

**Comments Submitted to the
Advisory Council to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
by the ARCH National Respite Coalition
The policy division of the ARCH National Respite Network
February 7, 2020**

Please tell us about any existing information, resources, programs and/or best practices that help grandparents, older relatives and/or kinship caregivers maintain their own physical and mental health, and emotional and financial wellbeing:

Undertaking the full-time responsibility for raising a grandchild or other relative causes major changes in a caregiver's life. This new role often includes physical, emotional, social, legal and financial challenges that were not present when they raised their own children. In addition, if the grandchild or other relative has a disability, they may have physical, emotional and behavioral conditions that require specialized care. Respite, a temporary break from the ongoing responsibilities of caregiving, can provide a much needed break from these responsibilities, giving time to balance caring for grandchildren with family caregiver self-care.

The ARCH fact sheet on the Nine Steps to Respite Care for Grandfamilies is a useful resource to share with grandparents and other relatives in need of respite. The fact sheet explains what respite care is, what types of respite are available, and guides grandparents and other relatives to government and private community resources that could be especially helpful in meeting their special respite needs or helping them identify respite services, including Kinship Navigator Programs, the Brookdale Foundation's Relatives as Parents Program, and disability organizations such as Easterseals and The Arc.

To help pay for respite, Area Agencies on Aging that administer the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP), may help. Grandparents and relative caregivers age 55+ caring for children are eligible for respite and other family caregiver supports through the NFCSP. Currently, there is a 10% funding cap for AAAs to serve this population. This funding cap should be removed and is pending in the current bipartisan, bicameral bill to reauthorize the Older Americans Act. State Lifespan Respite Programs that administer voucher programs or support community and faith-based respite services can assist grandparent caregivers who are not receiving support elsewhere. Additional resources can be found in the fact sheet Nine Steps to Respite for Gandfamilies:

https://archrespite.org/images/Caregiver_Fact_Sheets/9-Steps_Grandfamilies_web.pdf

If public support for formal services is not readily available, or if formal services are not the preferred option, informal supports can provide respite opportunities. These may include activities for grandchildren at YMCAs/YWCAs, arts and museum programs, libraries, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, cooperative extension programs, faith-based organizations, and university sponsored internships. Specific examples can also be found here:

https://archrespite.org/images/Natural_Supports/STAR_Database.pdf

Please tell us about any existing information, resources, programs and/or best practices that meet the needs of Native American tribes:

Lifespan Respite Washington worked collaboratively with eight Tribes on an innovative opportunity through its Tribal Respite Grant to develop culturally relevant respite services for Tribal kinship caregivers. They implemented respite models in collaboration with newly funded Tribal Kinship Navigators and engaged Tribal partners and Navigators by providing information for outreach on new respite opportunities. With grant funding eight Tribes developed their own respite plan and initiated culturally relevant activities. Tribes agreed to meet specific policies regarding transportation, supervision of children, and short respite breaks for caregivers. For more information see [https://lifespanrespite.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Conference%20Calls/Jan%2017-2018_Getting_Creative_w_Partnerships/WA_STATE_DOH.TRIBAL_PPT_1-19-18_FINAL.pdf](https://lifespanrespite.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Conference%20Calls/Jan%202017-2018_Getting_Creative_w_Partnerships/WA_STATE_DOH.TRIBAL_PPT_1-19-18_FINAL.pdf) and listen to presentation here: https://lifespanrespite.wildapricot.org/resources/Audio%20Files/Teleconferences/WA_Diverse_Partners_Track1-ID126881676.mp3

What are the support needs that are not being met for children in the care of a grandparent and/or older relative?

Sometimes the tables are turned, and grandchildren are taking care of their grandparents when their health fails or in the face of an unexpected emergency. There is help at the Caregiving Youth Project run by the American Association of Caregiving Youth. Resources can be found at <https://www.aacy.org/>

Please share any additional recommendations you have for supporting grandparents and older relatives caring for children:

The Administration for Community Living and the Administration for Children and Families can encourage partnerships between Lifespan Respite Care Program grantees and Kinship Navigator Programs to provide and/or develop respite services for this population, and to guide grandparent caregivers to other respite resources and payment options at the state and community levels. Joint webinars, learning collaboratives or other training formats can be used for Lifespan Respite care grantees, and partners and Kinship Navigator programs to raise awareness about the respite resources provided by each entity and to develop strategies for collaboration.