect.*

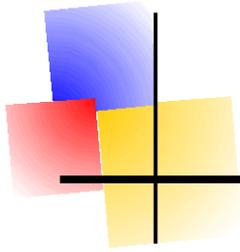


## Dealing with Child Protection

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**Be aware that Community Based Services (DCBS) may be involved in the placement of your child. Their job is to ensure the safety of the child, and you can expect to be asked many questions about your home situation.**

- ✓ First, have a clear understanding of what happened. Ask DCBS to explain as much of the story as possible. If this is a case of abuse, ask what type of abuse it was. This will give you an understanding of some of the behavior you could expect from the child.
- ✓ When the child is brought to you, ask who has custody. Request a copy of the custody order. Keep in mind that if you have received the child from DCBS, a crisis has occurred and the situation may be unsettled.
- ✓ Ask for any medical information regarding the child. Obtain names of doctors, dates of last exams, and any problems or information regarding the child you will need to know. If you aren't in contact with the parent, ask the case worker to help you find this out. State law requires a physical exam within the first 10 days a child is in your custody, but the sooner the better.
- ✓ Tell the case worker you want to be included in the case plan for the child. If visitation is decided at the case conference, get visitation requirements and a schedule in writing.
- ✓ Ask if DCBS will be present during any court hearings. Be sure to ask whether you are entitled to an attorney at this time.
- ✓ If you need any assistance or referrals for clothing, diapers, or any other necessities for the child, ask the case worker to make these for you.
- ✓ Obtain copies of all documents and keep them with you at all times. You may need to prove that the child is legally in your care.
- ✓ Ask for the DCBS workers name and number, and a back-up contact, such as a supervisor, in case you are unable to contact the worker when needed.



## **Domestic Violence/Abuse Resources**

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### **Bluegrass Rape Crisis Center**

1-800-656-4673 Crisis Line

#### Local Offices

Lexington	(859) 253-2615
Cynthiana	(859) 234-1011
Danville	(859) 236-4445
Frankfort	(502) 226-1400
Nicholasville	(859) 881-5110
Georgetown	(502) 863-7350
Richmond	(859) 625-0213
Winchester	(859) 744-3002

### **Center for Women, Children, and Families**

(859) 259-1974

### **Domestic Violence Prevention Board**

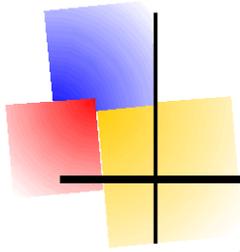
(859) 258-3803

### **Legal Aid of the Bluegrass**

(859) 431-8200

### **Children's Advocacy Center**

(859) 255-5437



# CHILD CARE

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## Child Care Options

### Type 1

Any facility other than a dwelling unit which regularly receives four (4) or more children for day care; or any facility, including a dwelling unit which regularly provides day care for thirteen (13) or more children.

### Type 2

Any home or dwelling unit which regularly provides care apart from parents for seven (7), but not more than twelve (12) children.

Source: <http://chfs.ky.gov>

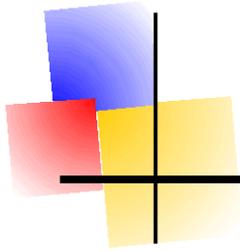
*For more information about Child Care in Kentucky, call (800) 421-1903*

### **A Bit of Advice**

The Child Care Assistance Program can help families pay for child care. In Fayette County, call (859) 271-4079 to make an appointment or call (800) 809-7076 to find the number of the Office in your County.



If the mother and child are living in your home, you are eligible for child care assistance as long as the mother is in high school. The mother of the child is eligible for assistance.



## Choosing Quality Child Care

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### Where do I start?

As a relative caregiver, this may be the first time you've needed child care. Services are available to help in your search for quality child care providers. The Child Care Council can inform you of certified homes and centers in your local area. The Child Care Council matches the child care needs of the caregiver with the child care services available in the community. Child care specialists will assist families with their child care search.

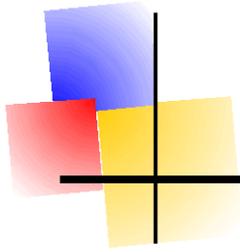
### What should I do?

