

Definition

Number receiving Kinship Care is children who lived in subsidized care of non-parental relatives during the reported year due to abuse or neglect in their home of origin. *Percent living with grandparents* is the percent of all children receiving Kinship Care who lived with grandparents as primary caregivers.

Data in context

All children need nurturing homes with loving adults to thrive. Yet not all children have a safe home of origin. When children cannot remain at home safely, placement with other family members can be an effective alternative. Research indicates that children in kinship care are more likely to be kept together with their siblings, have greater stability in residential placements and schools, and report a better experience in non-parental care, compared to children in non-relative foster care.¹ Kinship care arrangements also support a child's connections with extended family and allow children to maintain cultural practices.²

Grandparents are vital caregivers both within the child welfare system and in informal arrangements. More than 2.5 million grandparents in the United States were the primary caregivers for their grandchildren in 2007, an increase from the previous year.³ Grandparents were raising more than 46,000 Kentucky children in 2008.⁴

In May 2009, 9,475 children in Kentucky were in the Kinship Care program, a 17 percent increase from May 2007. Nearly two out of every three Kentucky children (64 percent) in the Kinship Care program lived with grandparents in May 2009, a rate that has remained stable since May 2007. In May 2009, there were 17 counties in which more than 3 in 4 children in the Kinship Care program were placed with grandparents. Children ages 6 to 12 represented the largest age group of youth in the Kinship Care program (44 percent of participating youth).⁵

The number of children receiving Kinship Care declined in 28 Kentucky counties from May 2007 to May 2009, but increased in the majority of counties. Among counties with six or more children receiving Kinship Care, the number of children receiving Kinship Care more than doubled in Greenup, Lawrence, Lewis, Marshall, and Washington Counties.

Research indicates no differences in rates of abuse or neglect by race; however, Black children are more likely to be removed from their home than White or Hispanic children.⁶ A permanent relative placement offers an opportunity to maintain family connections and ensure safety for children of all races, and Kinship Care provides financial assistance to relatives able to take custody. Among children receiving Kinship Care in Kentucky, Black or African American children represent a higher proportion than in the population of children in out-of-home care; however, Hispanic children and children of other races are less likely to receive Kinship Care.⁷

Subsidies for relative caregivers turn the opportunity to remain connected with extended family into a viable option for all children, regardless of their family's socioeconomic status, and can also reduce disproportionality in foster care.^{8,9} Many family members, such as grandparents, want to care for relatives' children, but may have fixed incomes and cannot afford the expenses associated with raising children.¹⁰ A report on programs in Kentucky and five other states identified many benefits of kinship care, including permanency for older youth and reduced racial disparities.¹¹ A new federal law, the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, will help states finance guardianship assistance payments and other aspects of kinship care programs (see text box).¹²

Data Source: Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department for Community Based Services.

Data Note: Number of children in Kinship Care and percent living with grandparents reflect data as of May 2009. Some child victims are directly placed by the courts into the custody of relatives without entering the foster care system. The figures here underestimate placements with relatives and only refer to those non-parental relatives receiving monthly payments subsidizing care of such children.

Rate Calculation: (number of children receiving Kinship Care who lived with grandparents in 2003 * 100) / (number of children who received Kinship Care in 2003)

(number of children receiving Kinship Care who lived with grandparents in 2008 * 100) / (number of children who received Kinship Care in 2008)

New Federal Options for States to Support Kinship Care

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 offers many new provisions to support kinship care arrangements, including:

- ▶ Federal reimbursement to states for financial assistance for caregivers, when the child has come from foster care.
- ▶ Grant funding for kinship navigator programs to identify family members and support the process of family group decision making.
- ▶ Coordination of health services for the child.
- ▶ Steps to ensure that a child may remain at his/her school, even when an out-of-home care placement is in a different school area. States may be reimbursed for higher transportation costs to assure the child gets to school.
- ▶ More training for family members and court personnel, including attorneys, judges, staff, and volunteer advocates.

Estimates from the Congressional Budget Office project the bill will yield federal savings of \$791 million and that matching funds will create savings at the state and local levels as well.

Sources: Allen, T., DeVoght, K., and Geen, R. (2008). *State Kinship Care Policies for Children that Come to the Attention of Child Welfare Agencies. Findings from the 2007 Casey Kinship Foster Care Policy Survey*. Child Trends. Available at <http://www.childtrends.org>.

