

Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Grandchildren



A Resource Guide for the Atlanta Region

Compiled by the Atlanta Regional Commission, Area Agency on Aging

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2005

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The ARC Board is composed of the county commission chairpersons in the Atlanta region, a mayor from each county, two mayors of the most populous county, the mayor of the city of Atlanta, and a member of the Atlanta City Council. It includes 15 private citizens and one non-voting member appointed by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

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Purpose of this Guide

The purpose of this guide is to give grandparents raising grandchildren a quick overview of services, programs, and general information to get needed assistance. This guide is by no means a complete list of all resources available to grandparents raising grandchildren. This guide includes resources and services that are statewide or countywide and serve as a place for grandparents to get further referrals for their individual needs.

How to Use this Guide

This guide begins with a listing of phone numbers of federal, state, and county agencies and programs that may assist grandparents who are raising grandchildren. The list of phone numbers is categorized by county and then by type of service.

Websites have also been provided if available. If you do not have a computer, you may access the Internet at your local public library, or your grandchild may access the Internet at school.

The guide is then divided into the following sections:

- > Advocacy
- > Child Abuse, Adult Abuse and Domestic Violence
- > Child Care
- > Children with Disabilities
- > Financial
- > Food & Nutrition
- > Housing
- > Legal
- > Medical & Health Care
- > Mental Health
- > Recreation & Respite
- > School & Education
- > Senior Resources
- > Sexuality, HIV/AIDS and STDs
- > Transportation

There are phone numbers in these sections. ☎ When you see this telephone symbol in the resource guide, you may obtain information by telephone. **These phone numbers may change. Contact the Atlanta Regional Commission Aging Division at 404-463-3524 or 404-463-3229 if the number is out of service.**

There are also Web addresses in these sections. 🖱 When you see this mouse symbol in the resource guide, you can obtain information on the Internet.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Resource Guide

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Resources by Service Category

Advocacy

House of Representatives—Public Information Office

404-656-5082

www.legis.state.ga.us

Senate—Public Information Office

404-656-0028

www.legis.state.ga.us

Voices for Georgia's Children

404-527-7250

www.georgiavoices.org/about.html

Child Abuse and Domestic Violence

Georgia Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-33-HAVEN (1-800-334-2836)

Prevent Child Abuse Georgia

404-870-6565 in metro Atlanta; 1-800-CHILDREN throughout Georgia

www.preventchildabusega.org/html/home.html

ChildHelp USA® National Child Abuse Hotline

1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453)

www.childhelpusa.org/programs_hotline.htm

Child Care

Georgia Head Start Association

770-841-9913

www.georgiaheadstart.org/hslit.htm

Quality Care for Children (formerly Save the Children)

404-479-4240

www.qualitycareforchildren.org

Children with Disabilities

Babies Can't Wait

404-657-2726

<http://health.state.ga.us/pdfs/familyhealth/csncoordinator.2004.pdf>

Marcus Institute (a place where children with disabilities learn skills and caregivers receive support)

404-419-4000

www.marcus.org



Parent-to-Parent of Georgia
1-800-229-2038
www.parenttoparentofga.org

Social Security Administration
1-800-772-1213
www.ssa.gov

Financial

Child Support Enforcement
1-800-227-7993
www.cse.dhr.state.ga.us

Right from the Start Medicaid
1-800-809-7276
www.rsm.dhr.state.ga.us

Social Security Administration
1-800-772-1213
www.ssa.gov

Food & Nutrition

Child and Adult Care Food Program
1-800-424-2246
www.childcareaware.org/en/findcare.html

Georgia Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)
1-800-228-9173
www.ph.dhr.state.ga.us/programs/wic/index.shtml

National Food Stamp Hotline
1-800-221-5689
www.fns.usda.gov/fsp

Housing

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
404-331-5136
www.hud.gov/local/index.cfm?state=ga

Legal

Adoption Information—Department of Human Resources
770-603-4774
www.adoptions.dhr.state.ga.us

Atlanta Legal Aid Society Grandparent/Relative Caregiver Project
404-524-5811
404-614-3911

Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation
404-521-0790

Foster Care Information

Homes for Georgia's Kids Information Line
1-877-210-5437 (or call your county DFCS office)

Georgia CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate Programs)
404-874-2888

Georgia Legal Services Program
404-206-5175 or 1-800-498-9469

Medical & Health Care

American Academy of Pediatrics (Georgia Chapter)
404-876-7535
www.gaaap.org

Ben Massell Dental Clinic
404-881-1858

Children's HealthCare of Atlanta Physician Referral
404-250-5437

Georgia Partnership for Caring Foundation
1-800-982-4723

Good Samaritan Health Center
404-523-6571

PeachCare for Kids
1-877-427-3224

Mental Health

Front Porch of Atlanta (grief counseling for kids)
770-730-5858

Grady Hospital Social Services
404-616-4195

Recreation/Respite

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Metro Atlanta
404-527-7600



Boy Scouts of America

404-577-4810

Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta

404-527-7100

Girl Scouts of America

404-527-7500

Kid Komed

770-887-9449

YMCA main office

404-588-9622

YWCA main office

404-527-7575

4-H Club Georgia

call your local county extension office

www.georgia4h.org



School & Child Education

Georgia Head Start Association

770-343-8921

Project GRAD (case management for children in certain schools)

404-897-2390

Senior Resources

AARP Georgia State Office

404-881-0292

866-295-7281 toll free

Atlanta Regional Commission, Age Wise Connection

404-463-3333 (information and referral)

Georgia Council on Aging

404-657-5343

www.gcoa.org

Georgia Department of Human Resources Aging Services Division

404-657-5258

Sexuality, HIV/AIDS, & STDs

AID Atlanta

404-870-7775

www.aidatlanta.org

National AIDS Hotline

1-800-342-AIDS

National AIDS Hotline in Spanish

1-800-344-SIDA

National Minority AIDS Council

202-483-6622

www.nmac.org

National Pediatric and Family HIV Resource Center

1-800-362-0071

www.thebody.com/nphrc/nphrc.page.html

The Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation

1-888-499-HOPE

www.pedaids.org and click “Pediatric AIDS and You”

The Georgia AIDS and STD Info Line

1-800-551-2728

The HIV/AIDS Treatment Information Service

1-800-HIV-0440

www.hivatis.org

Social Support Services for Non-English Speakers

Catholic Social Services

404-881-6571 (English, Spanish, French, German, Russian, Croatian, Arabic)

Center for Pan Asian Community Services

770-936-0969 (English, Vietnamese, Korean)

Clarkston Community Center, Inc.

404-508-1050 (African Languages, English, Russian, Vietnamese)

Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies

770-451-5501 or 1-800-822-2539
(English, Spanish)

Jewish Family and Career Services

770-677-9300 (English, Russian)

Latin American Association

404-638-1800



United Way
211 (English, Spanish)

Transportation/ID cards

MARTA

404-848-5000

www.itsmarta.com

Half-Fare Office (Five Points)

404-848-3203

Half-Fare Office (Lindbergh)

404-848-5112

ParaTransit for People with Disabilities

404-848-5389

Non-Driver ID Cards

678-413-8400



Resources by County

Cherokee County

Cherokee County Government

770-479-1953

www.cherokeega.com

Board of Education

770-479-1871

www.cherokee.k12.ga.us

Child Protective Services

770-720-6445

Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS)

770-720-3610

www.dhr.georgia.gov/02/dhr/home/0,2220,5696,00.html

Housing Authority

770-479-4969

Legal Services

770-535-5717

Mental Health/Counseling Centers

1-800-923-2305

North Georgia Community Action, Inc.

706-692-5644

Police (non-emergency)

770-345-3300

Probate Court (Guardianship)

678-493-6160

Public Health Department

770-345-7371

www.ph.dhr.state.ga.us/regional/cherokee/index.shtml

Public Libraries

770-479-3090

www.walker.public.lib.ga.us

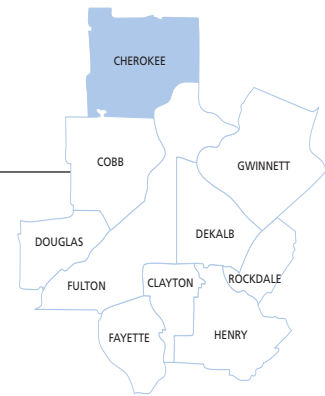
Recreation Services

770-924-7768

Senior Services

770-345-5312

www.cherokeega.com/ccweb/departments/senior/index.cfm



Superior Court

678-493-6501

Clayton County

Clayton County Government

770-477-3208

www.co.clayton.ga.us

Clayton County Community Services Authority, Inc.

404-363-0575

Board of Education

770-473-2700

www.clayton.k12.ga.us/admin/board

Child Protective Services

770-603-4602

Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS)

770-473-2300

www.ccd fcs.org/index.htm

Housing Authority

404-362-1200

Parks & Recreation

770-477-3766

www.thebeachccip.com

Police (non-emergency)

770-477-3747

Legal Services

404-669-0233

Mental Health/Counseling Centers—Adult

770-478-1099

www.claytoncenter.org

Mental Health/Counseling Centers—Child

770-991-7420

Probate Court (Guardianship)

770-477-3299

www.co.clayton.ga.us

Public Health Department

770-961-1330

Public Libraries

770-473-3850

www.clayton.public.lib.ga.us



Kinship Care Resource Center

770-477-3417

www.ccagingprogram.org

Superior Court

770-477-4565

Cobb County

Cobb County Government

770-528-1000

www.cobbcounty.org

Board of Education

770-426-3300

www.cobbk12.org

Child Protective Services

770-528-5015

Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS)

770-528-5000

Housing Authority—Acworth

770-974-3012

Housing Authority—Marietta

770-419-3200

Legal Services

770-528-2565

Mental Health/Counseling Centers

770-422-0202

www.cobbcsb.com

Police (non-emergency)

770-499-3900

Probate Court (Guardianship)

770-528-1900

www.gaprobate.org

Public Health Department

770-514-2300

Public Libraries

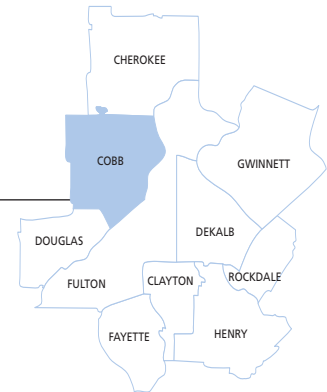
770-528-2320

www.cobbcat.org

Recreation Services

770-528-8800

www.cobbcounty.org



Senior Services

770-528-5364

www.cobbseniors.org

Superior Court

770-528-1300

www.cobbgasupctclk.com

Tallatoona Economic Opportunity Authority, Inc.

