

2002 Report on Kinship Care and Kinship Foster Care



The Arizona Department of Economic Security



According to Census 2000 Data:

Nationally:

5.6 million children in the US are being raised in Grandparent Headed Households. This reflects an increase of **29.7%** since 1990. (AARP/US Census Bureau)

2,350,477 Grandparents are responsible for their own grandchildren under 18 years.

889,415 Are Grandfathers.

1,461,062 Are Grandmothers.

1,717,620 Grandparents raising grandchildren are married.

632,857 Grandparents raising grandchildren are unmarried.

(GrandsPlace/US Census Bureau)

There are eight times more children in grandparent-headed homes than in the foster care system. (AARP)

In Arizona:

96,062 children are living in Grandparent Headed Households which is a **73.8%** increase since 1990. (US Census Bureau)



Background

More and more relatives, in particular grandparents, from all socio-economic and ethnic groups are becoming primary caregivers for their kin. Often times, the relatives are unprepared and ill-equipped to assume the new responsibilities. This experience in Arizona prompted representatives from the Arizona Legislature and the Department to examine this issue in more depth.

As a result, Arizona enacted House Bill 2400 and Senate Bill 1290 (Laws 2000, Chapters 183 & 285) effective August 18, 2000, which created two programs to provide support services to relative caregivers: **1) Kinship Care, and 2) Kinship Foster Care.** The Department of Economic Security (DES) was charged with implementing the legislation, using the following guidelines:

- Establish two pilot sites by January 1, 2001 (page 4).
- Establish Kinship Foster Care Services for individuals who are relative caregivers of children in Child Protective Services (CPS) custody (page 6).
- Streamline, expedite and coordinate existing services and referrals for Kinship Services (page 8).
- Enable families to support relative children (page 8).
- Adopt program rules to prescribe application and eligibility requirements that provide an expedited process for kinship care families to receive child-only TANF Cash Assistance eligibility (page 9).
- Preserve families (page 9).
- Use existing measures for outreach and marketing to facilitate community awareness of the pilot programs (page 10).
- Help meet the protection, developmental, cultural and permanency needs of children (page 12).

At the same time, the Arizona Legislature strengthened resource options for Kinship Care, by also enacting Senate Bill 1286 (Laws 2000, Chapter 312) effective August 18, 2000. This law authorized the Department to transfer child support rights and disbursement of child support payments to temporary caretakers and specifies the procedures to do so.

What is the Need?

Why are so many children living with their relatives?

According to the AARP Grandparent Information Center (GIC) the reasons are as follow:

- The relatives are responding to a problem in the middle (parent) generation, such as death of the parent, unemployment, illness, divorce, immaturity, teen pregnancy, incarceration of the parent, parental substance abuse, child abuse and/or neglect.
- The relatives are motivated by the love they feel for their family and step in to fill a gap created by the problem.



Those who care for others can do a better job if they pay close attention to their own needs as well.

Challenges faced by Kinship Families

Based on input from kinship caregivers and community partners some of the identified challenges are:

- Investigating and resolving legal questions about custody, guardianship, or adoption. For example, kinship caregivers may not have the legal ability to enroll their relative child in school or make medical decisions for them.
- Making appropriate financial decisions that may affect a caregiver's employment status, or applying for benefits like Medicaid, Foster Care, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or Social Security.
- Providing for personal health needs. The stress of caring for young children along with their own health difficulties can be overwhelming for many older kinship caregivers.
- Accommodating children in their current residence due to the lack of warning or preparation prior to taking on the role of caregiver.
- Choosing appropriate child care, including daycare, after-school programs, and respite care.
- Providing adequate medical care, including behavioral health services, and getting insurance coverage through private insurance.
- Providing emotional support for their children and finding support for themselves.

Kinship Care Definition:

An adult relative who is acting in the role of a parent for a child



Kinship Care

Kinship Care provides supports for relatives who have taken on the voluntary role of parenting a relative child without CPS or juvenile court involvement.

Many families have, thus, voluntarily taken on this responsibility at great personal expense. Kinship caregivers may apply for financial assistance for their relative children through the Family Assistance Administration.

DES also crafted a comprehensive Kinship Care plan to guide and support Arizona's Kinship Caregivers.

