Grandparent Satellite Conference

The satellite videoconference, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Legal and Policy Issues, took place on February 27, 2001. It was a resounding success again, with over 250 sites participating in 44 States and one site in Canada. If you agency sponsored a site or you participated in the conference, don’t forget to complete the evaluations. The participants’ evaluations that have already come in indicate what they have learned and what they plan to do. The site facilitator evaluations provide feedback to help improve future satellite broadcasts.

To enter the data, go to http://www.uwex.edu/grg/ and click on “Program Evaluation”. Then go to the “Participant” or “Site Facilitator” section. When prompted, type: grg in “user name” location, legal in “password” location.

Once you have entered the participant data, you will have a site-specific impact report available to you. In addition, your data will also be included in the impact report from your state.

Whether you were a sponsor or not, there is a lot of useful information you can get from the web site.

Contributions of site facilitators to the success of the videoconference is appreciated.

Contact Mary Brintnall-Peterson at (608) 262-8083 or Dena Targ at (765) 494-2937 for additional information. The conference was sponsored by Cooperative Extension Services.

A copy of the Conference video from 1999 is available in the Foundation library. It will soon be packaged into training modules by AARP, and we will let you know about its availability.

Oscar for Grandparents!

The Oscar-winning documentary, BIG MAMA, tells the story of a grandmother’s love for her grandson, and the struggle that 89 year old Viola Dees endures trying to raise him in South Central Los Angeles. This moving story captured the attention of Hollywood and is likely to make the issue of grandparents raising grandchildren better known to the public. BIG MAMA is produced and directed by Tracy Seretean and can be viewed on CINEMAX [Cable TV] as follows: Wednesday, May 30th from 7:30 to 8:15 p.m. Eastern and Pacific Time and Saturday, June 30th at 8:15 a.m. Eastern and Pacific Time.

New Staff Member

Melinda Perez-Porter, an attorney and graduate of New York Law School, is joining the Brookdale Foundation staff as Program Associate. Melinda comes to us from the Samuel Sadin Institute on Law at the Brookdale Center on Aging of Hunter College, where she was the Director of the Law Institute’s Grandparent Caregiver Law Center. She has written
several articles on the legal and financial issues of grandparent caregivers as well as a series of booklets for New York State grandparents on the issues they confront as primary caregivers.

**Attached Articles**

Two articles from *The Source*, a newsletter of the National Abandoned Infants Assistance Resource Center [Vol. 10, No. 2] are reprinted with permission. They provide useful information in planning for the transition of a child being cared for by a terminally ill parent to a relative caregiver. [ATTACHED]

**Housing**

Recently there have been requests for information on housing for grandparents raising grandchildren [particularly from a recent conference call]. Materials that can help with replication of the program in Boston, GrandFamilies House, is available. Contact Stephanie Chacker, Director of Housing Services at Boston Area Concerns – Young and Old United: (617) 266-2257.

**Bar Associations**

The American Bar Association is holding its annual conference in Chicago on August 3rd, and will offer a “showcase program” on grandparents’ rights and grandparents raising grandchildren. Three members of the RAPP network are presenters: Ethel Dunn, Grandparents United for Children’s Rights, Madison, WI; Barbara Schwartz, Illinois Department on Aging; and Joanne Thomas, Central Illinois Agency on Aging, Peoria, IL.

A special edition of the journal of the New York State Bar Association dedicated to the same issues is noted below (see resource section). These are two indications that bar associations around the country are paying more attention to the issue of grandparents’ rights and grandparents raising grandchildren. If you have not been in touch with your state or local bar association, consider doing so.

**TANF Report**

The Effect of State TANF Choices on Grandparent-Headed Households, by Faith Mullen and Monique Einhorn, published by the Public Policy Institute of AARP is now available. This report covers all states and provides critical information on issues ranging from benefit amounts and time limits, to work requirements and child support enforcement. This very useful report is offered free of charge for up to 5 copies. To order, e-mail Vanessa Woodard-Kinard at vwoodard@aarp.org. If you need additional copies for a conference or seminar, a request may be made in writing.

A summary of the findings is attached and will give you a good idea of the publication’s contents.

One of the issues highlighted is the requirement - in some states - that the relative caregiver disclose the name and location of the biological parent(s) so that the state can pursue them for child support. A caregiver can be denied service if (s)he does not provide the information. There is an exemption noted in the attached flyer that is distributed to caregivers by the Southwest Washington Area Agency on Aging – a grandparent has the right to refuse to disclose this information if there is a risk or fear of abuse or retribution.

**State Laws and Regulations**

“State Laws and Regulations Affecting Grandparent- and other Relative-Headed Families”
published by Generations United and AARP provides a comparison of all 50 states across 8 dimensions that are important to relative caregivers. These are: Financial and Support Services [guardianship subsidy, respite care, and other services]; Consent Legislation [medical consent for care of children, and educational consent]; and Legal Relationships [de facto custodian laws, standby guardianship, and open adoption]. An article by Ana Beltran that describes the 8 dimensions is attached.

New Resources

The following resources can be requested from the RAPP library, or acquired from the sources indicated.