For **child care resource and referral** information, call (877) 316-3552. There is a child care referral phone line with a counselor available to answer questions and provide information Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM.

For contact information from other areas of Kentucky visit: [www.chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dcc/](http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dcc/).

### Indicators of Quality Child Care

- ✓ The environment is inviting to children.
- ✓ The facility is neat, clean, and in good repair.
- ✓ There are a variety of materials and equipment for children to use.
- ✓ There is a balance of quiet and active play.
- ✓ The program has proper staff/child ratios.
- ✓ The staff understands child development.
- ✓ The staff is respectful of the children's feelings.
- ✓ There are activities and materials that promote development of the child.



# The Nest: Center for Women, Children, & Families

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## What is it?

The Nest—Center for Women, Children, and Families is a non-profit social service agency providing a safe, accessible, and healing environment for children, while developing families through education, support, and advocacy. The Nest offers temporary and long-term childcare, counseling, play therapy groups, crisis case management, and parenting courses. Two programs are described below:

**The Nest** is a state licensed child care center, providing a safe, nurturing environment. The Nest offers temporary childcare (as well as long-term) for relative caregivers who are financially unable to secure child care or have no other support system for emergency care. Hours are Monday- Friday, 9:00 AM- 5:00 PM. It is best to call in advance.

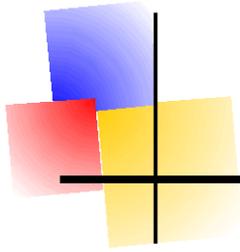
**Crisis Case Management** offers a variety of information and services, including information about community resources, parenting, jobs, as well as clothing and diapers. (Monday-Friday 1:00-3:00 PM)

## How Do I Apply

Call the Center for Women, Children, and Families for more information and an appointment.

 (859) 259-1974

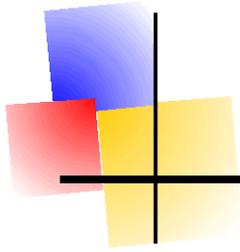
 [www.thenestlexington.org](http://www.thenestlexington.org)



# Child Care Licensing Requirements

From <http://chfs.ky.gov/os/oig/drcc.htm>

	LICENSED TYPE I	LICENSED TYPE II
Program Definitions	<p>Non-dwelling - 4+ children</p> <p>Dwelling - 13+ children</p>	Dwelling 7-12 Children
Qualifications and Requirements	<p>Director - 21 years old with a high school diploma or GED and one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• College degree</li> <li>• Competence based vocational training</li> <li>• 3 years full-time paid experience in child care</li> <li>• Certificate in child development services</li> </ul>	<p>Meet requirements of Type I director OR be at least 21 AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High school or GED or</li> <li>• Certificate in child development or</li> <li>• 1 year paid experience in child care</li> </ul>
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 hours orientation training within 3 months of employment for director and staff</li> <li>• 12 hours of training annually for director and staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 hours orientation training within 3 months of employment for provider and staff</li> <li>• 12 hours of training annually for provider and staff</li> </ul>
Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff member on duty current with CPR and First Aid certificates</li> <li>• Criminal records check for director and staff</li> <li>• TB skin test for director and staff</li> <li>• Child abuse neglect registry checks for director and staff</li> <li>• Nurse aide abuse registry checks for director and staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff member on duty current with CPR and First Aid certificates</li> <li>• Criminal records check for provider, staff and adults in household</li> <li>• Provider, staff and adults in household checked for substantiated abuse and neglect</li> <li>• TB skin test for provider, staff and adults in household</li> <li>• Child abuse neglect registry checks for director and staff</li> <li>• Nurse aide abuse registry checks for director and staff</li> </ul>
Inspections	<p>Annually:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Fire Marshal</li> <li>• Division of Licensed Child Care</li> <li>• Local Health Department</li> </ul>	<p>Annually:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Fire Marshal</li> <li>• Division of Licensed Child Care</li> </ul>