Despite the common stereotype of the single, African American grandmother raising her grandchildren in the inner city, the phenomenon transcends all socioeconomic groups, geographic areas, and ethnicity. (Generations United)

Kinship Care Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles were established by DES as provided in the DES Comprehensive Plan for Kinship Care (11/30/2000):

- Services and supports must be family-focused and child centered.
- Services and supports must be culturally sensitive.
- Services and supports must be provided in partnership with families and with the best interest of the child being the foundation for action.
- This partnership must include all agencies that would be or could be involved with the child and family with a shared focus on securing permanency for the child.
- Services and supports must be provided in a manner that values and respects family caregivers.
- Services and supports offered by charitable, private and faith-based communities are invaluable resources that should be utilized in the family.
- Services and supports must be provided in a fair and equitable manner.
- Services and supports must be provided in a manner that will assist relative caregivers, staff and families to appreciate the importance of permanency in the life of a child.
- Services and supports that are available to biological parents should also be available to relative caregivers.

In an effort to support these principles, DES has established an internal workgroup with representation from the Family Assistance Administration, Child Protective Services, Aging and Adult Administration, Child Care Administration, Office of Intergovernmental Operations and the Division of Child Support Enforcement to address issues as they arise and ensure that these principles are being followed.

Establishing and Training the two Kinship Care Pilot Offices:

On January 1, 2001 two Family Assistance Local Offices began operations as Kinship Care Pilot Sites. Prior to January 1, 2001, staff from five major program areas of the Department (Family Assistance Administration, Child Protective Services, Aging & Adult, Child Care and Child Support Enforcement) delivered training to the pilot offices staff. The training focused on the concept of Kinship Care and the purpose of linking the broad array of services within the Department to benefit Kinship families.

Following the implementation of the revised policy, the Family Assistance Administration continued to conduct training for all Eligibility Interviewers across the state to ensure that all offices, although not a part of the pilot project, implemented the revised policy.

Phoenix Pilot Office

The DES office located at 4635 S. Central, Phoenix was designated as the first pilot office:

This office is a multi-service center and houses the Family Assistance, Child Care, Job Service, Jobs programs, and Child Protective Services. Adult Protective Services also serves this office but is not housed at this location.

Staff from this office work together with community advocates to deliver services for Kinship Caregivers in the South Phoenix area. Staff from this office also attend monthly grandparent support groups to answer questions and assist with issue resolution.

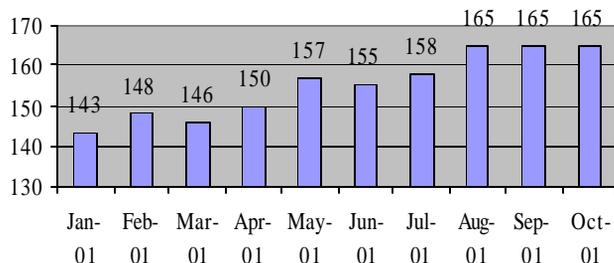
Tucson Pilot Office

The DES Office located at 195 W. Irvington, Tucson was designated as the second pilot office:

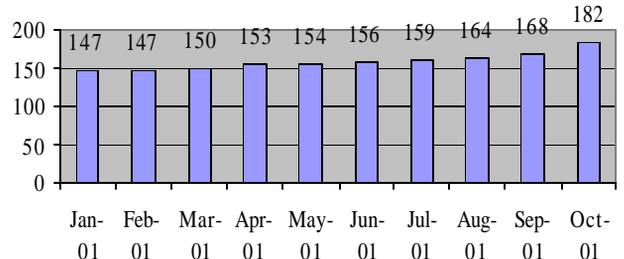
This office is a multi-service center and houses the Family Assistance, Child Care, Vocational Rehabilitation, Job Service and Jobs programs. Child Protective Services and Adult Protective Services also serve this office but are not located at this site.

Staff from this office have been working closely with community advocates who come to the office on a regular basis to assist Kinship Caregivers in applying for assistance. This office has also participated in local Town Hall meetings sponsored by the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Southern Arizona Coalition.