770-382-5388

DeKalb County

DeKalb County Government

404-371-2000

www.co.dekalb.ga.us

Board of Education

678-676-1200

www.dekalb.k12.ga.us

Child Protective Services

404-370-5000

Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS)

404-370-5000

Housing Authority

404-377-0425

Legal Services

404-377-0701

Mental Health/Counseling Centers

404-892-4646

Partnership for Community Action, Inc.

404-929-2500

Police (non-emergency)

404-294-2000

Probate Court (Guardianship)

404-371-2601

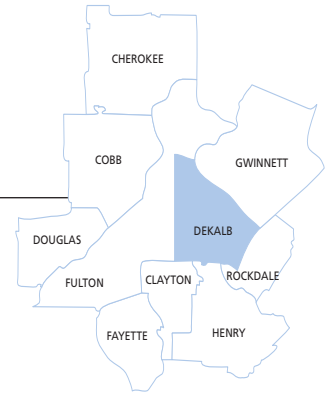
Public Health Department

404-294-3700

www.dekalbhealth.net

Public Libraries

404-370-8450



Recreation Division

404-371-2631

www.co.dekalb.ga.us

Senior Services

404-687-7117

www.dekalbseniors.com

Superior Court

404-371-2836

www.ojs.dekalbga.org

Douglas County

Douglas County Government

770-949-2000

www.co.douglas.ga.us

Board of Education

770-651-2000

www.douglas.k12.ga.us

Child Protective Services

770-489-3000

Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS)

770-489-3000

Housing Authority

770-942-3121

Legal Services

404-894-7707 or 1-800-822-5391

Mental Health/Counseling Centers

770-422-0202

www.cobbcsb.com

Parks & Recreation

770-920-7129

www.co.douglas.ga.us

Police (non-emergency)

770-942-2121

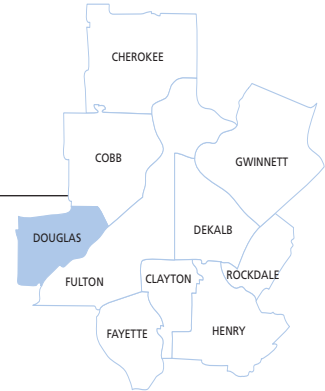
Probate Court (Guardianship)

770-920-7249

Public Health Department

770-949-1970

www.ph.dhr.state.ga.us/regional/douglas/clinics.shtml



Public Libraries

770-920-7125

www.pines.lib.ga.us

Senior Services

770-489-3100

Superior Court

770-920-7252

Tallatoona Economic Opportunity Authority, Inc.

770-382-5388

Fayette County

Fayette County Government

770-460-5730 Ext. 5400

www.admin.co.fayette.ga.us

Board of Education

770-460-3535

www.fcboe.org

Child Protective Services

770-460-2555

Clayton County Community Services Authority, Inc.

404-363-0575

Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS)

770-460-2555

Legal Services

404-894-7707 or 1-800-822-5391

Mental Health/Counseling Centers—Adult

770-460-2460

Mental Health/Counseling Centers—Child

770-358-8560

Police (non-emergency)

770-461-6353

Probate Court (Guardianship)

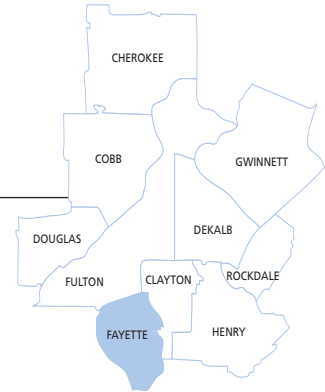
770-716-4220

www.admin.co.fayette.ga.us/courts/probcourt/info_probcourt.htm

Public Health Department

770-461-1178 (then listen to menu options)

www.admin.co.fayette.ga.us/health/physical/programs_phyhealth.htm



Public Libraries

770-461-8841

www.admin.co.fayette.ga.us/publiclibrary/info_lib.htm

Recreation Department

770-461-9714

Senior Services

770-461-0813

www.fayss.org

Superior Court

770-461-4703

www.admin.co.fayette.ga.us/courts/superiorcourt/info_supcourt.htm

Fulton County

Fulton County Government

404-730-4000

www.co.fulton.ga.us

Fulton Atlanta Community Action Authority

404-320-0166

www.facaa.org

Fulton County Board of Education

404-768-3600

www.fultonschools.org

Atlanta Public Schools

404-802-3500

www.atlanta.k12.ga.us/board_of_ed/meet/district6.html

Child Protective Services

404-699-4399

Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS)

404-206-6565

Atlanta Housing Authority

404-892-4700

Fulton County Housing Authority

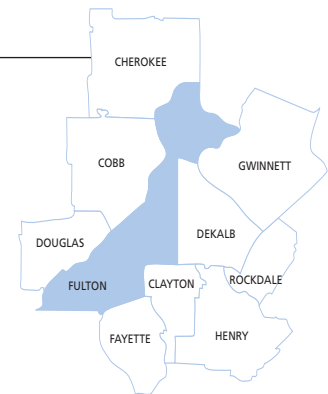
404-730-5840

Legal Services—North Fulton

404-524-5811

Legal Services—South Fulton

404-669-0233



Mental Health/Counseling Centers

404-730-1600

Parks & Recreation

404-730-6200

www.co.fulton.ga.us/departments/parks_rec.html

Police (non-emergency) North Fulton

770-551-7600

Police (non-emergency) City of Atlanta

404-853-3434

Police (non-emergency) South Fulton

770-306-3005

Probate Court (Guardianship)

404-730-4640

Public Health Department

404-730-1371

Public Libraries

404-730-1700

www.af.public.lib.ga.us

Senior Services

404-730-6000

www.co.fulton.ga.us

Superior Court

404-730-5300

Gwinnett County

Gwinnett County Government

770-822-8000

www.co.gwinnett.ga.us

Board of Education

770-963-8651

www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us

Child Protective Services

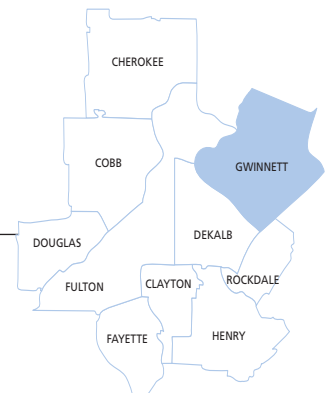
678-518-5630

Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS)

678-518-5500

Housing Authority

770-963-4900



Parks & Recreation

770-822-8840

Police (non-emergency)

770-513-5000

Legal Services

404-377-0701

Mental Health/Counseling Centers

770-963-8141

Partnership for Community Action, Inc.

404-929-2500

Probate Court (Guardianship)

770-822-8265

Public Health Department

770-339-4206

www.ph.dhr.state.ga.us/regional/gwinnett/index.shtml

Public Libraries

770-822-4522

www.gwinnettpl.org

Senior Services

678-377-4150

www.gwinnettcountry.com

Superior Court

770-822-8100

Henry County

Henry County Government

770-954-2400

www.co.henry.ga.us

Board of Education

770-957-6601

www.henry.k12.ga.us

Child Protective Services

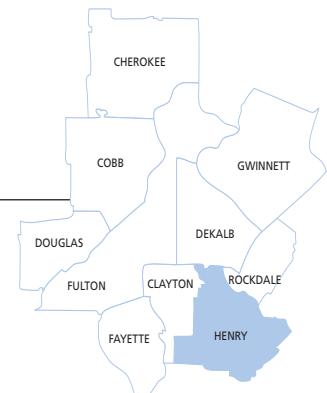
770-954-2014

Clayton County Community Services Authority, Inc.

404-363-0575

Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS)

770-954-2014



Housing Authority

770-957-4494

Legal Services

404-894-7707

1-800-822-5391

Mental Health/Counseling Centers—Adult

770-898-7400

Mental Health/Counseling Center—Child

770-358-8535

Police (non-emergency)

770-954-2900

Probate Court (Guardianship)

770-954-2303

Public Health Department

770-954-2250

Public Libraries

770-954-2806

www.henry.public.lib.ga.us

Recreation Department

770-954-2031

Senior Services

770-898-7670

www.co.henry.ga.us

Superior Court

770-954-2121



Rockdale County

Rockdale County Government

770-929-4008

www.rockdalecounty.org

Board of Education

770-483-4713

www.rockdale.k12.ga.us

Child Protective Services

770-388-5025

Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS)

770-388-5025

Housing Authority

770-483-9301

Legal Services

404-894-7707 or 1-800-822-5391

Mental Health/Counseling Centers

770-918-6677

Parks & Recreation

770-785-5922

Partnership for Community Action, Inc.

404-929-2500

Police (non-emergency)

770-918-6700

Probate Court (Guardianship)

770-929-4058

www.rockdalecounty.org/rock.cfm?pid=38

Public Health Department

770-785-5936

Public Libraries

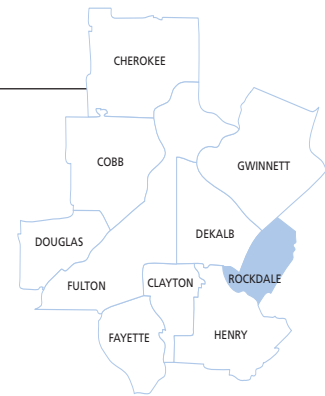
770-388-5040

Senior Services

770-922-4633

Superior Court

770-929-4021



Resources for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

General Resources

AARP Grandparent Information Center

1-888-OUR-AARP (1-888-687-2277)

www.aarp.org/grandparents

Atlanta Regional Commission—AgeWise Connection

404-463-3333 (Information and referral services)

www.agewiseconnection.com

Catholic Social Services

404-881-6571

www.ccsatlanta.com

Jewish Family and Career Services

770-677-9300

www.jfcs-atlanta.org

Project Healthy Grandparents—GA State University

404-651-0340

www.gsu.edu/~wwwalh

United Way Information and Referral Service

211 or 1-800-614-1000

www.unitedwayatl.org



Internet Resources for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

AARP Grandparent Information Center
www.aarp.org/life/grandparents

Atlanta Regional Commission—Area Agency on Aging
www.agewiseconnection.org

Generations United
www.gu.org

GrandsPlace—Georgia Support Groups
www.grandsplace.com/gp4/ga.html

The Foster Parent Community homepage
www.fosterparents.com/index30raisinggrch.html

Children

Child Welfare League of America
www.cwla.org/whowhat/mission.htm

Children's Defense Fund
www.childrensdefense.org

Aging Networks

AARP
www.aarp.org

Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
www.aoa.dhhs.gov/elderpage.html

Atlanta Regional Commission—Area Agency on Aging
www.atlantaregional.org

Seniors Site homepage
www.seniors-site.com

The National Resource Center for Respite and Crisis Care Services
(The Chapel Hill training outreach project includes information on grandparents raising grandchildren.)
www.archrespite.org



Advocacy

Whether you are new to the challenge or experienced at raising your grandchildren, you already know the difficulties and opportunities associated with this caregiving role.