Standby Guardian Laws: A Guide for Legislators, Lawyers, and Child Welfare Professionals, by J. Larson. Published in 2000 and available from the ABA Center for Children and the Law, 740 15th Street, N.W., 95th Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 662-1746, for $10. This in-depth guide describes, compares, and analyzes the standby guardian laws in 18 states. It is also useful for those states that do not have standby guardian laws and may be considering them. This publication and two others [a guide and training curriculum for social workers] can also be downloaded free of charge from the agency’s web site: www.abanet.org/child. The site is worth a visit since it has other resource material on kinship care.

How to Conduct a Workshop for the Bereaved: A Leader’s Manual, by R. Temes, provides practicing clinicians with easy-to-follow, adaptable and explicit guidelines on conducting workshops for the bereaved. Several interventions and techniques that are helpful in supporting diverse individuals and groups are presented. Published in 1999 by Learning Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 1338, Dept. DC95, Holmes Beach, FL 34218-1338; (800) 222-1525 [cost: $6.95].

Grandparents as Carers of Children with Disabilities: Facing the Challenges, is a special edition of the Journal of Gerontological Social Work, Vol. 33, No. 3, edited by Philip McCallion and Matthew Janicki. This is the first comprehensive consideration of the unique needs and experiences of grandparents caring for children with developmental disabilities. It includes a series of articles that cover a wide range of issues from the mental and physical health of the caregivers to service provision for the children. It can be ordered from Haworth Press by calling (800) HAWORTH [price is $24.95].

Elder Law Attorney, Summer 2000: Vol. 10, No. 3, published by the New York Bar Association, focuses on grandparents raising grandchildren and grandparents’ rights. A series of seven articles covers extensive material. It is available by calling the NYS Bar Association at (518) 463-3200.

Innovative Practices Report to the Center for Mental Health Services: Behavioral Health Models for Relative Caregivers and the Children they Raise, edited by Maggie Troope and published by Generations United [GU]. This is an excellent compilation of best practices material provided by four of the RAPP Network Mental Health Programs funded by GU. If you are planning to develop mental wellness services for relative-headed households, this publication is recommended. It can be downloaded [no cost] from the GU website: www.gu.org.

Intergenerational Training

Generations Together, at the University of Pittsburgh, is holding its 9th International Intergenerational Training Institute from July 11-13, 2001. The Institute features three days of intensive, interactive training to help participants develop the skills needed for success in the intergenerational field. Continuing education credits are offered and an accredited certificate program. For more information or to register visit: www.lwsonline.com, or call Jenny at: (800) 777-1720, ext 102.

Title III-E National Family Caregiver Support Program

There are a number of approaches to implementing the National Family Caregiver Support Program [Title III-E of the Older Americans Act] in different states. The funds authorized [a maximum of $12.5 million a year currently] will be handled by the State Offices for
Aging and the Area Agencies on Aging [AAA]. However, many AAA’s contract out their services and there are opportunities for non-aging groups that partner with aging organizations to be beneficiaries of the new funding. The planning processes and guidelines for the states of Illinois and Michigan few states are discussed below.

**Illinois**
The Illinois Department on Aging has taken an aggressive approach in its efforts to implement provisions of the newly authorized National Family Caregiver Support Program under Title III, Part E of the Older Americans Act as amended in 2000. Director Margo E. Screiber has made the caregiving initiative a priority in the development of the Department’s two-year plan. A successful two-day planning meeting with Area Agencies on Aging and twenty provider agencies was held in January to assess needs and gain input regarding gaps in service. Caregiver organizations have been asked to rank allowable support services listed in the Act, provide recommendations regarding the definition of “supplemental services” and identify how services and the needs of caregivers should be prioritized.

Each Area Agency will develop a “Caregiver Implementation Plan” which will be reviewed by the Department. Public hearings will be held within each service area to assist in the development of the caregiving plan, illustrate how they will implement the process, identify gaps in services, and determine what services are available in their areas. Support group members, caregivers and organizations have been encouraged to attend these hearings and share their needs with regard to the implementation of the initiative. Funding will be awarded based upon the traditional, weighted funding formula.

The Department has established an internal Steering Committee responsible for developing a plan for activities over the next two years to include the implementation of the OAA – Family Caregiver Support Program, along with home and community-based services under the Community Care Program; intergenerational initiatives; public information and training. The Department will promote Family Caregiving in all program areas and concentrate on developing a visible, identifiable network so caregivers will know where to turn when they need help. For further information, call the Illinois Department on Aging at (217) 785-3356.

**Michigan**
Grandparents and other older relative caregivers are eligible for service provided they are 60 years of age and older, and caring – either as a guardian or informally – for a child under 18 years of age. Area Agencies on Aging must budget an amount not less than $25,000 or 5% [but no more than 10%] of the Title III-E allocation to support grandparent and other older caregivers. In addition, each Area Agency on Aging must develop one Caregiver Resource Center as part of its plan. Additional statewide projects will be developed with Title III-E administrative funds at the state level. For additional information contact Bonnie Graham, RAPP State Coordinator for the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging, at (517)-373-9360.

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FUNDING ALERT—FUNDING ALERT—FUNDING ALERT

The Brookdale Foundation has initiated the thirteenth round of its Respite seed grant funding initiative.

This funding is available for developing or expanding social model, dementia specific respite programs for older adults.

The RFP application and guidelines are available for downloading from the Foundation’s web site at http://www.ewol.com/Brookdale