Kinship Cases Phoenix Pilot Office

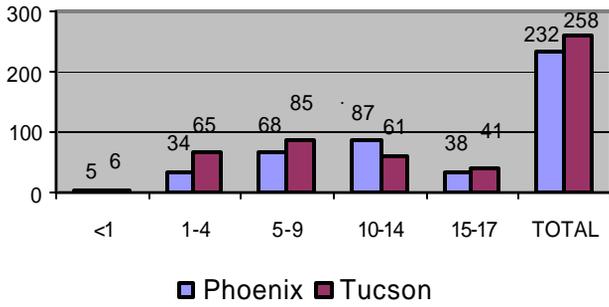


Kinship Cases Tucson Pilot Office



Pilot Offices Demographic Data

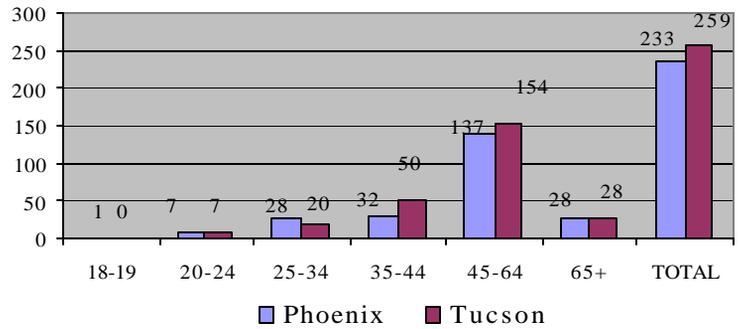
Ages of Kinship Children Receiving Benefits



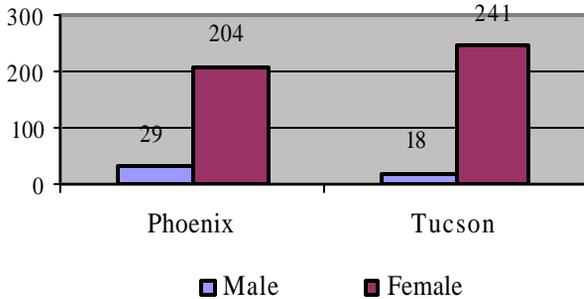
The ages of children in Kinship Care who are receiving TANF child-only cash assistance within the two offices of this pilot evaluation are reflective of the national statistics which indicate that the majority of children in Kinship Care are of school age.

The Kinship Caregivers ages range from 18 to over 65 with the majority of caregivers being between the ages of 45 and 64 which is actually younger than the national average of 55 to 64.

Age of Kinship Caregivers



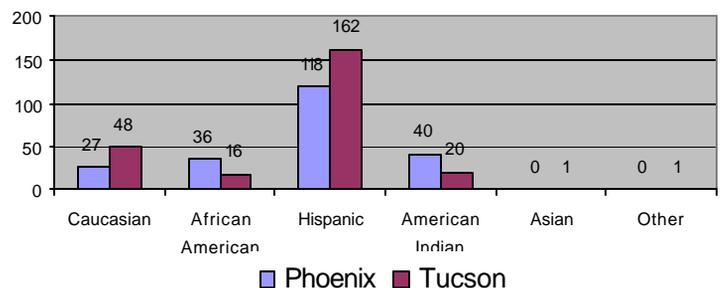
Sex of Kinship Caregivers



While there are some men acting in the role of a parent in the two pilot sites, the majority are women and statistics show that they are more likely to be a grandmother or an aunt.

The ethnicity of the Kinship Caregivers in the two pilot sites is predominantly Hispanic which is indicative of the population surrounding the pilot offices.

Ethnicity of Caregivers



Kinship Foster Care

Kinship Foster Care provides for relatives as the first placement preference for children in CPS custody requiring out-of-home care. Kinship Foster Care families are informed of financial options and non-financial services available to them such as denial of placement grievance procedures, and expedited procedures for Kinship Foster Care applications for TANF child-only cash assistance for the foster children.

There are two forms of Kinship Foster Care:

Licensed Foster Care is when a child is placed with a relative who becomes licensed as a foster care provider.

Unlicensed Foster Care is when a child is placed with a relative with court approval and the relative does not wish to be a licensed foster care provider.



