

# Family Support

## Grandparents Raising Grandchildren



Grandparents raising and parenting children come in all shapes, sizes, colors, and ages. They may be young grandparents in their 40's, retired grandparents living on Social Security, or anywhere in between. Whatever the differences, they all have one thing in common – their child rearing days are not over!

When grandparents become the full-time parent it may be due to various reasons - the death of a parent, a parent is away in the military or may be because a child was having problems with his/her social environment and needed a change. The parent may have issues with alcohol, drug abuse or addiction, be mentally ill, incarcerated or just incapable of caring for their child.

Many grandparents may have had no mental, emotional, or financial preparation when they begin raising their grandchildren. It can be overwhelming. Everything, from needing diapers and formula, an appropriate car seat for the toddler, furniture such as cribs or kid's bunk beds, to dealing with an ill child with health and medical concerns, may need to be immediately addressed.

Some grandparents are dealing with children who have come to them with severe mental health issues, autism or learning disabilities, while other grandparents are raising children with physical disabilities, needing the use of wheelchairs and medical supplies. Finding needed resources for the children, as well as for themselves, can be an urgent and exhausting challenge.

Whatever the situation, one thing is clear; their lives have changed with the addition of someone else's children. The change may bring happiness or sadness, but there is a change. And with that change, can comes stress. Understanding the stress and finding proper ways to deal with it is vital for their own emotional and physical health as well as for the health of the children

Family TIES of Massachusetts provides information, referral, and parent to parent support for families of children with special health needs or disability and their professional partners. We also provide information about Early Intervention (EI) and maintain a complete list of EI Programs in Massachusetts.

The information provided on the back page of this sheet is not a complete list of the resources that may be available. For information about community based programs, resources and local support groups, please call your Regional Coordinator or our toll-free line 800-905-TIES (8437).

We publish an annual *Directory of Resources for Families of Children and Youth with Special Needs*. The Directory is always listed as the first place to look for resources on our Topic Sheets!

Call us if you would like a copy of the directory mailed to you. A pdf version of the directory is available to download on our website [www.massfamilyties.org](http://www.massfamilyties.org). You can also find the phone number for the Family TIES Regional Coordinator for your area on our website.



## Information and Resources

### Family TIES Resource Directory:

Under *Family Support, I & R*

### Massachusetts State Agency Program:

- Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren  
<http://www.massgrg.com>
- Support Group List  
<http://www.massgrg.com/web/docs/2018SupportGroupList.pdf>
- Resource Guide  
[http://massgrg.com/assets/grandparents\\_raising\\_grandchildren-2.pdf](http://massgrg.com/assets/grandparents_raising_grandchildren-2.pdf)
- You're Not Alone article  
[http://www.massgrg.com/assets/One\\_Pager\\_YOU\\_ARE\\_NOT\\_ALONE.pdf](http://www.massgrg.com/assets/One_Pager_YOU_ARE_NOT_ALONE.pdf)

### National:

- Grandfamilies State Law and Policy Center  
<http://www.grandfamilies.org/>
- Resources  
<http://www.grandfamilies.org/Resources>
- State Fact Sheets  
<http://www.grandfamilies.org/State-Fact-Sheets>
- AARP Family Caregiving  
<https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/>