



# Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

What Providers Need to Know

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# National Statistics on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

2010-2014 American Community Survey 5 year estimate S1002

- 7 million grandparents living with own grandchildren under age of 18.
- 2.7million (39%) are responsible for grandchildren's basic needs.
- 888,300 (33%) of the 2.7 million have no parent present in the household





# Massachusetts' Statistics on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

2010-2014 American Community Survey 5 year estimate S1002

- 120,571 grandparents are living with own grandchildren under age of 18
- 34,877 (29%) are responsible for their grandchildren's basic needs
- 10,393 (29.8%) grandparents living with grandchildren with no parents present.

# Increase in Massachusetts Grandparents Raising Grandchildren since 2000

**2000**

- Grandparents living with Grandchildren = 98,325
- Responsible for grandchildren = 27,924
- No parents present = 8,852

**2014**

- Grandparents living with grandchildren = 120,571 **(+22.6%)**
- Responsible for grandchildren = 34,877 **(+24.9%)**
- No parents present = 10,393 **(+17%)**



# Who are these Massachusetts Grandparents Raising Grandchildren?





# Massachusetts Grandparents Raising Grandchildren



- 69.9 % white    16.4 % Hispanic
- 14 % black or African –American
- 64.6 % female    35.4% male
- 67.9% married
- 61 % under the age of 60 years old
- 61.8 % in the work force
- 16.6% are below poverty level





Most common issues which cause grandparents to raise grandchildren:

- Substance Abuse
  - Mental Illness
- Homelessness/Poverty
  - Incarceration
- Military Deployment
  - Death of a parent







# The Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

- The Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren was established in 2008 by the Legislature.
- It consists of 15 volunteer Commissioners from across the Commonwealth who work to support, inform, and advocate for grandparents raising grandchildren.
- The Commission meets monthly and all meetings are open to the public.





# 2009 Listening Tour

## Four Major Areas of Focus:

- Information and Referral
- Support Groups
- Finances
- Legal Issues



### To contact

The Commission on the Status of  
Grandparents Raising Grandchildren:

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(617) 748-2454



- Created an up to date website [www.massgrg.com](http://www.massgrg.com)
- Created a 6 page “Tip Sheet Series” for grandparents and providers. Tip Sheet Series is available in English and Spanish
- An online Legal Resources Guide
- Re-Established the Statewide Resource Network: support group facilitators from across the state meet quarterly
- Purchased books for 50 support groups to create a “Lending Library”
- Sponsor the “Annual Conference for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren and Providers”
- Hired a Full-Time Director available for community outreach visits, consultation, and support



# Current Projects and Initiatives by the Commission







## 2016 Information Exchange and Listening Tour

The Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, in collaboration with the Office of the Attorney General, conducted a statewide Information Exchange and Listening Tour in 2016. The purpose was to not only provide grandparents and kinship caregivers with information about The Commission, the Attorney General's Office, and services and resources for their families, but also to engage in meaningful and solution-focused discussions about the correlation between the increase in substance-use and the increase in grandparents raising grandchildren in Massachusetts.



## The Impact of the Opioid Epidemic on Children and Families

Throughout the entire 2016 Information Exchange and Listening Tour, in all eight communities throughout the Commonwealth, grandparents and kinship caregivers expressed concern, frustration, and grief when sharing stories about how addiction, specifically, heroin addiction, has significantly impacted their children and grandchildren.

### Key Findings and Concerns:

- The lack of legal resources for kinship caregivers, particularly, legal representation for caregivers during guardianship/custody proceedings
- The lack of access to affordable and accessible child care for grandparents and kinship caregivers
- Discrepancy of services, financial assistance, and benefits for kinship families involved with DCF compared to families not involved with DCF
- Concerns about inconsistent practices within DCF and other systems
- The importance of support groups
- Concerns about the impact of trauma on children and families and lack of mental health services to address trauma.