# EMOTIONAL NEEDS

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*Joining a support group is an effective and informal way to learn from other grandparents about services and resources for which you may be eligible. At the support group, suggest a discussion topic you are interested in learning more about; for example, how to help your grandchild do computer based homework assignments.*

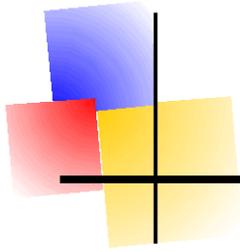
*Call United Way 2-1-1, your local school, or county Cooperative Extension Office to ask about support groups in your area.*

## **A Bit of Advice**

Raising your child is not an easy task! Parenting is all about communication and love. There is no right or wrong answers, and there is no “perfect” parent.



The AARP Grandparent Information Center (GIC) provides an abundance of helpful materials to support your efforts. Call them at 1-800-424-3410 or visit their webpage at [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org).



# Assistance in Meeting the Child's Emotional Needs

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## Counseling

Because your child has been through a lot, he or she may benefit from the assistance of a counselor to help understand what has happened. As adults, we often have a hard time understanding how or why people do the things they do--Imagine how a child feels. Meeting with a counselor gives a child the opportunity to talk about feelings and to understand why he or she feels a certain way. A counselor also gives a child undivided attention and a sense of safety and security.

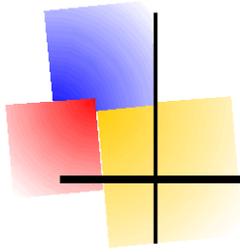
To find a counselor in your county, look in the phone book or ask someone for a recommendation. Every county has a mental health agency that has counselors on staff. Call and schedule an appointment. Staff may want to meet with you first to discuss the problem the child is having and to talk about past events. Encourage your grandchild to talk about his or her feelings, and be open with the child. Speaking with a counselor does not mean something is wrong!

Counseling is usually covered under an insurance plan, as well as with a medical card. If you do not have either, most agencies have a sliding scale fee policy to cover services.

## Relative Caregiver Resources

Taking on the full-time care responsibility for a child is one of the hardest, yet most rewarding jobs you can have. There are places you can go if you have questions about the child's behavior or about parenting a child in today's ever-changing world. The best approach to find what works for each child is simply trial and error. If one way doesn't work, try something else. When you find something that works, the key is CONSISTENCY.

For more information, call the school counselor or the Cooperative Extension in your county.



# Catholic Charities

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## What is it?

Catholic Charities' counseling program is a non-denominational, non-profit program. The counselors offer adult, individual, marital relationship, family, adolescent, parenting, grandparenting, and child therapy for a wide range of issues. Counselors are available to facilitate groups. Hours are weekdays and several evenings during the week.

## Am I Eligible?

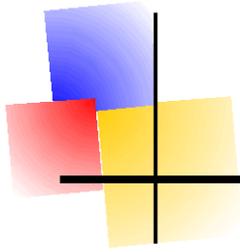
Catholic Charities' Counseling Program is sensitive to the client's financial situation. The fee for services is based on a sliding scale and the staff considers family size and household income when establishing the fee. Catholic Social Service Bureau is open to people of all faiths.

## How do I Apply?

For more information, or to make an appointment, go online at <http://www.catholiccharitieslexington.org/services.html> or call (502)-637-9786 or in Lexington (859) -253-1993 and ask for a counselor.

### A Bit of Advice

Both relative caregivers and children often deal with various mental health issues, such as grief, anger, confusion, resentment, and depression. Remember—there are good support programs that can help relative caregivers raise their children.



# Big Brothers Big Sisters

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## What is it?

The agency matches children, ages 6-13, with adult volunteers to have fun together, share experiences, concerns, and accomplishments. Children are matched with volunteers based on the child's specific needs and interests. Most of the children in the program come from a single parent/guardian home but each situation is considered on a case by case basis.

Volunteers spend time with children in many different ways, including: community activities, school mentoring, and group outings. Volunteers act as a friend and positive role model to your child, not a parent or disciplinarian. Volunteers go through a special screening process and the parent/guardian makes the final decision whether or not to accept the volunteer.