The majority of grandparents raising grandchildren are between the ages of 55 and 64; approximately 20% to 25% are over 65. (AARP)

Services available to Kinship Foster caregivers:

- Case Management Services include regular contact with the kinship foster family to assess and identify problems and develop solutions.
- Family Assessment is provided by CPS to determine the caregiver's ability to meet the child's health and safety needs and to determine the suitability of all family members for this role.
- Health care coverage for children in Kinship Foster Care.
- Parent Aide Services are offered through contracted and state employed parent aides who provide training in "family life skills", transportation and supervised visitation.
- Parent Skills Training/Classes may be accessed to enhance and update parenting knowledge and skills.
- Referral to Mental Health Programs and Supportive Intervention services.
- Respite Care is available for 144 hours per child per state fiscal year for children in both kinship and non-kinship licensed foster homes.
- Transportation Services to access medical services and other services for a child.
- Childcare.
- Referrals to interdepartmental programs such as the Division of Developmental Disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation, Job Service Programs, and community resources.

Cost of Services

The cost for services paid on behalf of the children in Kinship Foster Care between 10/01/2000 and 9/30/01 was :

\$1,123,088

Examples of the types of services provided to the children include:

- Special payments and allowances such as emergency clothing, books/education, supplemental school tuition, graduation and camp fees
- Monthly clothing and personal allowances per child
- Foster care maintenance payments (for licensed Kinship Foster Caregivers)
- Counseling and psychological services
- Family Support Services: parent aide and parenting skills training
- Transportation
- Costs associated with locating potential kin caregivers

Demographic Data of Children in Kinship Foster Care

The number of children placed in Kinship Foster Care:

1,519 children were in Kinship Foster Care as of 9/30/01.

The number of families served through Kinship Foster care:

952 families were being served through Kinship Foster Care as of 9/30/01.

The length of time these children have been in care:

30 days or less -	4%
31 days to 12 months -	47%
13 to 24 months -	23%
Over 24 months -	26%

Profile of a Kinship Foster Caregiver:

Relationship to the Child:

43% Grandparents

1% Great Grandparents

28% Aunt or Uncle

14% Other Specified Relative

4% Other Unspecified Relatives

10% Other not specified

Marital Status of Kinship Caregiver:

54% Married

31% Single

3% Widowed

8% Divorced

4% Other

Type of Kinship Foster Caregiver

12% are licensed and care for 12% of the children in Kinship Foster Care

88% are unlicensed and are caring for 88% of the children in Kinship Foster Care

Where our Kinship Foster Caregivers Reside:

46% live in Maricopa County

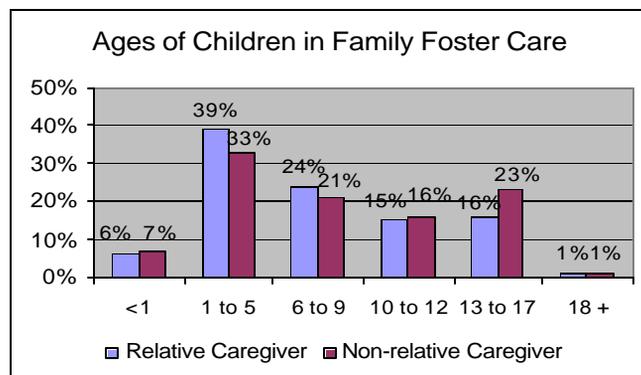
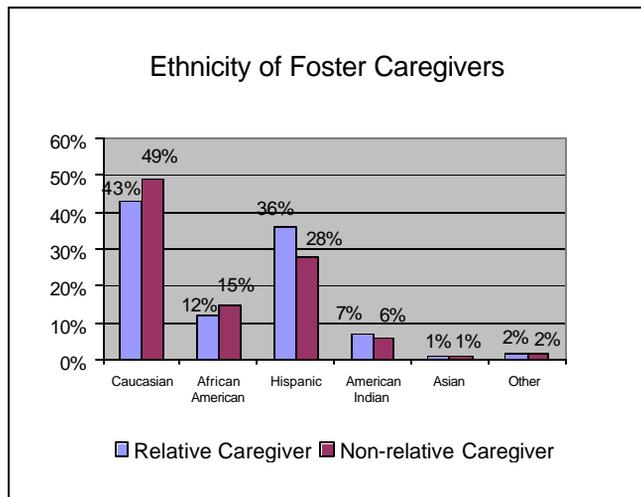
31% live in Pima County

