

Centering Lived  
Experience for Better  
Outcomes for Children:  
The Case for Kinship  
Care



# Panelists

Hope Cooper, True North  
Group

Allison Gilbreath, Voices for  
Virginia's Children

Beth Jordan, Child Trends

# Four cornerstone ideas

1. Kinship care is an incredible resource for children, and uniquely valuable for young children
2. There are a lot of children in kinship care!
3. Policies that support kinship caregivers are connected to early childhood policies
4. There is exciting momentum around expanding supports for kinship caregivers across the country

# What do we mean by kinship care?

**“Families in which ‘kin’ (such as grandparents, other adult family members, such as great-grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, siblings, other family members) or family friends who have a close emotional relationship with the child (such as godparents, ‘aunties,’ ‘uncles,’ and others who are not related by blood/birth, marriage or adoption, and are sometimes known as ‘fictive kin’) are raising children who have no parents in the home. These families can be either inside or outside the child welfare system.”**

Source: Generations United – [State of Grandfamilies Report 2021](#)

STATE OF GRANDFAMILIES **2021**

REINFORCING A STRONG FOUNDATION:  
EQUITABLE SUPPORTS FOR BASIC  
NEEDS OF GRANDFAMILIES



# Idea 1: Kinship care is an incredible resource for children, and uniquely valuable for young children

“I became a kinship caregiver after finding out my brother had a little girl—Nadia—in foster care, which spurred me into action. **Nadia had been in four foster homes after being removed from her mother’s care. Even though we’d never met before, I knew taking Nadia in and caring for her was something I had to do....** I became Nadia’s guardian in September 2019, when she was 6 years old. Caring for Nadia has changed me. It’s transformed me into really having a heart for children from various walks of life. It’s made me curious about a child’s potential. What is waiting in this child that could possibly bloom into something wonderful?”

[Source: Genia Newkirk's Story, Featured in the Children’s Bureau Express](#)

# Idea 1: Kinship care is an incredible resource for children, and uniquely valuable for young children



Less likely  
to enter  
foster care



More likely  
to live with  
or be  
connected  
to siblings



Preservation  
of cultural  
identity and  
community  
connections



Stronger  
feelings of  
belonging



Better  
health and  
educational  
outcomes

Source: [Fact Sheet: Children Thrive in Grandfamilies \(Generations United\)](#)



# Over 2.5 million children

are living in households that are headed by  
grandparents, adult family members, or close family  
friends with no parent in the home

# Idea 2: There are a lot of children in kinship care, and many more that could benefit from it

## Have experienced maltreatment

- Over **1/3** of children who the state determines have experience maltreatment are between 0 – 3.
- Over **half** of all children with a maltreatment determination are under the age of 8.

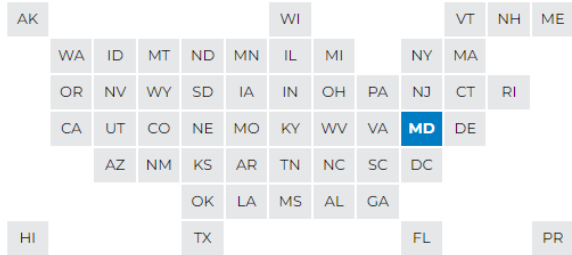
## Foster care placement

- Over **40%** of children in foster care are under the age of 6.
- Nearly **50%** of all children in relative foster care are under the age of 6.



# Check out your state-level data

## Select a state



## Jump to a profile

- Child maltreatment
- Foster care
- Kinship caregiving**
- Permanency
- Older youth in care

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See values for that year. For bumpup graphs (i.e., dots on the right side of horizontal lines), hovering over the dot reveals the number of children associated with the percentage. "NA" appearing indicates that data was not available.

## Kinship Caregiving Maryland

Relatives and other kin are invaluable sources of support and connection for children. Kinship caregiving exists for

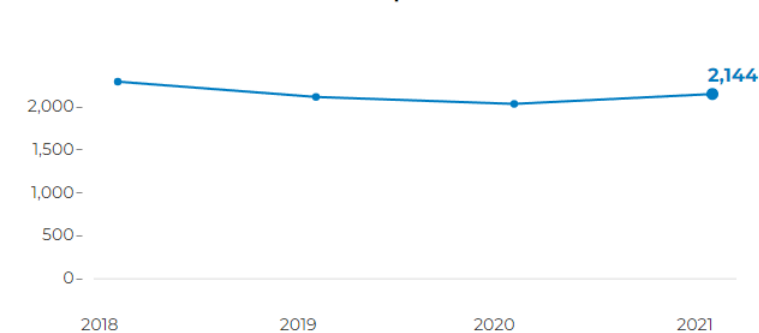
State-level Data for Understanding Child Welfare in the United States (Child Trends)