# 2017 will be busy!

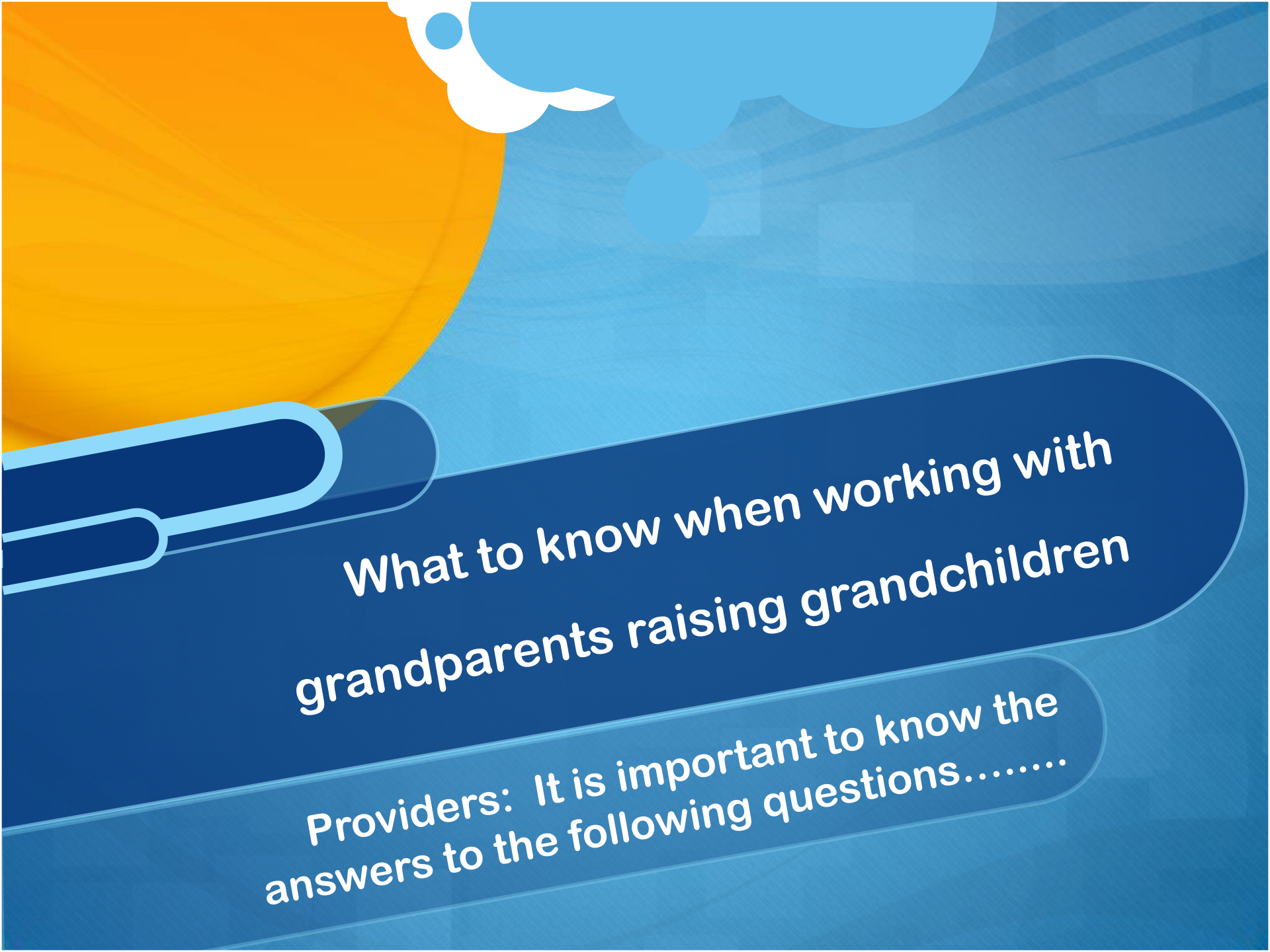
## Projects:

- ◆ Regional Workshops in Worcester, Lawrence, Brockton, Boston, Hyannis, and Northampton, *Spring 2017*
- ◆ Annual Conference for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren and Providers, *June 2017*
- ◆ Grand-Families Fun Day, *Fall 2017*

## Advocacy and Initiatives:

- ◆ Proposed Legislation has been filed in both the House and Senate to require courts to appoint attorneys for grandparents and kinship caregivers during custody hearings– *details coming soon*
- ◆ The Commission has engaged EEC in discussions to increase access to child care vouchers for grandparents and kinship caregivers – *details coming soon*





# What to know when working with grandparents raising grandchildren

Providers: It is important to know the  
answers to the following questions.....





# 1. Where does the family live?

Depending on the nature of the call or meeting, it is important to know where the family lives in order to refer them to the most appropriate local resources to their community





## 2. Who has custody of the child and from which court?

This question may be, perhaps, the most important question to know the answer to when talking with a grandparent raising a grandchild.

If the grandparent has custody (guardianship or adoption) from Probate and Family Court, then the information you provide will lead them down one path.

If DCF is involved and the court case is through Juvenile Court, the information you provide will lead them down a totally different path.





# A Tale of Two Courts.....

Juvenile Court versus Probate and Family Court





# Services for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren





# Support Groups

For a listing of support groups for grandparents raising grandchildren in Massachusetts visit

[www.massgrg.com](http://www.massgrg.com)





# Financial Assistance

- ◆ If DCF is involved = foster care payments, clothing allowances, eligible for child care vouchers, access to the DCF Kids Fund, etc.
- ◆ If no DCF involvement = can apply for benefits through DTA, SSDI

For more information: [www.massgrg.com](http://www.massgrg.com)



# Legal Assistance

- ✧ Court service centers
- ✧ Lawyer of the the day at Probate and Family Court
  - ✧ Free Legal Aid for low-income families
  - ✧ Guardianship workshops
- ✧ Visit [www.massgrg.com](http://www.massgrg.com) “Legal Resources” Tip Sheet for more information





# Family Resource Centers

Massachusetts Family Resource Centers are a statewide network of community based providers offering multi-cultural parenting programs, support groups, parenting programs, early childhood services, information and referral services, and educations for families whose children are from birth to 18 years old.

[www.frcma.org](http://www.frcma.org)



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