There seem to be no quick answers to even the simplest questions. You may experience delays and confusion in finding and getting services for yourself and your grandchild. Although help may be available, it is sometimes difficult to find. To get the help you require, you will need to learn how to work with the public school system, the child welfare system, and the legal system.

Our legal system can be frustrating and time consuming. Many grandparents around the country are becoming activists for the first time in order to protect their grandchildren and make necessary changes in policy. Many individuals have become involved with advocacy groups and are fighting to be heard by their states, by other concerned citizens and by the federal government.

How to Become More Involved

Joining with others who share your interest in raising grandchildren and making a difference in the laws that affect these children will not only help further your cause but also may give you the social and emotional involvement you need to stay energized. Senior citizens are an extremely important group to both local and national politicians. Elected officials cannot afford to ignore you because together you are a huge group of voters, and you are the ones that actually go out to vote.

Grandparent support groups that already exist or ones that you might want to start are also excellent ways to talk things over and think about solutions.

There are many national and local groups that are eager to hear you and have you help in the effort. Groups that may be helpful to you are:

AARP Georgia 

1-866-295-7281

www.aarp.org/ga



AARP Grandparent Information Center 🔍 📞
1-888-OUR-AARP (1-888-687-2277)
www.aarp.org/life/grandparents

Georgia Council on Aging 🔍 📞
404-657-5343
www.gcoa.org

AgeWise Connection 🔍 📞
404-463-3333
www.agingatlanta.com

Children's Defense Fund 🔍 📞
202-628-8787
www.childrensdefense.org

Generations United 🔍 📞
202-289-3979
www.gu.org



Child Abuse, Adult Abuse, and Domestic Violence

Child Abuse, Neglect, or Abandonment

Even if the children in your care are happy to be with you, they have been through a lot. Losing a parent is hard on a child, and so are too many changes. One or both parents may abuse drugs or alcohol, be violent or mentally unstable. Some children have been hurt physically or emotionally. They may have been left without enough food, or without the care they need to stay safe and grow. They may have been allowed to see sexual activity or even been sexually abused. All of these problems may have affected the children in your care, who may need special help to grow and thrive.

You may be able to handle these difficulties successfully or you may need the help of a professional. We recommend that grandparent caregivers experiencing these issues find supportive services and assistance specific to the child's needs.

If a child is in immediate danger (obviously being beaten or left alone overnight, for example), call 911 immediately.

If you think a child is being abused in any way, please contact:

Prevent Child Abuse Georgia 📞 🌐

404-870-6565 in metro Atlanta; 1-800-CHILDREN throughout Georgia
www.preventchildabusega.org/html/home.html

ChildHelp USA® National Child Abuse Hotline 📞 🌐

1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453) toll free
www.childhelpusa.org/programs_hotline.htm

Local Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs

Advocates for Children

The CASA program assists children whom a juvenile judge has determined to be abused or neglected. If there is evidence of neglect before you become your grandchild's guardian, you may be able to work with a free CASA advocate to help determine what programs or services are needed for the care of your grandchild.

Every **school district** has child advocates. Ask for the name of the advocates in your district. The phone numbers for each county's school district have been provided in the front of this book.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence may affect people of all ages. Both grandparents and grandchildren may experience domestic violence. Georgia’s certified family violence programs provide 24-hour crisis lines, legal and social service advocacy, children’s programs, parenting support and education, emotional support, and community education. (Thirty-eight of these programs also offer emergency safe shelters.) If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, call the statewide 24-hour crisis hotline at:

Georgia Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-33-HAVEN (1-800-334-2836) toll-free

Adult Protective Services

Adult Protective Services (APS) investigates reports of abuse, exploitation or neglect of older adults or people with disabilities who cannot care for themselves. If the person needs help, APS provides services and assistance.

Reports of suspected maltreatment of adults should be made to the office of the DFCS APS Central Intake Unit in the county where the person lives.

Check the county listing of resources in the front of this guide for the DFCS office nearest you.

DFCS

1-888-774-0152 toll free (statewide)

404-657-5250 (Metro Atlanta)

<http://dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov/portal/site>

Division of Family and Children’s Services (DFCS)

DFCS investigates child abuse; finds foster homes for abused and neglected children; helps low-income, out-of-work parents get back on their feet; assists with childcare costs for low-income parents who are working or in job training; and provides numerous support services and innovative programs to help troubled families. If you need assistance from DFCS, call your county DFCS office. The numbers are listed for each county in the front of this guide, or visit their website.

County Departments of Family and Children Services

See listing in the front of this guide or visit:

<http://dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov/portal/site> click on “County Offices”



Child Care

There may be times when you will need assistance finding good child care services. For instance, if you work full- or part-time you will need child care help with pre-school age children or with after-school care. You may need time without the children to accomplish personal chores or errands. Remember, you need to take care of yourself and stay emotionally healthy for the sake of yourself and your grandchildren.

What to look for in child care providers

There are many day care options and child care providers available. Many child care providers offer services by the day or the hour. Some have after school sessions as well as transportation for your grandchild from school to the day care facility. Fees will range widely, but many offer services on a sliding fee scale based on your ability to pay.

Child care centers and family child care providers are licensed through Georgia's Department of Human Resources, Office of Regulatory Services. You can find inspection reports of child care facilities at www.ors.dhr.state.ga.us. It is a good idea to ask facility managers for the qualifications of the child care providers and how many children each staff member cares for. Get to know the director of the center and the staff providing the services for the children.

Where to look for help in finding child care

The Child Care Resource & Referral Program of Metro Atlanta is a central source of free information about child care in the 10-county Atlanta region. Experienced parent counselors can help answer your child care questions and help you find:

- > Family child care providers (people who provide child care);
- > Child care centers (places where care is provided for several children at one time);
- > Pre-schools (programs that provide educational experiences for children aged 2-5);
- > Head Start (provides education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families);
- > After school care;
- > Summer camp programs.

Child Care Resource & Referral Program  

1-877-722-4225 (toll free)

404-479-4240 (Atlanta Metro)

www.qualitycareforchildren.org/parents_families.htm

Georgia Head Start Association 🔍 📄

770-841-9913

www.georgiaheadstart.org**Other possible sources for locating child care services****United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta** 🔍 📄

211 (Atlanta Metro)

404-614-1000

www.unitedwayatl.org**County Departments of Family and Children Services** 📄

See listing in the front of this guide or visit:

<http://dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov/portal/site> click on

“County Offices”

Parent to Parent Georgia 🔍 📄

1-800-229-2038

www.parenttoparentofga.org

Charitable organizations such as:

- > Jewish Family and Career Services;
- > Catholic Social Services.

Your local church, synagogue, or mosque (faith-based religious organizations often have excellent day care facilities.)

Child care cooperatives (co-ops) in your area that you will find by asking friends and neighbors.



Children with Disabilities

Your grandchild may have disabilities due to various physical or mental problems. Fortunately, there are many federal, state and local programs to help caregivers raise children with disabilities.

Cash Benefits

If your grandchild has a disability, he or she may qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). SSI provides financial assistance for low-income people, including children who are blind or have a disability, or people who are older adults. If you are over the age of 65 or have a disability, you may also qualify for SSI. If you and your grandchild qualify for SSI, you will also qualify for food stamps and Medicaid services to pay for medical bills. For more information and how to apply for SSI, contact:

Social Security Administration 

1-800-772-1213

www.ssa.gov/pubs/11000.html#part1

Deeming Waiver

This program is for children who have a severe disability where it has been determined that it is less expensive for a child to receive treatment at home than in an institution. The program provides Medicaid coverage when SSI has been denied due to income. It involves a lengthy application process. The Deeming Waiver is generally in place for children with large medical or therapy needs/expenses that are not covered by private medical insurance or whose medical insurance does not cover the prescribed services at the recommended intensity or frequency. For more information on how to apply, contact your local DFCS and ask to speak with the Adult Medicaid Worker, or contact:

Georgia Medical Care Foundation 

1-800-982-0411

www.gmcf.org

County Departments of Family and Children Services 

See listing in the front of this guide or visit:

<http://dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov/portal/site> click on “County Offices”

Babies Can’t Wait (BCW)

This is Georgia’s statewide service system for infants and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities and for their families. BCW serves children from birth up to age three, regardless of income, if they meet one of the following criteria:

- 1) Have a diagnosed physical or mental condition that is known to

result in a developmental delay, such as blindness, Down's syndrome or Spina Bifida.

- 2) Have a diagnosed developmental delay confirmed by a qualified team of professionals.

Anyone can refer a child to BCW. In order to refer a child to BCW for an evaluation, contact the district office that serves the county in which the child and family reside. To find the district office near you, call:

Division of Public Health 📞

404-657-2726

<http://health.state.ga.us/pdfs/familyhealth/csncoordinator.2004.pdf>

The Community Care Services Program (CCSP)—A Medicaid Waiver program

CCSP helps Medicaid-eligible people who are older adults and/or functionally impaired to continue living in their homes and communities. These services are reimbursed under the Georgia Medicaid Waiver for Community and In-Home Services. Included services are assessment, care coordination, adult day health, alternative living services, emergency response, home-delivered meals, home-delivered/home health services, and personal support services. To determine eligibility, contact:

CCSP Intake and Screening 📞

404-463-3244

The SOURCE Program (Service Options Using Resources in Community Environments)—A Medicaid Waiver program

The SOURCE Program creates a continuing care network for at-risk individuals who need medical attention and personal care and prefer to stay in their own homes and communities. This alternative to nursing home placement provides comprehensive medical care with in-home support including meals, non-emergency transportation, adult day care, emergency response systems, personal care, home-delivered meals, home health, alternative living services, and case management. To determine eligibility, contact:

SOURCE Intake Unit 📞

404-463-3248

Mental Retardation Waiver Program (MRWP) and Community Habilitation and Support Services (CHSS)

MRWP and CHSS offer home- and community-based services for people who have mental retardation or a developmental disability. A diagnosis of developmental disability includes mental retardation or

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

other closely related conditions such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, or neurological problems that require the level of care provided in an intermediate care facility for people who have mental retardation. To apply for MRWP or CHSS, contact your regional Board of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Addictive Diseases (MHDDAD). See regional offices by county below:

MHDDAD Regional Office—Cumming ↘

770-205-5411 or 1-800-646-7721

Cherokee, Cobb, and Douglas Counties

MHDDAD Regional Office—Tucker ↘

770-414-3093

Clayton, DeKalb, Fulton, Gwinnett, and Rockdale Counties

MHDDAD Regional Office—Columbus ↘

706-568-5281 or 1-800-832-2439

Fayette and Henry Counties

Family Support Services

Raising a grandchild with disabilities can be stressful. There are several disability-related family support groups available in Georgia. Parent to Parent of Georgia, Inc. can provide information on raising a child with disabilities and link you with a fellow grandparent who is raising a grandchild with disabilities. For more information, contact:

Parent to Parent of Georgia ↘ 📞

1-800-229-2038

www.parenttoparentofga.org



Financial Information

Many grandparents have not planned to raise a second family or may be retired and living on a fixed income. Having enough money or other resources to provide housing, food, clothing, medicine, and school supplies may be of critical concern.