15% live in the remaining counties of AZ

8% live in other states or countries



As of 9/30/01, there were 6,121 children in out-of-home care. Of the 6,121 children, 3,997 were in family foster care including non-relative foster homes and licensed and unlicensed Kinship Foster Care homes. Of the 3,997 children in family foster care, 1,547 children were in Kinship Foster Care and 2,450 in non-relative foster homes.



Kinship Care and Kinship Foster Care Legislative Provisions Addressed:

Streamline, expedite and coordinate existing services and referrals for Kinship Services

Upon the signing of House Bill 2400 and Senate Bill 1290, the Family Assistance Administration (FAA) reviewed the existing TANF Cash Assistance policies and procedures and determined that the immediate implementation of this legislation was possible. The Department determined that the major priority was to streamline and expedite access to TANF Cash Assistance benefits. It was further determined that the approval timeframe for a “child-only” case should be shortened from 45 days to 20 days and that the requirement for a face-to-face interview was a true barrier to services. A request was forwarded to the Department of Health and Human Services for a waiver of the face-to-face requirement which was approved on August 18, 2000, and became part of the TANF Cash Assistance State Plan. Policy was changed and eligibility interviewers statewide were trained for immediate implementation.

CPS and FAA established policy and procedures to expedite kinship foster caregivers with TANF child-only cash assistance benefits. This includes acceptance of the court order and signature of the CPS case managers as proof of the relationship. The case manager is responsible for faxing the application directly to an FAA local office. The application process can be completed by telephone; no office appointment is required with the kinship caregiver.

Enable families to support relative children

Easy access to financial assistance, medical coverage and child care better enable families to support relative children. However, in addressing the many barriers faced by Kinship Caregivers, it is important to note that these services alone are not sufficient to truly “enable families to support relative children”.

Trainings Conducted:

CPS provided training to approximately 595 CPS Case Managers, Supervisors and Managers.

FAA conducted statewide policy training on kinship related policy changes.

Kinship Programmatic Training sessions were conducted for all staff in the two pilot offices prior to January 1, 2001.

Additional trainings were conducted for staff in a second Phoenix office (within 1.5 miles of the Phoenix pilot office) and for all Flagstaff office staff.

Trainings were also conducted for Tucson community advocates who assist kin in completing the application process.



Adopt rules to prescribe application and eligibility requirements that provide an expedited process for kinship care families to receive child-only TANF cash assistance

On August 18, 2000, the Department received approval from the Department of Health and Human Services to waive the requirement for a face-to-face interview for Child-only TANF Cash Assistance applicants.

The Department is currently in the process of revising the TANF Administrative Rules to reflect this and other modifications.



Preserve families

In an effort to preserve families, the Department has devoted resources to training staff to assist Kinship caregivers in their application for TANF Cash Assistance and informing them of referrals for other DES program services. Other services explored are child care, in-home services for the elderly, Social Security benefits, Women, Infants and Children Supplemental Food Program (WIC), veterans' benefits, school lunch program and referrals to community agencies for assistance with clothing, shelter costs, dependent care costs and medical needs, etc.

Kinship Care eligibility is completed by all workers in the local FAA offices. The interviews are conducted by phone, in the office or through a home visit at the request of the caregiver, and are given priority to the first available worker.

Cooperation with Child Support Enforcement is a requirement of the TANF Cash Assistance program, including Kinship Foster Care and Kinship Care. "Good Cause" for not cooperating is explored with any applicant who indicates that they or the child would be in danger if they provided this information.

The Department has participated in Grandparent Universities, Town Hall meetings and is also collaborating with community partners in identifying additional needs and services throughout the community to address some of the barriers faced by kin.



Being a grandparent is a role most adults look forward to with great excitement! We look forward to *spoiling* our grandchildren, sharing time and special moments with them; however, many grandparents find themselves in the primary caregiver role as a *parent* assuming parenting responsibilities.