## Am I Eligible?

Children from single parent households, ages 6-13 may be eligible for the program. The child must live in the 14 county service area for at least three months prior to applying for service. A child may only be referred to the program by a parent or guardian, and all referrals are handled on a case-by-case basis. Big Brothers Big Sisters is a youth prevention program.

## How Do I Apply?

Parents need to speak with a case manager to see if the child meets preliminary eligibility criteria. The case manager will then inform the parent/guardian of the remainder of the process to have the child enrolled in the program. The case manager will inform the parent/guardian of office locations in different service areas at the time of the initial phone call.

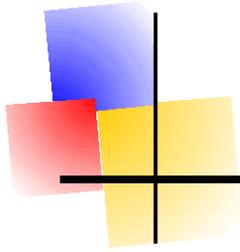
## For more information:



**Call 859-231-8181**



**Visit [www.bbbs-bluegrass.org](http://www.bbbs-bluegrass.org)**



# Family Counseling Service

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## What is it?

Family Counseling Service offers support and assistance in areas of stress and uncertainty. The staff knows that the challenges of becoming a parent again are real, substantial, and sometimes overwhelming. In addition, there can be emotional problems for the child that need to be addressed in order for him or her to successfully navigate the transition.

The program offers family-oriented counseling to enable relative caregivers and their children to heal, grow, and move forward.

## Am I Eligible?

Family Counseling Service is a non-profit organization with a sliding fee scale. They accept some insurance plans and Medicare. Their services are available to anyone in the Bluegrass Region.

The Center operates evenings and weekends and they are generally able to schedule an appointment for the same week the initial call is received. In addition, the agency is wheelchair accessible and has plenty of easy parking.

## How Do I Apply?

Call for an appointment.

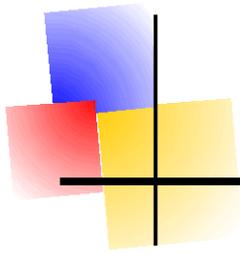
### For more information:

 (859) 233-0033

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

2432 Regency Road Suite 120 (Same building as Caretenders)

Lexington, KY 40503



# Kentucky KINCARES Project

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## What is it?

**KINCARES** Kentucky Information Network: Collaborating Advocating Resourcing Educating Supporting Grandparents/Relatives Raising Children

**Mission Statement:** **KIN-Cares** is a statewide collaborative whose sole mission is to focus on supporting grandparents/relative caregivers who are raising children (formerly known as the Kentucky Statewide KinCare Steering Committee).

### Goals:

To promote self-sustaining grandparents and relatives raising children support groups throughout Kentucky

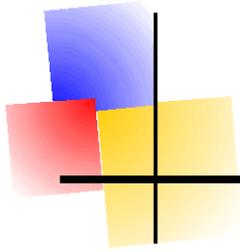
- To support quality training efforts that enhance, enrich, and empower grandparents and relatives raising children.
- To identify and provide resources and information related to grandparents and relatives raising children.
- To create a greater awareness and appreciation of the experiences of grandparents and relatives raising children.
- To foster a collaborative approach to resolving systematic issues confronting grandparents and relatives raising children.

### For more information:

If interested in more information about this group or how to become a member of KIN-Cares, contact:



**Division of FRYSC at (502) 564-4986**



# ADVOCACY

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*When calling legislators, ask to speak with the person handling the bill or issue you are calling about. You can use this sample conversation as a guide when you are speaking with the legislator or aide.*

**Introduce yourself:** Hello, my name is Jane Doe. I am a registered voter in your District/County.

**State why you are calling:** I am in favor of/opposed to bill \_\_\_\_\_. *Briefly describe bill and why it is important.*

**Request a Response:** Can you tell me your position on this bill?

**Acknowledge Response:** Thank you for your support; or,  
We really need your support—I hope you will consider this issue further; Thank you for your time.

**Remember—**

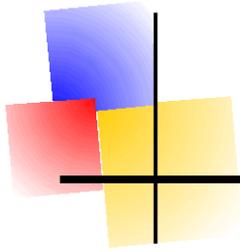
- Keep the conversation brief!
- Know your facts before calling.
- Admit if there are facts you don't know.
- Leave your number if you reach voice mail.
- Keep trying if you don't get through at first.