<https://www.childtrends.org/publications/state-level-data-for-understanding-child-welfare-in-the-united-states>

## Current foster care placement with relatives

### Number and percentage of children in foster care placed with relatives

Number of children in foster care placed with relatives<sup>1</sup>

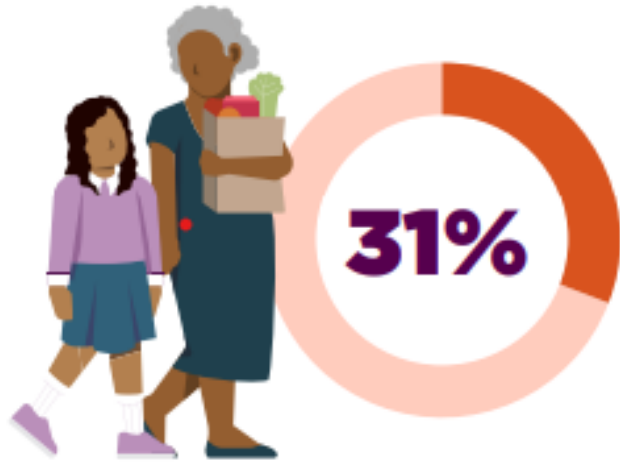


Percent of children in foster care placed with relatives

	Maryland	U.S.
2018	37%	30%
2019	37%	30%
2020	40%	31%
2021	40%	32%

### Other information on children placed with relatives

# Idea 3: Policies that support kinship caregivers are connected to early childhood policies



## Poverty

31% of grandchildren being raised by their grandparents in a grandparent-headed household without parents in the home are living under the poverty level, compared to 16% of all children nationwide.

Source: <https://www.gu.org/app/uploads/2022/11/2022-Grandfamilies-Report-FINAL-R1-WEB.pdf>

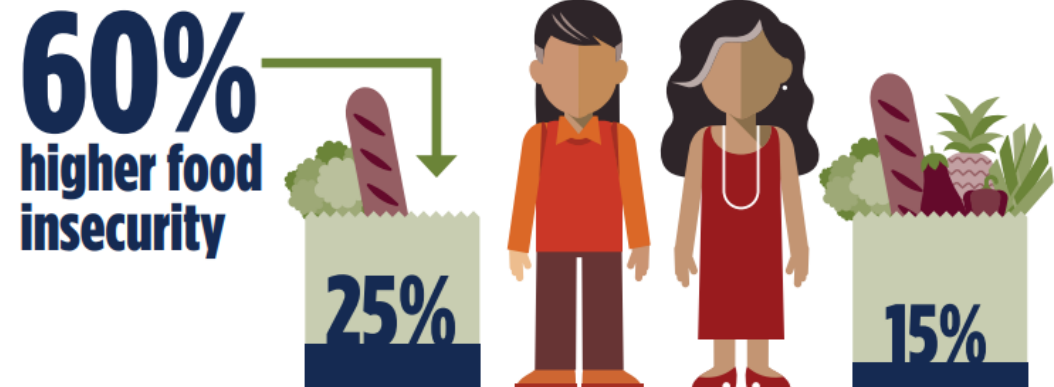
Source: [https://www.gu.org/app/uploads/2022/10/SOGF-2022-Executive-Summary-Final-10\\_27.pdf](https://www.gu.org/app/uploads/2022/10/SOGF-2022-Executive-Summary-Final-10_27.pdf)

## Child Care

“The cost of day care just wiped me out.” That year, child care for [the child in her care] cost \$15,800. “A lot of other things went unpaid.”

- Joanne Clough, GRAND Voices Network Member

The rate of food insecurity for grandparent-headed households (25%) is more than **60 percent higher** than the rate for all households with children (15%).



# Idea 4. There is momentum around supporting for kinship caregivers across the country

Just a few examples:

- ✓ New federal dollars for kinship navigator services and other prevention services in the Family First Prevention Services Act. 46 states, DC, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and 4 Tribes have submitted plans
- ✓ 41 states, DC, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and 11 Tribes have Guardianship Assistance Programs, a path to supported permanency for children who were in foster care
- ✓ The number of states that have waivers in place to help relatives become licensed foster parents has increased dramatically since 2007 – and we anticipate even more opportunities for smoother licensing with new federal rule

# Policy leadership from caregivers and youth

National example – Generations United's [GRAND Voices](#)

Increasing state investment in incorporating perspectives of youth, kinship caregivers, and parents:

- New policy data found that most states that responded to the survey have a mechanism to incorporate the perspectives of youth, kin caregivers, and parents into decision making for policies that impact them.
- Examples include through interviews, working groups, trainings, surveys, and advisory boards.







# VIRGINIA'S YOUTH IN ACTION!











Voices  
for Virginia's  
Children  
Foster &  
Kinship Care  
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