(Generations United)

Family Caregiver Support Program

A new program was recently developed as a result of the Older American Act Amendments of 2000, to provide support services to family caregivers. The law permits up to 10% of the funds for the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) to be allocated for Kinship Caregivers.

The family caregiver is required to be age 60 or older and be the primary caretaker of the child, in order to participate in the program. Funds for the NFCSP have been distributed to the eight Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) within Arizona.

Each AAA determines how much of the federal dollars, if any, will be allocated for programs serving grandparents or other relatives over age 60 raising a family member under age 19.

The DES Aging and Adult Administration website is currently being developed to include information on the NFCSP. This will include information on various organizations involved in the implementation of kinship care support groups. In addition, there will be links to national and local websites on the topic of kinship care.



Use existing measures for Outreach and Marketing to facilitate community awareness of the pilot program

Flyers promoting the Kinship Care Program's availability have been distributed to staff to display at community agencies, in the lobby of each pilot office, and to post in interviewers' cubicles.

Resource Directories

- A resource directory was developed for each pilot office. The directory includes names and phone numbers of local community resources and is available in each pilot office to be distributed to all Kinship Care applicants.
- The Grandparents Guide and Caregiver's Guide have been developed through a contract with the Beatitudes Center for Developing Older Adult Resources and are available at no cost through Blue Cross, Blue Shield of Arizona.
- The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Task Force, Pima Chapter, has developed a resource manual for grandparents, with links to agencies that provide Kinship Care throughout Pima County. The manual also provides grandparents with resources for self-care, legal and financial matters, childcare, school support, and parenting tips.



The majority of relative caregivers are grandparents. However, there are an additional 22% of relative caregivers who are aunts, uncles, siblings or other relations which are not captured in the 2000 census data.

(Brookdale Foundation)

DES' Efforts to Address the Needs of Kinship Caregivers

KIN-Nections Project

The Division of Children Youth and Families (DCYF) is a participant in the KIN-nections Project. The goal of this project is to improve permanency outcomes for children within their extended families.

The Project is operated in collaboration with the Arizona's Children Association and Casey Family Programs under a federal grant.



A primary focus of DES is timely intervention to preserve families or working toward the reunification of parents with their children whenever possible. (DES Staff)

The Aging & Adult Administration is working to meet the needs of Kinship Caregivers

The DES Aging and Adult Administration (A&AA) received a seed grant from the Brookdale Foundation Group to implement the Relatives as Parents Program Statewide Initiative (RAPP). The goal of the two-year grant is to:

- Develop five new support groups under the sponsorship of local agencies in different parts of the state.
- Develop a statewide network of local organizations to raise awareness of relative caregivers' needs and serve as a focal point for information on current programs, policies and resources.
- Convene an inter-system task force of state agencies and statewide organizations to facilitate service delivery of coordinated systems that support the needs of relative caregivers and the children in their care.

Grandparents' Concerns Task Force

The Aging & Adult Administration is a member of the Grandparents' Concerns Task Force (GCTF), which is sponsored by the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging. The GCTF membership is comprised of individuals, private and public agencies, and organizations statewide. GCTF's main objective is to increase community awareness of the special problems faced by grandparents who are primary caregivers to their grandchildren, and to collaborate with state and community agencies to expand services to grandparent caregivers and their families. The GCTF meets monthly to focus on resource updates, receive local expert presentations, and develop a list of recommendations to provide support with the goal of keeping families together.

Help meet the Protection, Developmental, Cultural and Permanency Needs of children

DES is Working in Partnership with Community Advocates

The Department is committed to ensuring that the safety and protection of children are its highest priorities.

The common image of a family is that of a father, mother, and a child or children. But in today's world, that picture doesn't always reflect reality. An estimated 42,000 Arizona children are currently living solely with grandparents.

The best way to help meet the protection, developmental, cultural and permanency needs of these children is to provide ongoing assistance to kinship caregivers as they raise their relative children.

Department staff are working with community partners to assist the caregiver in accessing support services, encouraging self-care, and connecting them to support groups. These families may also be referred for services provided through the DES Family Advocacy Office.

Community partnerships have created easy access to financial assistance, medical coverage and child care to better enable families to support relative children. The Department and community partners have created additional support services for Kinship Caregivers.