Financial resources for grandparents who are employed

Earned Income Tax Credit

For grandparents who work and are raising their grandchildren, this tax credit on your income tax return will be based on your income and the number of grandchildren you are raising. It requires a special Schedule EIC attachment to your income tax return. For more information contact your county DFCS.

County Departments of Family and Children Services

See listing in the front of this guide or visit:

<http://dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov/portal/site> click on “County Offices”

Financial resources for grandparents who have a low income

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

TANF is a cash assistance program. It is administered by county Departments of Children and Family Services.

The grandparent may apply for TANF in the child’s name alone (a “child-only grant”). This assistance would be based only on the child’s income and resources, not that of his or her grandparents. The state will ask the grandparents to help identify the parents’ location to get child support. In order to qualify, a child must be under the age of 18 and without parental support or care and living with a relative. If the child is eligible for TANF assistance in his or her name alone, there is no four-year time limit on receiving benefits and no work requirements.

An adopted child must apply in the grandparent’s name. There may be a four-year time limit on receiving benefits and possible work requirements. Some children will not qualify for TANF after they are adopted. For more information, contact your county DFCS office.

County Departments of Family and Children Services

See listing in the front of this guide or visit:

<http://dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov/portal/site> click on “County Offices”

Foster Care Payments

The state of Georgia administers foster care payments. To qualify for foster care payments, the child must be a dependent of the state juvenile court system and placed in the grandparent's home by court order. The state determines who the child's foster parent will be; it is not a decision made by the grandparent. All foster care homes, whether relative or non-relative, must meet the same approval requirements. This is federal law. A foster parent must be approved by the state. The foster care payments are reimbursements for expenses related to the child's care. These reimbursements for care are payable until the child's 18th birthday and may be more than TANF payments would be. Foster care benefits include reimbursements, health care through Medicaid and social services. For more information, contact your county DFCS office.

County Departments of Family and Children Services

See listing in the front of this guide or visit:

<http://dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov/portal/site> click on "County Offices"

Supplemental Security Income

This federal cash assistance program is available through the Social Security Administration and is based on financial need and disability. It does not necessarily end on the child's 18th birthday. To be eligible for this program, the child's disability, whether physical or mental, would be defined as an impairment that is marked and severe, may result in death, or can be expected to last at least 12 months. For more information, contact:

Social Security Administration

1-800-772-1213

www.ssa.gov

Social Security Grandchild Benefits

If a grandparent adopts a grandchild, the grandchild also may be eligible to draw Social Security benefits off the grandparent's account if the grandparent is receiving Social Security benefits himself or herself. Generally, an adopted grandchild is entitled to a monthly benefit equal to one-half of the grandparent's benefit. For more information contact:

Social Security Administration

1-800-772-1213

www.ssa.gov

Social Security Survivor's Benefits

A dependent child or one with disabilities (whether adopted or not) may be entitled to draw Social Security Survivor's Benefits off a deceased parent's Social Security account. These benefits are available

from the Social Security Administration for children under 18 whose parent(s) have died. The child must be a dependent of the dead parent(s) and unmarried. The parent(s) must have paid Social Security taxes through their paycheck. You can apply for Social Security Survivor's Benefits for your grandchild at the local Social Security Administration office for your county or region. If you adopt a grandchild who is getting a survivor's benefit, the survivor's benefit does not end when the child is adopted. For more information contact:

Social Security Administration 📞 📄

1-800-772-1213

www.ssa.gov

Adoption Assistance for Children with Special Needs

Adoption Assistance is available to some grandparents who are adopting their grandchildren if grandchild has special needs. Adoption Assistance includes:

- 1) a monthly payment per child;
- 2) payment of one-time (or time-limited) expenses like orthodontics, psychological counseling, or special day camps for children;
- 3) Medicaid coverage; and
- 4) payment of legal fees and costs associated with the adoption.

Apply for adoption assistance at your local Division of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) office. **YOU MUST APPLY FOR ADOPTION ASSISTANCE BEFORE THE COURT ENTERS THE FINAL ADOPTION DECREE.** If the grandchild has special needs that make it more costly to care for him or her, you can ask that your grandchild be considered for a monthly rate higher than the minimum monthly payment.

To be eligible for Adoption Assistance, a child must be eligible for or receiving TANF or SSI. The child must be removed from the home of her parents in a particular way. Anyone considering adoption of a grandchild should consult an attorney before obtaining any court order for custody of the grandchild.

The child also must be a special needs child. Georgia defines special needs as:

- > any child eight years of age or older;
- > any child of African American heritage one year or older;
- > members of a sibling group of three or more to be placed together;
- > members of a sibling group of two where one is over the age of eight or has another special need;

- > any child with a documented physical, emotional, or mental problem or limitation.

For more information, contact your county DFCS office.

County Departments of Family and Children Services

See listing in the front of this guide or visit:

<http://dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov/portal/site> click on “County Offices”

Relative Care Subsidy

Grandparents raising grandchildren may be eligible for a relative care subsidy. To be eligible, the child must be permanently placed with the relative after first being placed in the care of DFCS. The child must also have income of less than \$400 per month. The relative care subsidy can be payable until the child’s 18th birthday and may be more than TANF payments. DFCS must visit the relative’s home once every three years in order for the grandparent to continue to receive this subsidy. For more information, contact your county DFCS.

County Departments of Family and Children Services

See listing in the front of this guide or visit:

<http://dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov/portal/site> click on “County Offices”

Child Support

Grandparents, who have legal custody of their grandchildren, may be eligible to receive child support on behalf of the children they are raising. Child support is a regular payment provided by the child’s parents that can be used to help cover a child’s living expenses. It can also include payments for a specific benefit, such as health insurance or child care. Determining the amount of child support is generally based on a percentage of the parent’s income. If children are receiving TANF payments, any child support collected on the child’s behalf will go directly to the state TANF agency to reimburse it for the costs of the child’s welfare benefits. Grandparents do not have to ask the child’s parents for child support if they do not wish to DO SO. But, if grandparents are receiving TANF on a child’s behalf, they WILL be required to have to help the state of Georgia establish a child support order.

There are four ways to apply for child support:

- 1) Hiring a private attorney,
- 2) Getting an attorney at no charge from a local legal services office,
- 3) Filing a child support petition in court and representing yourself, or
- 4) Applying for assistance with the state’s child support enforcement agency.

For more information and where to apply, call:

Office of Child Support Enforcement 📞 📍

1-800-227-7993

In the 404, 678 or 770 area codes, call 404-463-8800

www.cse.dhr.state.ga.us

Other resources available based on income

You may access these resources through your county DFCS office:

- > Food Stamps provide low-income families with low-income coupons to purchase food.
- > Housing Assistance provides subsidized housing and other financial help.
- > WIC (Women, Infants and Children) provides food and nutritional assistance.

County Departments of Family and Children Services

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See listing in the front of this guide or visit:

<http://dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov/portal/site>

click on “County Offices”

Energy Assistance

Many utility companies in Georgia offer discounts to those with a low income. For the most up-to-date information, contact your local utility companies.

Natural Gas and Electricity

In 1999, Georgia deregulated its natural gas market. There are now several companies that can supply gas to your home. Many of these companies have discount programs. There are also several suppliers of electricity in the Atlanta region that may also have discount programs available. For more information on discount programs, contact your current gas or electricity provider, or contact:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 📞 📍

404-657-3377 or 1-800-869-1150 toll free

<http://neaap.ncat.org/programs/lowincome/ga-li.htm>



Georgia Public Service Commission 📞 🌐

1-800-282-5813

www.psc.state.ga.us

Emergency Energy Assistance Program

This program assists older adults, people with disabilities, or families with low income who are unable to pay energy bills due to family emergencies.

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

This program provides assistance to help offset the increased cost of energy for home heating during winter. For more information, contact your county Community Action Agency.

Emergency Assistance

Many organizations offer temporary, one-time, or emergency financial assistance. Assistance is available for clothing, food, and furniture. Cash for utility bills, rent or transportation needs may also be available in emergency situations. To learn more about organizations that may be able to help you, contact:

United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta 📞 🌐

211 (Atlanta Metro)

404-614-1000

www.unitedwayatl.org



Food & Nutrition

Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC)

The goal of WIC is to meet the special nutritional needs of low-income and pregnant, post-partum, and breast-feeding women, and infants and children up to age five. WIC staff members are available to educate caregivers about proper nutrition and refer children to health care providers. To qualify, the child must be low-income and nutritionally at risk. This means that grandchildren must have certain health conditions like anemia or growth problems, or they may need to eat more nutritious foods. Grandparent caregivers do not have to have any legal relationship with the child to sign a young child up for the services provided by WIC. WIC services are available in every county in Georgia. For more information, contact:

WIC program 📞 📍

1-800-228-9173

www.ph.dhr.state.ga.us/programs/wic/index.shtml



Food Stamps

Food stamps are food coupons or Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards that are available to eligible, low-income individuals and families with low income. Food stamps are used like cash or electronic “debit” cards at most grocery stores. Generally, they can be used to buy food items that are prepared and eaten at home as well as seeds and plants to grow food. Food stamps cannot be used to buy prepared hot foods that might be eaten at the grocery store or at home or for any non-food items like toilet paper, soap, paper towels, toothpaste, or pet food. Food stamps cannot be used to buy alcohol, cigarettes, vitamins, or medicine and are not accepted in restaurants. Grandparent caregivers do not need legal custody or guardianship to apply for food stamps on behalf of the children they are raising, but they need to realize that eligibility is based on family income not just the child’s income. To find the nearest food stamp application site, contact:

National Food Stamp hotline 📞 📍

1-800-221-5689

www.fns.usda.gov/fsp

National School Breakfast and National School Lunch Programs

These programs provide free or low-cost nutritious meals in schools to all eligible students in the United States. Children through age 18 also can receive snacks if they attend after-school programs at participating

sites. Generally, children qualify for these meals if they meet income requirements and their school participates in the program. Many public and nonprofit private schools serving kindergarten through age 12 offer these meals. They are also available at residential child care programs.

