

# Serving Grandfamilies in Libraries: A Comprehensive Guide for Library Professionals

Grandfamilies, households where grandparents are the primary caregivers for their grandchildren, are a growing population segment in the United States. In 2020, there were an estimated 2.6 million grandfamilies in the US, a 12% increase from 2000. This growth is due to a number of factors, including the opioid crisis, the rising cost of childcare, and the increasing number of elderly Americans.



## Serving Grandfamilies in Libraries: A Handbook and Programming Guide by Sarah Gough

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Libraries are uniquely positioned to serve grandfamilies. They are trusted community institutions that offer a wide range of services and resources, including:

- Books and other reading materials for all ages
- Computer and internet access

- Storytime and other children's programs
- Parenting and grandparenting classes
- Support groups

This guide will provide library professionals with the knowledge and tools needed to effectively serve grandfamilies. We will cover the following topics:

- Who are grandfamilies?
- The challenges faced by grandfamilies
- Library services and resources that can help grandfamilies
- Best practices for serving grandfamilies
- Case studies of successful library programs for grandfamilies

## **Who are Grandfamilies?**

Grandfamilies come in all shapes and sizes. They may be single grandparents raising their grandchildren, or they may be couples who are providing care for their grandchildren due to the death or incapacity of their parents. Grandfamilies may also include great-grandparents, aunts, uncles, or other relatives who are caring for children.

Grandfamilies are often facing a number of challenges, including:

- **Financial difficulties:** Grandparents who are raising their grandchildren may have limited income and resources. They may also be facing unexpected expenses, such as childcare or medical costs.

- **Health concerns:** Grandparents who are raising their grandchildren may be older and have their own health concerns. They may also be caring for grandchildren with special needs.
- **Emotional stress:** Grandparents who are raising their grandchildren may be experiencing a variety of emotions, including grief, loss, anger, and guilt. They may also be feeling isolated and alone.
- **Lack of support:** Grandparents who are raising their grandchildren may not have the support of family and friends. They may also be facing discrimination or stigma.

## **Library Services and Resources That Can Help Grandfamilies**

Libraries can offer a variety of services and resources that can help grandfamilies, including:

- **Books and other reading materials:** Libraries can provide grandfamilies with books and other reading materials on topics such as grandparenting, caregiving, and children's development. They can also provide materials in different languages and formats, such as large print, audiobooks, and e-books.
- **Computer and internet access:** Libraries can provide grandfamilies with computer and internet access, which can be helpful for researching information, finding support, and connecting with other grandparents.
- **Storytime and other children's programs:** Libraries can offer storytime and other children's programs that can provide grandfamilies with opportunities to bond with their grandchildren and meet other families.

- **Parenting and grandparenting classes:** Libraries can offer parenting and grandparenting classes that can help grandfamilies learn about child development, parenting skills, and grandparenting strategies.
- **Support groups:** Libraries can offer support groups for grandfamilies that can provide them with opportunities to connect with other grandparents, share experiences, and learn from each other.

## **Best Practices for Serving Grandfamilies**

When serving grandfamilies, it is important to:

- **Be welcoming and inclusive:** Grandfamilies should feel welcome and included in the library. This means providing a variety of services and resources that meet their needs, and creating a welcoming atmosphere where they feel comfortable asking for help.
- **Be respectful of their experiences:** Grandfamilies have unique experiences and perspectives. It is important to be respectful of their experiences and not make assumptions about what they are going through.
- **Be sensitive to their needs:** Grandfamilies may have different needs than other library patrons. It is important to be sensitive to their needs and provide them with the support they need.
- **Collaborate with other community organizations:** Libraries can collaborate with other community organizations to provide grandfamilies with the resources they need. This may include partnerships with schools, social service agencies, and healthcare providers.

- **Evaluate and adapt services:** It is important to evaluate library services for grandfamilies and make adjustments as needed. This will ensure that the library is meeting the needs of this growing population.

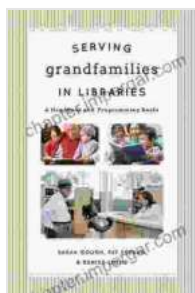
## **Case Studies of Successful Library Programs for Grandfamilies**

There are a number of libraries across the country that have developed successful programs for grandfamilies. These programs have helped grandfamilies to connect with their grandchildren, learn about child development, and find support from other grandparents.

Here are a few examples of successful library programs for grandfamilies:

- **The Grandfamilies Program at the Chicago Public Library:** This program provides grandfamilies with a variety of services and resources, including storytime, parenting classes, and support groups. The program also offers a lending library of books and other materials on grandparenting and caregiving.
- **The Generation to Generation Program at the San Antonio Public Library:** This program brings together grandparents and grandchildren for intergenerational activities, such as storytelling, crafts, and gardening. The program also offers a support group for grandparents.
- **The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program at the Multnomah County Library in Oregon:** This program provides grandfamilies with a variety of services and resources, including parenting classes, support groups, and a lending library of books and other materials on grandparenting and caregiving. The program also offers a Grandparents Advisory Council that provides input on the program.

Libraries are uniquely positioned to serve grandfamilies. They can provide grandfamilies with the resources they need to succeed, and they can create a welcoming and supportive environment where grandfamilies feel comfortable asking for help. By following the best practices outlined in this guide, libraries can make a real difference in the lives of grandfamilies.



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