Support Services for Kinship Caregivers

The two largest Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) regions are in Maricopa and Pima counties. Both regions have developed innovative ideas to promote additional support services to kinship caregivers as follows:

Therapeutic Support Group - In Maricopa County, a therapeutic/support group meets one Saturday morning each month. In addition to the one-hour support group meeting for the grandparent, a certified child and family counselor provides therapeutic group activities for the children. This is a three-hour program intended to give respite to the grandparent. Plans are underway for a second therapeutic/support group in the west valley.



Ensuring a child retains a connection to his or her culture is often a significant factor in relatives taking on the responsibility for raising a relative child

Tucson K.A.R.E. (Kinship, Adoption Resources and Education) Center

In Pima County, the Kinship and Adoption Resource & Education Family (K.A.R.E.) Center opened in February 2002. This is a one-stop facility that provides referrals, resources, education and emotional support to relatives raising other relatives' children, as well as guardianship and adoption families.

The K.A.R.E. Center's services are modeled after the Edgewood Family Center in San Francisco, California. The model features a wide range of holistic services offered in a one-stop setting, and employs some of the caregivers themselves as outreach workers. Both case management and ongoing support services are offered in this unique model. Cases are never totally closed, so that caregivers can utilize the Center as needed-- sometimes intensively, through short or long-term case management, and sometimes with support services like self-help groups, after school services and outings for children and youth, or maybe just a food box from time to time.

The K.A.R.E. Center has ten staff, with three of these positions occupied by caregivers. Arizona's Children Association (AzCA) and Casey Family Programs, Tucson Division, are the lead collaborators. Pima Council on Aging, the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension and DES are key partners. The Family Assistance Administration provides itinerant services to complete application interviews for TANF child-only cash assistance benefits. Both Child Protective Services, and the Pima County Juvenile Court have been active supporters and currently provide joint bi-monthly training. Members of the Pima County Bar Foundation are working with the Center to provide access to legal assistance and information.

It is expected that peer-based support and the participatory structure of the Center will enhance the health and well being of caregivers and their families, who are leery and even fearful of traditional "agency" approaches. The "one-stop" concept assures a dignified initial intake and up-to-date knowledge about resources typically needed by caregivers.

The challenge lies in educating other systems about the unique characteristics of extended and multigenerational families. The goal is to respect the time-honored tradition of shared caregiving and to become "kin-competent" in our work with these families.



While grandparent-headed families cross all socio-economic levels, these grandparents are more likely to live in poverty than other grandparents. (AARP)

Partnership Training - The Department has devoted resources to train community advocates to assist Kinship Caregivers in applying for TANF Cash Assistance and referring them to other DES program services. In addition, other services explored are in-home services for the elderly, Social Security benefits, Women, Infants and Children Supplemental Food Program (WIC), veterans' benefits, school lunch program, and referrals to community agencies for assistance with clothing, shelter costs, dependent care costs and medical needs, etc.

Grandparent Universities and Town Halls - The Department has participated in Grandparent Universities, Town Hall meetings and is also collaborating with community partners in identifying additional needs and services throughout the community to address some of the barriers faced by kin.



Support Group Facilitation Training The Governor's Advisory Council on Aging in collaboration with Beatitudes Center D.O.A.R., Inc., the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, the Grandparents' Concerns Task Force, and other resource information sources have developed the "Support Group Training Manual for Kinship Caregivers and Grandparents Raising Grandchildren." While there is a growing body of literature on grandparents and other relatives raising their kin, there is little material specifically focused on creating and maintaining support networks for the caregivers. This training manual is available through the Governor's Council on Aging.

Next Steps

The following steps will be followed to further address the provision of services to Kinship Caregivers.

1. The Department of Economic Security will continue to monitor each pilot office as well as conduct surveys of Kinship Caregivers who are utilizing the services of these two offices in an effort to identify if additional areas of policy or practices should be further streamlined to improve better access to services.
2. The Department will continue to network with community advocates in marketing the programs and services available to Kinship Caregivers and their children.
3. The Department of Economic Security will collaborate with the Auditor General on its performance evaluation of the implementation of the Kinship legislation to further determine areas for improvement.