Caregivers can ask their children's teacher, school principal, or school district's director of nutrition for an application. The same application covers both breakfast and lunch programs. Grandparent caregivers do not have to have legal custody or guardianship to apply for school breakfast and lunch programs for the children they are raising.

Summer Food Service Program

The Summer Food Service Program provides free meals and snacks to low-income children up to age 18 at summer food sites when school is not in session. The program can help stretch a grandparent's food budget when his or her grandchildren are not getting breakfast, lunch, or snacks at school. The child does not have to apply for the program. There is no application to enroll for these summer food service programs at "open" sites. However, some sites are "enrolled" sites. Enrolled sites require the child to be registered in a program to receive the meals. Summer food service program sites may be located in a school, community center, park, homeless feeding site or summer camp.

Call your county Board of Education for more information. Board of Education phone numbers for each county are listed in the front of this guide.

To find out about summer food service programs in your area, visit www.ers.usda.gov/Data/sfsp and type your zip code in the data search box then click "go."

Child and Adult Care Food Program

This program goes beyond just providing meals in schools but also provides meals and snacks to children who attend child care centers, family child care homes, before- and after-school programs, and Head Start centers. It also provides meals and snacks at after-school programs for school-age kids up to age 19. Generally, only children who attend the programs approved to get these special funds are eligible to be served. Many child care centers, group, and family child care homes, Head Start programs, after school programs, and recreation centers get these special funds. To find local programs that offer the Child and Adult Care Food Program, call:

Child Care Aware  

1-800-424-2246 toll free

www.childcareaware.org/en/findcare.html

Housing Information

Subsidized Rental Housing

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds three main types of federal housing assistance to low-income families.

FEDERAL LAW DOES NOT REQUIRE GRANDPARENTS TO HAVE LEGAL CUSTODY OR GUARDIANSHIP OF THE CHILDREN THEY ARE RAISING TO QUALIFY FOR FEDERAL HOUSING PROGRAMS.

1. Public Housing

These are rental units owned and operated by Public Housing Authorities (PHAs). Public housing tenants pay rent directly to the PHAs. The PHA sets the amount of rent required based on income levels. The rest of the operating and maintenance costs are paid through available PHA funds.

2. Housing Choice Vouchers (Formerly Section 8 Vouchers)

Housing choice vouchers allow low-income families to choose and lease safe, decent and affordable privately owned rental housing. The PHAs pay the landlords an amount equal to the difference between the tenant's required rental payments and the approved "market rent."

3. Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program

Sometimes called "senior housing," the current program provides capital advances through HUD to finance the development of very low-income rental housing with supportive services. Rent subsidies also are provided to make the units affordable to very low-income households. CHILDREN ARE ALLOWED TO RESIDE IN SECTION 202 HOUSING. HUD's policy states: "When an applicant for a Section 202 project is otherwise eligible and there is an appropriate-size unit available, that applicant shall not be rejected solely on the basis of a child being a member of the household." [National Housing Law Project, HUD Housing Programs: Tenants Rights, (Oakland: National Housing Law Project, 1998), p.4]

Housing Authorities

For further questions on housing, contact your local housing authority. The phone number for the housing authority has been provided in the county phone number lists in the front of this book.

Housing Discrimination

Federal law prohibits housing discrimination based on your race, color, national origin, religion, sex, family status, or disability. The only exception to this rule is that some housing can legally be seniors-only housing. If 80 percent of the units in a building are occupied by one person who is at least 55 years old, the building may legally exclude children.

If you have been trying to buy or rent a home or apartment, and you believe your rights have been violated, you can file a fair housing complaint. There are several ways to file a complaint. You may call:

HUD 📞 📄

1-800-440-8091

Or you can file a complaint by using an online form at:

www5.hud.gov:1025/netdynamics/ndNSAPI.nd/HUD903/pagHUDPrivac

Or you can print out a form, complete it, and drop it off at your local HUD office or mail it to:

Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity
Department of Housing and Urban Development
Room 5204
451 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20410-2000



Legal

You have a biological relationship with your grandchild (i.e., your daughter or son is the biological parent), but unless you have gone to court concerning your grandchild, you have no legal relationship with your grandchild. Only an adult who has a legal relationship with the grandchild has the legal right to make certain types of decisions on behalf of a child.

Grandparent Rights

The types of rights you have as a grandparent caregiver depend upon the type of legal relationship you have with your grandchild. If you have no legal relationship with your grandchild, you may have trouble doing certain things on his or her behalf, like enrolling her in school or getting certain types of medical treatment.

Types of Custody

1. Temporary Guardianship

Grandparents can petition for the temporary guardianship of their grandchild. The petition is filed in the Probate Court in the county in which the child lives. If either parent objects to the grandparent getting temporary guardianship, the court must deny the grandparent's petition, even if the parent is unable to care for the child. For example, a mother may object to the grandmother having temporary guardianship of her child because the mother wants to keep the welfare check to buy drugs, not because she can care for the child. In this case, the Probate Court must deny the grandmother guardianship even though the mother cannot care for her child. Also, after a court grants a petition for temporary guardianship, the parent can tell the court she wants her child back. In some cases the court must terminate guardianship. In other cases, the guardian will have ten days to object. If the guardian objects, a juvenile court judge will decide whether it is in the child's best interests for the guardianship to be terminated.

There is a fee for filing a petition for temporary guardianship. However, the court may waive the fee if you are unable to pay for it. If you cannot pay the fee, you should ask for paperwork (a poverty affidavit) to file with your petition.

Most public benefits that the child was receiving prior to the guardianship order, like TANF, SSI, or Medicaid, should continue. In addition, you can apply for child support (see Child Support on page 32).

2. Foster Care

The foster care system does not create a legal relationship between a



grandparent and his or her grandchild. For a child to be in foster care, the juvenile court must determine that the child is abused, neglected or somehow deprived. If a grandchild is in foster care, DFCS, not the grandparent, has legal custody of the grandchild. Therefore, DFCS has the right to make all important decisions concerning the grandchild, including where the child lives. You may ask DFCS to consider your home as a place for the child to live. If your home meets DFCS and court requirements, DFCS may choose it as the best place for the child to live. One requirement is that you attend parenting classes, often called MAPP (Model Approach to Partnership Parenting) classes. When a child is in foster care with a grandparent, the grandparent will get foster care payments to help pay for the child's care.

Sometimes, a juvenile court may take a child out of the care of DFCS and place the child with a grandparent. If the juvenile court gives the grandparent legal custody of the grandchild, then this creates a legal relationship between the grandparent and grandchild. Sometimes a grandparent will get temporary custody that has to be renewed every two years. Sometimes a grandparent will get permanent custody until the child turns 18. If a grandparent obtains permanent custody of the grandchild, then the grandchild may be eligible to receive a Relative Care Subsidy (see Relative Care Subsidy on page 32).

3. Legal Custody

A grandparent (and certain other relatives) can petition for legal custody of the grandchild he or she is raising. For situations in which adoption is not appropriate, a custody award by a court provides the most stable legal relationship between the grandchild and the grandparent. A petition for custody is filed in the Superior Court in the county in which the grandparent and the grandchild live. The Superior Court will apply a "best interests" standard in deciding whether to grant the grandparent legal custody of the grandchild. This means the court has to decide what is in the child's best interest. The court should consider many factors in making its determination, including how long the grandchild has lived with the grandparent, whether the grandparent is able to care for the grandchild, and whether the parent is able to care for the child, and if not, why.

There is a fee for filing a petition for custody. However, the court may waive the fee if you are unable to pay it.

Most public benefits the child was receiving before the custody action, like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or Medicaid should continue. In addition, you can apply for child support. (See Child Support on page 32.)

4. Adoption

Adoption provides the greatest legal stability to the relationship between a grandparent and a grandchild. In order for you to adopt your grandchild, the parents must voluntarily surrender their parental rights. If the parents are not willing to do this, you must seek a court order terminating the rights of the parents on the grounds of failure to communicate with the child in a meaningful, supportive parental manner for at least a year or on the grounds of abandonment or unfitness.

A petition for adoption should be filed in the Superior Court of the county in which you live. To adopt a child in Georgia, the grandparent must have been a resident of the state for at least six months and must be financially, physically, and mentally able to have permanent custody of the child. A final adoption decree destroys the legal relationship between the child and his or her biological parents. It creates the legal relationship of parent and child between the grandparent and the grandchild.

The adopted grandchild has the same rights and privileges as a biological child. For example, the grandchild can inherit from the grandparent without a will just like the grandparent's children can. However, the grandchild does not have to change his or her name because of the adoption, but can keep the name he or she received at birth.

Adoption law can be very complicated. It is best to get an attorney if you want to adopt your grandchild.

A child who is adopted by a grandparent may be eligible for Adoption Assistance Benefits and Social Security benefits. (See Adoption Assistance on page 31.) Caution: If you adopt your grandchild, he or she may no longer be eligible for TANF.

Rights of Parents

In guardianship cases, parents must consent to the guardianship. If a parent does not show up for a guardianship hearing after getting notice of the hearing, the court will assume that the parent consents. The parent has the right to ask the court to terminate the guardianship. The parent may visit with the child if the guardian agrees.

In custody cases, parents are not required to consent. The court will decide where the child should live. The court will try to decide what is in the child's best interest. The court may give the parent some visitation with the child and order the parent to pay child support.

If the court gives the grandparent custody of his or her grandchild, the parent has the right to ask the court to change custody later on if some-

LEGAL INFORMATION

thing changes. The court will decide whether the change affects the parent, the child or the grandparent. For example, if the grandparent moves out of state and the parent can no longer visit with the child, that is a change that affects the parent and the child. The court will decide whether the change is “material,” or important. If the change is important, the court will decide whether the child should go back to live with the parent or stay with the grandparent.