## A Bit of Advice

**You** have an important voice in policies that will impact you and your child!



You can track legislation by calling the Calendar Line at 1-800-633-9650 or the Bill Status Line at 1-800-809-0020.



## Contacting Legislators

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### Find out who your Kentucky Senator and Representative are:

- Call your local Board of Election
- Call your County Clerk's Office
- Call the League of Women Voters
- Call 1-888-VOTE-SMART
- Visit [www.vote-smart.org](http://www.vote-smart.org)
- Visit [www.lrc.ky.gov](http://www.lrc.ky.gov)
- Call the LRC Public Information Office—502-564-8100 x517

### Contact Legislators in Frankfort:

#### Call

502-564-8100

#### Fax

502-564-6543

#### Email

Visit [www.lrc.ky.gov](http://www.lrc.ky.gov) for email addresses

*\*\*Before emailing, check with your legislator to see if he or she minds receiving email. Often a letter or phone call is preferred and may be more effective.*

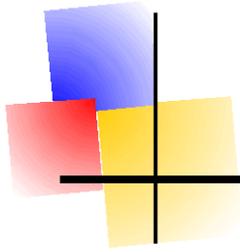
#### Mail

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
Legislative Offices, Capitol Annex  
Frankfort, KY 40601

### Contacting Other Kentucky Officials:



[www.kentucky.gov](http://www.kentucky.gov) for a state phone directory.



# Communication Tips

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## Calling

If the legislature is not in session, try calling your legislator's district office. If you do not speak with the actual legislator, ask the name of the person with whom you are speaking. Leave a message with your phone number if you do not speak with someone directly.

In your phone conversation, be sure to say where you live and why the issue is important to you. If you are calling about a specific bill, state the name and number, if known. Keep your call focused and pick a few talking points to focus on. Ask the legislator's position on the issue. Thank the legislator or aide for his or her time.

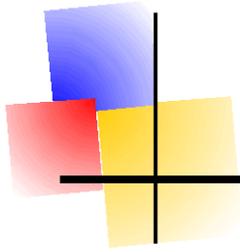
## Writing

As with calling, send letters to the legislator's district office when the legislature is not in session. Use your own stationery or colored paper. Avoid form letters or mass mailings. Be sure to include your name, address, and phone number.

Be very specific about why you are writing. Keep the letter brief and to the point. Write in a way that educates without a threatening or condescending tone. Follow up after your legislator votes and let him or her know that you agree or disagree.

## Emailing

Make the subject line count! Let your legislator know you are a concerned constituent. Keep the tone of the email formal, just like you would a written letter. Include your full name and address. Let your legislator know if you expect a response. Avoid abbreviations or symbols sometimes used in email.



# Phone Discount - Lifeline/Link-Up

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## What is it?

Lifeline gives consumers a discount on monthly charges for basic local telephone service.

Link-Up pays for part of the consumer's connection or activation charge for new telephone service.

Some cellular companies offer discounts as well.

## Am I Eligible?

You must have a total household income at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty guidelines.

## How Much Can You Save?

Lifeline - The amount of the discount depends on where you live. The basic federal program provides a discount as high as \$10 per month, but most states provide an additional discount.

Link-Up – the program pays up to half the installation/connection charge (with a \$30 cap). You may ask for a year to pay off the other half of the connection or activation charge, without interest. Link-Up will not cover the cost of a phone or wiring your home.

## How Do I Apply?

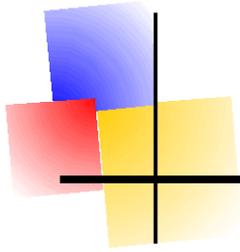
There are three ways to learn about these programs;

Call your local phone company and ask about Lifeline and Link-Up

Call the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) at **1-888-CALLFCC**



[www.lifeline.gov](http://www.lifeline.gov)



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**For Additional Copies Please Contact:**

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Director of Aging and Disability Services  
200 East Main Street  
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