Center for the Study of Law and Social Policy, et al. (2009). *New Help for Children Raised by Grandparents and Other Relatives: Questions and Answers About the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008*. Available at <http://www.clasp.org>.

CHILDREN RECEIVING KINSHIP CARE

(number & percent living with grandparents)

	May 2007		May 2009		May 2007		May 2009		
	Number receiving Kinship Care	Percent living with grandparents	Number receiving Kinship Care	Percent living with grandparents	Number receiving Kinship Care	Percent living with grandparents	Number receiving Kinship Care	Percent living with grandparents	
Kentucky	8,086	64	9,475	64					
Adair	17	41	23	22	Knox	73	67	91	53
Allen	29	52	28	61	LaRue	15	47	30	60
Anderson	34	59	28	64	Laurel	121	58	132	55
Ballard	14	79	13	77	Lawrence	28	68	63	76
Barren	47	57	44	48	Lee	21	48	39	69
Bath	30	73	46	78	Leslie	44	48	50	52
Bell	112	69	123	67	Letcher	110	75	142	75
Boone	99	53	105	57	Lewis	12	75	39	64
Bourbon	52	58	63	56	Lincoln	45	64	33	61
Boyd	49	59	80	66	Livingston	14	100	18	67
Boyle	32	69	52	77	Logan	18	44	22	50
Bracken	13	62	10	40	Lyon	4	75	3	67
Breathitt	81	62	100	63	McCracken	39	46	52	56
Breckinridge	34	65	30	57	McCreary	90	39	88	43
Bullitt	76	70	83	73	McLean	21	67	21	67
Butler	21	71	16	50	Madison	135	60	157	62
Caldwell	20	75	25	40	Magoffin	60	55	76	55
Calloway	13	85	20	80	Marion	26	81	32	81
Campbell	113	71	123	72	Marshall	6	50	15	53
Carlisle	7	57	8	63	Martin	41	83	74	69
Carroll	19	58	16	63	Mason	33	70	24	67
Carter	76	68	140	60	Meade	51	33	49	41
Casey	14	43	21	43	Menifee	15	80	22	73
Christian	40	53	45	73	Mercer	45	67	47	68
Clark	62	53	67	58	Metcalfe	29	83	18	83
Clay	32	31	57	60	Monroe	7	71	13	46
Clinton	8	38	9	33	Montgomery	39	67	53	79
Crittenden	8	88	15	93	Morgan	35	63	36	67
Cumberland	6	67	4	100	Muhlenberg	42	57	49	59
Daviess	190	67	191	61	Nelson	47	68	58	69
Edmonson	25	64	26	73	Nicholas	18	67	26	62
Elliott	18	33	27	44	Ohio	53	75	51	80
Estill	24	83	40	68	Oldham	21	71	23	74
Fayette	544	69	577	66	Owen	26	81	21	86
Fleming	35	71	44	70	Owsley	17	29	27	48
Floyd	107	64	129	64	Pendleton	42	60	34	56
Franklin	66	61	51	61	Perry	222	69	240	70
Fulton	8	75	7	71	Pike	116	68	155	66
Gallatin	18	78	30	80	Powell	44	73	50	70
Garrard	27	56	40	70	Pulaski	112	63	129	67
Grant	43	70	65	75	Robertson	0	*	0	*
Graves	24	38	31	42	Rockcastle	75	69	88	74
Grayson	78	68	62	74	Rowan	30	50	51	69
Green	34	82	37	78	Russell	15	80	15	53
Greenup	28	68	59	64	Scott	63	54	93	56
Hancock	0	*	6	33	Shelby	34	71	46	67
Hardin	101	50	108	51	Simpson	11	73	19	74
Harlan	79	77	91	69	Spencer	34	53	28	46
Harrison	19	79	28	75	Taylor	43	63	51	63
Hart	28	46	37	70	Todd	14	50	11	45
Henderson	39	56	37	30	Trigg	21	76	20	80
Henry	32	56	29	62	Trimble	18	44	16	38
Hickman	1	0	4	0	Union	10	40	10	90
Hopkins	43	60	54	61	Warren	123	80	153	73
Jackson	47	51	45	58	Washington	11	73	28	75
Jefferson	2,150	65	2,396	63	Wayne	45	62	69	54
Jessamine	47	53	90	66	Webster	10	70	15	87
Johnson	51	69	53	75	Whitley	153	71	161	66
Kenton	216	57	298	60	Wolfe	27	89	46	63
Knott	104	54	137	64	Woodford	28	79	30	73

* County had no children receiving Kinship Care.