In an adoption, Georgia law distinguishes between different types of parents: legal parents and biological fathers. The child’s biological or adoptive mother is a parent. The child’s father is a parent if he marries the mother or goes to court to establish paternity.

Before the adoption, legal parents have more rights than biological fathers. Legal parents have the right to consent to the adoption and to withdraw the consent within 10 days, unless a court has already terminated the parents’ rights. Sometimes, the grandparent doing an adoption will ask the court to terminate the legal parents’ rights as part of the adoption proceeding, instead of getting a surrender from each legal parent. In this case, the legal parents have the right to receive notice of the adoption and the right to show why their rights should not be terminated.

Before the adoption, a biological father has the right to receive notice of the adoption and must file a petition to legitimate the child within 30 days of receiving notice. In addition, the biological father must also notify the court (where the adoption is pending) and the attorney for the adoptive parents that he has filed his petition to legitimate the child. The biological father may surrender the child to the adoptive parents or to a private or state child-placing agency.

An adoption terminates all of the parents’ rights and all of the biological father’s rights. After the adoption, parents and biological fathers do not have any rights. They are not entitled to see the child. They do not have the right to make any decisions about or for the child.

If you need help with a legal issue, refer to Legal Services for your county located in the front of this directory.

If you are 60 and older and would like legal advice over the telephone, contact:

**The Georgia Senior Legal Hotline
Grandparent /Relative Caregiver Project**

888-257-9519 (from 9 am to 3 pm)

404-614-3911 (screening)

In Atlanta: 404-647-9915

404-614-3953 (general info)

Medical & Health Care

Your grandchild's health is always important. Some areas you might need information about include immunizations, health screenings, nutrition, childhood diseases, allergies, and emergencies. You can get health care from your family physician, at a private clinic, or at a public health clinic operated by your county health office. Know that you have choices.

The biggest medical issue is finding affordable medical coverage for your grandchild. In addition, the legal arrangements (guardianship, legal custody, foster care, adoption) you have concerning your grandchild may determine how and where you can seek medical assistance. Your grandchild may be turned away from medical help if you do not have the decision-making authority. But if your grandchild has an emergency care situation, the child will be treated.

Physicians

You can find a pediatrician as well as other physicians by calling your local children's hospital's physician referral office or the American Academy of Pediatrics in your area. Pediatricians treat children from birth to age 21.

American Academy of Pediatrics (Georgia Chapter) 

404-876-7535

www.gaaap.org

Private Medical Insurance

You may have private insurance or be a part of a managed health care system, whether or not you are retired. You may be able to purchase this insurance through your employer or through your former employer. You need to ask your insurance carrier if your grandchild is covered as a family member and, if not, how you can go about covering your grandchild. If you have adopted your grandchild, there should be no problem having your grandchild insured as a family member through your private insurance. In some cases, your grandchild may be eligible if you have legal custody or guardianship or you are designated as the primary caregiver.



Public Medical Assistance

If you are receiving Medicaid assistance or if your grandchild is receiving public assistance (TANF or SSI) or if you qualify as a foster care provider for your grandchild, medical assistance may be available from Medicaid for your grandchild.

Medicaid

Medicaid is a public health program based on income and need. It is administered through the county DFCS. It covers many doctor and hospital procedures as well as some medications, eyeglasses, dental care, and lab work. If your grandchild qualifies, he or she will get a Medicaid card that should be shown at doctors' offices, clinics, and hospitals.

The health promotion program under Medicaid in Georgia is Health Check. The intent of Health Check is to guarantee that all Medicaid-eligible children from birth to 21 years and PeachCare-eligible children from birth to 19 years get a broad range of preventive health services. During the first year of life, infants may receive up to seven well-child checks through this program. The screening services may take place in a private physician's office, county health department, primary care center, health clinics, hospitals, and some public schools. The diagnostic and treatment services are provided by Medicaid-enrolled providers across the state. For more information, call:

Health Check ☒
404-463-0183

Right from the Start Medicaid

The Right from the Start Medicaid program provides Medicaid coverage for pregnant women and children under the age of 19. The application process is fast and easy. Working families may be eligible even if both parents live in the home or if other insurance coverage is in place. For more information or to apply call:

Right from the Start Medicaid ☒ ☒
1-800-809-7276
www.rsm.dhr.state.ga.us

PeachCare for Kids

PeachCare for Kids is a program that provides free or low-cost health insurance for Georgia's children. It provides complete health care to children through the age of 18 who do not qualify for Medicaid and live in households with incomes at or below 235 percent of the federal poverty level. This means a family of three can earn more than \$35,000 per year and a family of four can earn \$42,000 per year and the child can qualify for the program. This insurance covers doctor visits, immunizations and check-ups, specialist care, dental care, vision care, including eyeglasses, hospitalizations and emergency room visits, prescription medications, and mental health care.

PeachCare for Kids was created to provide health care to the uninsured children. For this reason, children must be uninsured for three months before applying for PeachCare. There are exceptions for children who have lost coverage involuntarily (for example, if a child was covered through a parent's or grandparent's employer and the parent lost the job, or the employer dropped coverage for dependent children). For more information, call:

PeachCare for Kids 📞 📍

1-877-GA-PEACH (1-877-427-3224) toll free

www.peachcare.org/dehome.asp

Community Health Centers

In addition to public health facilities, there are public, nonprofit health clinics that provide primary health care for the entire family. They accept Medicaid payments but also provide services on a sliding scale, depending on the income of the patient. There are some 85 clinics in the metropolitan Atlanta area. Contact the AgeWise Connection at the Atlanta Regional Commission for a listing of clinics in your area.

AgeWise Connection 📞

404-463-3333

Dental Care

Healthy teeth help kids stay healthy by allowing them to chew foods properly. In the past, pulling teeth was a common cure for dental problems. Today, treatments are available that make pulling teeth a rarity. Talk to your dentist to start a plan for keeping your grandchild's teeth healthy and strong. For low-cost dental care for children, contact:

Ben Massell Dental Clinic 📞 📍

404-881-1858

www.jfcs-atlanta.org/services_asol_BMDC.asp

Immunizations/Shots

Your grandchild needs immunizations so that he or she is protected from disease AND because schools and day care centers require them for enrollment. For information on immunizations and programs in your area that offer free or low-cost immunizations, contact:

Georgia Department of Public Health 📞 📄
404-657-3158

www.ph.dhr.state.ga.us/programs/immunization/index.shtml

For a copy of Georgia's recommended immunization schedule, contact:

Georgia Department of Public Health 📞 📄
404-657-3158

www.immunize.org/cdc/child-schedule.pdf



Lead Poisoning

Lead poisoning can slow a child's development and cause learning and behavior problems. Even in small amounts, lead can damage a child's brain, kidneys, and stomach. A child most often gets lead poisoning by inhaling or eating lead dust or eating paint chips. Lead is most harmful to children under the age of six because their small bodies absorb the lead easily. Many homes built before 1978 have lead paint on the inside and the outside of the building. If your home was built before 1978, you should have your home tested for lead.

Even children who appear healthy may have high levels of lead. The only way to know for sure if your grandchild has been exposed to lead is with a simple blood test. If too much lead is in the body, your grandchild may need treatment. To find out how to have your grandchild tested for lead, contact your pediatrician, local health department, or the Georgia Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. For more information on lead poisoning or having your home inspected for lead please contact:

Georgia Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program 📞
1-888-247-9054

Mental Health

If you are raising your grandchildren, you may find yourself coping with all kinds of feelings. Your grandchildren may also be having difficult feelings. The difficulty of an uncertain or changing family structure may leave them feeling insecure, mistrustful, guilty, or needy. They may experience a deep sense of loss.

The demands of raising your grandchildren may leave you feeling resentful, isolated, stressed, or just plain exhausted. While there are many positive feelings that you and your grandchildren are also enjoying, it is normal for all family members to feel uncomfortable with shifting responsibilities and relationships.

Often, when children are upset or confused, they convey these feelings through actions, not words. Sometimes when children have temper tantrums, sleeping or eating difficulties, poor school performance, or peer problems, it is their way of showing that they are having a hard time. Staying in close contact with your grandchild's teachers will help you determine if there is a need to find assistance in this area. The school's counselor may recommend contacting a mental health professional (social worker, psychologist or psychiatrist) through a community mental health center.

To reach a community mental health center in your area, please see the Mental Health number by county in the front of this book, or contact:

Georgia Division of Mental Health (MH), Developmental Disabilities (DD) and Substance Abuse (SA) ☎

404-657-5737

www.dhr.state.ga.us and click on "Divisions"


Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)

These programs assist employees, retirees, and their families in dealing with the emotional problems of modern life. The purpose of an EAP is to encourage an individual to get help early, before a problem becomes a crisis. The program is paid for by the employer, is confidential, and puts you in contact with experienced social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists and physicians. If you are employed, ask your human resource manager at work to see if EAP is available.

Support Groups

For many families, it is helpful to seek counseling or guidance through a support group or family counseling. Learning about how other families struggle with challenges similar to your own can be very useful. You are not alone, and there are many resources available in your community


that may be of help to you and your family. Support groups also offer helpful information for grandparent caregivers. They may be just for grandparents or grandchildren, or they may focus on your grandchild's issues such as a support group for caregivers of children with bipolar disorder or ADHD. If you want to know what support groups have formed in your area, contact:

Atlanta Regional Commission, AgeWise Connection 
404-463-3333

Bereavement Camps for Kids

Camp Magik

Camp Magik provides a safe and nurturing environment where children can express their grief over the death of a loved one and begin to heal. Camp Magik is open to children ages 6-17 who have lost a parent, sibling, or other close relative. Camp Magik is free. Camp is held one weekend in May and one weekend in October at Camp Calvin in Hampton, Georgia. For more information, contact:

Rene Searles, Camp Magik  
renesearles@campmagik.org
www.campmagik.org/index2.html

Camp STARS

Camp STARS is open to any child between the ages of 7 and 17 who has experienced a close personal loss six or more months before the start of camp. Camp STARS is designed to help kids understand that they are not alone and that their feelings of loss are normal. Campers have a safe environment where they can have fun while expressing their grief. There is a registration fee of \$10 to attend camp. For more information, contact:

Hospice Atlanta  
404-869-3000
www.glsr.org/SummerCamp%202004/C/CampStars.htm

Challenges Facing Today's Children

Children learn about drugs, alcohol, sex, gangs, and violence at very early ages. Your grandchild's history might include some of these behaviors. As a result, he or she may not know what is right and wrong.

You may be raising a child who is developmentally behind, or has a disability or is slow, but socially advanced. For example, your grandchild



may have trouble reading on a third-grade level but has the survival instincts or “street-smarts” of an older teenager. The events that led up to your grandchildren being placed in your home may warrant a special approach in child rearing. To find a counselor or family therapist, check with your grandchild’s school counselor for additional information and referrals on getting help with child rearing.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Young people are being exposed to alcohol, tobacco, and drugs as early as elementary school. The younger someone starts to use alcohol and drugs, the more likely she or he is to develop problems. Consider the following facts and information from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

- > Young people who use alcohol and drugs also are more likely to be victims or perpetrators of violence, engage in unplanned and unprotected sex, experience school failure, or be seriously injured from driving or engaging in other risky behavior while impaired.
- > Easy access and availability of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs make it difficult to keep young people out of harm’s way.
- > Young people who use tobacco are more likely than others to drink heavily later or use illegal drugs.
- > Young people report that getting alcohol, tobacco, and most illegal drugs is very easy.

Five Reasons Young People Give for Using Alcohol, Tobacco, and Illegal Drugs

- > To feel grown up.
- > To fit in and belong.
- > To take risks and rebel.
- > To satisfy curiosity.
- > To relax and feel good.

For more information about drug/alcohol abuse and prevention, contact:

Georgia’s Council on Alcohol and Drugs 

770-239-7442

www.livedrugfree.org/help/index.html

Gangs

Criminal gang activity is a growing problem in our society. It is not illegal to be in a gang, but when gangs break the law, gang members can be prosecuted. Gangs may be part of a larger city or national gang, or they may be local. Your grandchild might feel a sense of belonging by joining a group that has a reputation, good or bad, and gives a child a sense of belonging. People who are in gangs have said that the interaction of members, listening to one another’s problems, and sharing the

ups and downs kids face are often what entices them to join a gang. Once in a gang, children may find quitting the gang difficult and, in some cases, dangerous.

Most police departments have juvenile gang specialists. For more information on gang prevention and intervention, contact your local police department. Non-emergency police telephone numbers are listed by county in the front of this book.

Incarcerated Parents

You may be raising your grandchildren because their parents are in prison. In addition to the daily task of raising your grandchildren, you may also be responsible for making sure your grandchild keeps a healthy relationship with his or her incarcerated parent.

Some tips from other caregivers of children of incarcerated parents are:

- > Talk about feelings with your grandchildren.
- > Be as honest with children as possible, especially about the length of time before the parent may come home.
- > Remember to keep your feelings separate from each child's.
- > Set up times to have family conversations.
- > Talk about the family's choice to tell others or keep the parent's incarceration a secret from certain people.
- > Encourage your grandchildren to write or talk to their parents whenever possible.
- > Help children to start a picture or story that their parent adds on to, then the child adds on and so on by mailing it back and forth.
- > Read with your grandchildren.
- > Get support and help for the children and yourself through friends, clergy, or counselors.

Amachi is a faith-based mentoring program offered through Big Brothers/Big Sisters for children of incarcerated parents. The goal of the program is to give children a different path and a better life than following in their parents footsteps. Contact your local Big Brothers/Big Sisters for more information on the Amachi program.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Metro Atlanta ↘
404-527-7600



AARP Grandparent Information Center  
www.aarp.org/life/grandparents/help/raising/Articles/a2004-09-07-granparents-prison.html



Recreation & Respite

Just as your grandchild needs an education to develop learning skills, children also need physical activity, playtime, and social interaction with family and other children to round out developmental skills and personality. Extracurricular and recreational activities are very important to children of all ages. Your grandchild needs time for recreation in order to broaden and enrich the other important concepts you are teaching at home. Athletic programs, other extracurricular activities, and ordinary playtime help children develop socialization skills, sharing and a sense of fair play. Other activities, such as music education and art classes outside the school environment, may also play an important role in the development of your grandchild.

Recreation Programs for Children

To enroll your grandchild in any of these programs, you may have to prove your legal relationship with your grandchild.


- > Scouting organizations (such as Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts) offer children of all ages an opportunity to work and play in an organized, supervised environment.

Girl Scouts of America council finder  
 1-800-GSUSA 4 U (1-800-478-7248) toll free
www.girlscouts.org/councilfinder

Boy Scouts of America council finder  

www.scouting.org/nav/enter.jsp?s=xx&c=lc

- > County recreation programs. (See the front of this book for listings of the Parks and Recreation department for each county.)
- > County school programs and after-school clubs. (Call your local school board. The numbers are listed in the front of this guide for each county.)

Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Atlanta  
 404-527-7100
www.bgcma.org



Big Brothers/Big Sisters 📍 📞

404-527-7600

www.bbbsa.org

- > Summer camps and day camps are offered by religious organizations, schools, scouting organizations, and the YMCA/YWCA.

YMCA 📍 📞

404-588-9622

www.ymca.com

YWCA 📍 📞

404-527-7575

www.ywca.org

Activity Resources for Children

Chattahoochee Nature Center 📍 📞

770-992-2055

www.chattnaturecenter.com

Center for Puppetry Arts 📍 📞

404-873-3089

www.puppet.org

Children's Museum of Atlanta 📍 📞

www.imagineit-cma.org/home.asp

404-659-5437

Zoo Atlanta 📍 📞

404-624-5600

www.zooatlanta.org

Fernbank Science Center 📍 📞

678-874-7102

www.fsc.fernbank.edu

Atlanta History Center 📍 📞

404-814-4000

www.atlantahistorycenter.com

Outdoor Activity Center 📍 📞

404-752-5385

www.suvoac.org

- > Newspaper leisure sections, advertisements, and flyers.
- > Local libraries offer story times for young children, as well as other educational/social programs. Libraries and bookstores offer publications listing activities in your neighborhood. (See Public Libraries for each county listed in the front of this book.)



School & Education

Enrolling Your Child in School

To enroll your grandchild in public school, you may need proof that you are the child's legal guardian, have legal custody, or have adopted your grandchild. The state of Georgia requires this. School enrollment will be a problem if you cannot show that you have such guardianship. Even if the court has appointed you as a foster care provider or has granted you with temporary placement of the child, you may experience problems with enrollment. It is best to check with the school district office before the time for enrollment occurs.



First, find the school district that your grandchild will attend. Then call the school or the local school board and ask for specific procedures and what you will need to bring to registration. You may be asked to bring:

- > Proof of residence;
- > Court papers;
- > Immunization records;
- > Child's birth certificate.

If your grandchild is transferring from another school, proof of grade level or a report card may be necessary.

In Georgia, children must register for kindergarten if they turn 5 years of age by September 1. Children younger than five can be admitted to public preschool programs such as Head Start and Early Head Start. Head Start and Early Head Start are comprehensive child development programs that serve children from birth to age five, pregnant women, and their families. They are child-focused programs and have the overall goal of increasing the school readiness of young children in low-income families. The Georgia Head Start program provides education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families. For information on how to enroll your grandchild in Head Start or Early Head Start contact:

Georgia Head Start Association 📞 📄

770-343-8921

www.georgiaheadstart.org

Another resource for your preschooler is your church-, synagogue- or mosque-sponsored preschool program.

Getting Documents to Enroll your Grandchild in School

Birth Certificate

In order to get a copy of your grandchild's birth certificate, you must write to the Georgia Department of Human Resources Vital Records Division, providing all of the information listed below. Sign your request and include a photocopy of a valid photo ID such as a driver's license, state-issued ID card, or employer-issued photo ID.

The following information must be provided to conduct a search for a birth certificate:

- > Full name of person shown on the birth certificate (last name at birth if female)
- > Date of birth (month, day, year)
- > Place of birth (city, county)
- > Current age
- > Sex
- > Race (optional)
- > Full name of mother (include mother's maiden name)
- > Full name of father
- > Relationship to the person named on the birth certificate requested
- > Number of certificates requested

For more information about getting a birth certificate, contact:

Georgia Dept. of Human Resources Vital Records Division 📞
404-679-4701

www.ph.dhr.state.ga.us/programs/vitalrecords/birth.shtml

Social Security Card

If your grandchild does not have a Social Security card, or if it is lost, you can apply for a new or replacement card. You do not have to be the child's legal guardian to obtain Social Security cards for him or her. U.S. citizens need a copy of their birth certificate or baptismal record. Non-U.S. citizens may need to provide an adoption record, a Department of Human Services document; doctor, clinic or hospital record; or baptismal record as proof of the child's identity. For information on getting a Social Security card, contact:

Social Security Administration 📞
1-800-772-1213

www.ssa.gov

Dealing with Behavioral Problems at School

Often when children misbehave in school, it is difficult to determine the cause. It is important not to ignore behavioral problems in school, since they may begin to affect your grandchild's schoolwork and grades. Some resources for finding assistance are below:

- > The school guidance counselor and/or principal.
- > The local mental health department in your county can assist you in finding programs or peer counseling for your grandchild.
- > A local clergy member, pastor, rabbi, or counselor.
- > A psychologist or social worker.

Keeping Up with a Child's Progress or Problems in School

- > Attend conferences and events in school. Get to know the physical layout of the school, so that you will feel comfortable going there.
- > Get in touch and stay in close contact with the child's teacher regarding concerns you may have.
- > Make sure your grandchild does school work first. Make sure that your grandchild has the school supplies he or she needs both at school and at home. Create a quiet place for your grandchild to do school work.
- > Talk to the school principal and guidance counselor.
- > Keep up with school paperwork and keep good notes or records from all meetings and evaluation sessions you attend with your grandchild's teacher and others.
- > Attend sessions that the teacher or principal arranges for parents and guardians. When possible, attend PTA (Parent-Teacher Association) meetings and events.



Senior Resources

As a grandparent raising your grandchild, it is very important for you to take care of yourself so you can take care of your grandchildren. There are many services available to older persons that may be of benefit to you, including: senior centers, home-delivered meals, transportation to senior centers and medical appointments, homemaker services, adult day care, respite care, care management, senior employment, legal services, home repair, and caregiver support. There are specialized services available for people with dementia or developmental disabilities, older refugees, the hearing impaired, and the visually impaired. For a full range of information on services, resources, and referrals, contact your local Area Agency on Aging. In the Atlanta Region, call the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC).

Atlanta Regional Commission, Area Agency on Aging ↵ 📄

404-463-3100

www.atlantaregional.com/aging/aging.html

AgeWise Connection

AgeWise Connection is a telephone service offering consulting, referrals, and useful information. Specialists can describe services available through public as well as private sectors, explain complicated eligibility requirements for public benefit programs, and make referrals by location, cost, or special needs. All information from callers is handled confidentially.

For additional information, callers may contact the following county AgeWise Connection numbers or the specialists at ARC, particularly if they need referrals that cross county lines or are uncertain about location or jurisdiction.

AgeWise Connection Offices in the Atlanta Region

Cherokee County—Cherokee County Senior Services ↵

770-345-5312

Clayton County—Clayton County Aging Program ↵

770-603-4050

Cobb County—Cobb Senior Services ↵

770-528-5364

DeKalb County—DeKalb Aging Information System ↵

404-687-7117

Douglas County—Douglas Senior Services ↵

770-489-3100

Fayette County—Fayette Senior Services ↗
770-461-0813

Fulton County—Fulton Senior Information ↗
404-730-6000

Gwinnett County—Gwinnett County Senior Services ↗
678-377-4150

Henry County—Henry County Senior Citizen Services ↗
770-898-7670

Rockdale County—Rockdale County Senior Services ↗
770-922-4633

The GeorgiaCares Program (health insurance counseling)

The GeorgiaCares Program provides health insurance information, counseling, and assistance for older adults and their families when they need help understanding Medicare, Medicaid, supplemental insurance, or long-term care insurance. They can also assist people who have questions about applying for prescription assistance programs. For further information, please contact:

GeorgiaCares ↗ 📞
1-800-669-8387

www.atlantaregional.com/aging/georgiacares.html

Medicaid Waiver Programs for Adults

Medicaid Waiver programs allow states to provide services to people who are elderly or disabled and need help to live in their own homes, instead of an institution such as a nursing home.

The Community Care Services Program (CCSP)— A Medicaid Waiver Program



CCSP provides community-based services as an alternative to nursing home care. Services are reimbursed under the Georgia Medicaid Waiver for Community and In-Home Services. Available to functionally impaired people who meet certain eligibility requirements, these services include: assessment, care coordination, adult day health, alternative living services, emergency response, home-delivered meals, home-delivered/home health services, and personal support services. To determine eligibility, contact:

Community Care Services Program (CCSP) ↗
404-463-3244



The SOURCE Program (Services Options Using Resources in Community Environments)—A Medicaid Waiver Program


The SOURCE Program, an alternative to nursing home placement, provides comprehensive medical care with in-home support including meals, non-emergency transportation, adult day care, emergency response systems, personal care, home-delivered meals, home health, alternative living services, and care management. To determine eligibility, contact:

770-925-1143  

www.agewiseconnection.com

Independent Care Waiver Program (ICWP)—A Medicaid Waiver Program

The ICWP provides in-home care to individuals who have severe physical disabilities or who have traumatic brain injuries, and are between the ages of 21 and 64. These individuals need more care than can be provided by CCSP. Participants must meet the criteria for nursing home placement although they remain in the community. To determine eligibility, call:

1-800-982-0411, x7319 

Mental Retardation Waiver Program (MRWP) and Community Habilitation and Support Services (CHSS)

The Mental Retardation Waiver Program and Community Habilitation and Support Services offer home- and community-based services for people who have mental retardation or a developmental disability. A diagnosis of developmental disability includes mental retardation or other closely related conditions such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, or neurological problems that require the level of care provided in an intermediate care facility for people who have mental retardation.

To apply for MRWP or CHSS, contact your regional Board of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Addictive Diseases (MH/DD/AD). See regional offices by county below:

MH/DD/AD Regional Office—Cumming

770-205-5411 or 1-800-646-7721 (Cherokee, Cobb, and Douglas Counties)

MH/DD/AD Regional Office—Tucker

770-414-3093 (Clayton, DeKalb, Fulton, Gwinnett, and Rockdale Counties)

MH/DD/AD Regional Office—Columbus

706-568-5281 or 1-800-832-2439 (Fayette and Henry Counties)

Sexuality, HIV/AIDS & other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

Talking To Your Grandchild about Sex

As a grandparent caregiver, talking to your grandchildren about sex, sexuality and sexually transmitted diseases may be especially difficult. Most people are uncomfortable talking about sex. There are many excellent books and videos to help you. These are usually available through your local library, health department, or Planned Parenthood. If you still feel uncomfortable or unable to discuss sexuality with your grandchild, encourage him or her to talk to another trusted adult about these issues. The best thing you can do is keep lines of communication open between you and your grandchild. Listen to them and let them describe their feelings about sex and sexuality. Kids get a lot of pressure to have sex. You may want to encourage your grandchild to protect him or herself from sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and unwanted pregnancy by not having sex or, if they are sexually active, by using birth control and condoms.

For more information on talking to your grandchild about sexuality, STDs, HIV, and pregnancy contact your local health department or Planned Parenthood. Teens may also want to visit www.teenwire.com, a website by and for teens that gives accurate information to their questions.

HIV/AIDS

You may be raising children who are living with HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS may affect children differently than it does adults. Having accurate, up-to-date information about treatment options, services, and new ways to care for the child on a daily basis is very important. You may also want help in talking to child care providers or teachers about your grandchild with HIV/AIDS. For help with any of these services contact:

National Pediatric and Family HIV Resource Center 📞 🌐

1-800-362-0071

www.thebody.com/nphrc/nphrc.page.html

The Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation 📞 🌐

1-888-499-HOPE

www.pedaids.org and click “Pediatric AIDS and You”

You may also be caring for your grandchild because the child’s parent has HIV/AIDS. In these cases you may be dealing with the grief of your own child’s HIV/AIDS illness plus the added stress of caring for your

grandchild, who also may be dealing with his or her own feelings about the parent's illness. There are several organizations available for support with these difficult issues.

The Georgia AIDS and STD Info Line 📞 📱
1-800-551-2728

AID Atlanta 📞 📱
404-870-7775
www.aidatlanta.org

HIV/AIDS Treatment Information Service 📞 📱
1-800-HIV-0440
www.hivatis.org

National AIDS Hotline 📞 📱
1-800-342-AIDS or 1-800-344-SIDA (Spanish)

National Minority AIDS Council 📞 📱
202-483-6622
www.nmac.org



If you are caring for a grandchild whose parents have HIV/AIDS, you may also want to get information on legal services and information to plan for the child's future. You may need legal help to make sure that the children will continue to live with you after his or her parents' death. You may want to encourage the child's parents to create a will designating you as the child's guardian after they die. You may want to contact a lawyer to help with the will. Please see the legal section for helpful resources and legal services.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

STDs are infections that can be transferred from one person to another through sexual contact. STDs are caused by parasites, bacteria, or viruses. Some of the more common STDs include pubic lice (crabs), chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, herpes, HIV, cytomegalovirus (CMV), genital warts, hepatitis B and C, human papilloma virus (HPV), trichomoniasis, and pelvic inflammatory disease. Many STDs have no symptoms, so if you suspect your grandchild has been sexually active, you may want to encourage him or her to be tested for STDs at an annual physical or gynecological exam.

Transportation & ID Cards

Public Transportation

MARTA

MARTA (Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority) is the public transportation system serving Fulton and DeKalb counties. It has both buses and subway trains. Children under 6 ride free with a paying adult. For information, updated fares, and schedules, call:

MARTA 📞 📱

404-848-5000

www.itsmarta.com

Discount Fares for Students and Seniors

For elementary, middle, or high school students attending schools located in Fulton and DeKalb counties, the Student TransCard can be used on buses and trains from 6am until 7pm on weekdays. The weekly cards can be purchased through a child's school.

MARTA issues Half-Fare Passes for senior citizens age 65 and older people who have a physical or mental disability. The card allows you to travel at half the regular fare at all times, but you must pay your share in cash. Half-Fare Passes are good for both the bus and rail systems. You can get a Half-Fare card at either Lindbergh Center Headquarters or Five Points Transit Station. For more information on the Half-Fare program, contact:

MARTA 📞 📱

404-848-5112

www.itsmarta.com/howto/special/half.htm

ParaTransit for People with Disabilities

MARTA's ParaTransit service is for people with disabilities who cannot board, ride, or get to an accessible fixed route bus or train because of their disability. For more information and an application for ParaTransit service, contact:

MARTA 📞 📱

404-848-5389

www.itsmarta.com/getthere/para.htm



Clayton County C-TRAN

Clayton County C-TRAN provides bus service in and around Clayton County. All buses are lift-equipped, making it accessible for patrons with disabilities. Priority seating for senior citizens and people with disabilities at the front of each bus is provided. Paratransit Service is also available for people with disabilities. For more information call:

Clayton County C-TRAN 📞 📍

770-472-8800

<http://web.co.clayton.ga.us/ctran/index.htm>

For an application for ParaTransit service, call:

Clayton County C-TRAN 📞 📍

678-479-4151

<http://web.co.clayton.ga.us/ctran/paratransit.htm>

Cobb Community Transit

Cobb Community Transit provides public transit buses from the Marietta Square to several destinations throughout Cobb County. There are 13 local and two express routes. Three park-and-ride lots (Marietta Park-and-Ride, Busbee Park-and-Ride, and Johnson Ferry Baptist Church) allow people to leave their cars and use transit. Buses operate on major corridors in Cobb, with several routes accessing MARTA bus stops and rail stations. All buses accommodate wheelchairs. For more information, call:

Cobb Community Transit 📞 📍

770-427-4444

www.cobbdot.org/cct.htm

Gwinnett County Transit

Gwinnett County Transit provides express, local and Paratransit services for the people of Gwinnett County. Express bus service operates Monday through Friday and includes six routes using the HOV lanes on I-85. Park-and-ride lots at I-985, Discover Mills, and Indian Trail have been built or upgraded to provide free and convenient parking for bus riders. Local bus service operates five routes Monday through Saturday connecting neighborhoods and businesses to Gwinnett County's many cultural, shopping and educational opportunities. Paratransit service for qualifying people with disabilities operates in conjunction with the local bus service. For more information, call:

Gwinnett County Transit 📞 📍

770-822-5010

www.gctransit.com

Transportation to Medical Appointments and Senior Centers

To register for non-emergency transportation for people age 60 and older, call your county senior services agency. (The phone numbers are listed by county under Senior Services in the front of this guide.) For information on other transportation options, call:

AgeWise Connection

404-463-3333

Non-Driver Identification Cards

If you do not have a driver's license, it is important for you to have some form of government-issued photo identification. To get a non-driver identification card, contact:

Georgia Department of Motor Vehicle Safety

678-413-8400

www.dmv.ga.gov/drivers

