

# Parenting your Grandchild

## A practical guide to resources in Santa Barbara County

While it is not part of their plans, many grandparents are taking on the role of primary caregiver for their grandchildren. The reasons that they take on this new role vary from family to family: death of one or both parents, unstable family situation (due to divorce, drugs, or finances), incarceration, military deployment or abandonment. Whatever the circumstances, many grandparents need assistance adjusting to their new role. The following guide and resources are provided to make this transition as successful as possible.



### Defining The Relationship

The following terms describe some of the typical caregiving relationships grandparents have with their grandchildren. These terms are used by service providers to distinguish between the different types of caregiving relationships.

**Informal Day Care Provider**– Provides unpaid caregiving for minors. Grandparents providing this level of care for their grandchildren may do so occasionally or regularly (weekly or daily).

**Primary Caregiver**- The person who is responsible for providing or coordinating the care for a minor. If the biological parent is actively involved, they are generally considered the primary caregiver. In situations where the parent is absent, the following describes other options for fulfilling this role. Most of the

information in this guide is directed towards primary caregivers.

**Kinship Caregiver** is a primary caregiver who provides full-time care, nurturing, and protection of children and is either a blood relative, member of their tribe or clan, or other adult who have a family relationship to a child.

**Grandparent Caregiver** is a primary caregiver who is over the age of 55 and

- lives with the child; AND
- is the primary caregiver of the child because the biological or adoptive parents are unable or unwilling to serve as the primary caregiver of the child; AND
- has a legal relationship to the child, such as legal custody or guardianship, or is raising the child informally.

### Legal Designations for Caregivers

**Caregiver's Authorization Affidavit**- Is sufficient to authorize an adult (18 or older) to enroll a minor in school and authorize school – related medical care; it can be adapted to permit any other medical care. The caregiver's authorization affidavit does not affect the rights of the minor's parents or legal guardian regarding the care, custody and control of the minor, and does not mean the caregiver has legal custody of the minor.

**Foster Care** is the placement of a child, by a legal authority, in the temporary, primary care of a family other than its own as the result of problems or challenges that are taking place within the birth family, or while critical elements of an adoption are being completed.

**Guardianship-** Is the legal relationship created when a person is named in a will or assigned by the court as the primary caregiver of minor children. This means that a guardian has the “care, custody and control of” the child and responsibility for the minor’s education. This includes providing meals, clothing, education and living facilities for the child.

A legal guardian has an ongoing responsibility to update the court on the child’s wellbeing and residence until the child is 18.

**Adoption-**Is the termination of parental rights of the parents and the creation of a new parent-child relationship between the child and another individual (s). After an adoption the adoptive parents and the adopted child sustain towards each other the legal relationship of parent and child and have all the rights and are subject to all the duties of that relationship.

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## Financial Supports

Becoming the caregiver for a grandchild may mean unexpected and/or unmet expenses. Especially for retired persons who are on a fixed income, increased expenses for food, clothing, and school supplies can be overwhelming. There are public benefits that can provide assistance for households who find themselves in financial need.

### Cash Assistance

**CalWORKS-** Kinship caregivers can apply for CalWORKS benefits in one of two ways: for a “child-only grant” or by adding the child as part of a grant covering the entire household. Most kinship caregivers apply for CalWORKS “child-only grants.” With a child-only grant, only the child’s income is counted for the purposes of determining his or her eligibility for cash benefits. Since the benefit is intended only for the child, a relative kinship caregiver does not have to share her income information or comply with welfare program work requirements. More importantly, there is no time limit on the receipt of a child-only grant. Eligible children can continue to receive monthly assistance until they reach the age of 18—or 19, if they are full-time students.

For more information on CalWORKS or to apply contact:

#### **Santa Barbara County Dept. of Social Services**

Lompoc      Santa Barbara  
737-7080    681-4401

Santa Maria  
346-7135

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## **Survivor Benefits or Social Security**

**Disability (Social Security)-** This benefit paid through Social Security to surviving children under the age of 18. Eligibility and payment is based on the parents Social Security Contributions.

For more information on Social Security Benefits or to apply you can contact:

### **Social Security Administration Office**

Santa Barbara      Santa Maria  
866-695-6285      866-331-2316

National  
800-772-1213 (Live 7AM-7PM)

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## **Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment Program (Kin-GAP)**

The Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment (Kin-GAP) program may be available to those children exiting the juvenile court dependency system or to probation youth exiting the delinquency system to live with a related guardian.

The intent of the program is to provide an option for dependent and delinquent children to leave the juvenile court system to live with a relative legal guardian. Kin-GAP provides a subsidy to the family that is equal to 100% of the basic foster care rate, based upon age

To find out if you may qualify for this you need to speak with the social worker assigned to the child by the courts.

### **For information on eligibility contact:**

Funding Eligibility Unit  
Foster Care Audits and Rates Branch  
744 P Street, MS 20-38  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 324-4873  
<http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/cfsweb/pg1354.htm>

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## **Food Assistance**

It may seem at times that a grandchild's stomach is a bottomless pit. It may be difficult to meet the nutritional needs for a child without some financial assistance. The following programs may help to extend a family's food budget.

**CalFresh** Also known as Food stamps. Food stamps are used like cash or electronic "debit" cards at most grocery stores. Generally, they can be used to buy food items that are prepared and eaten at home as well as seeds and plants to grow food. Kinship caregivers do not need legal custody or guardianship to apply for food stamps on behalf of the children they are raising.

**Women, Infants and Children (WIC)-** This program can help eligible kinship caregivers meet the special nutritional needs of their young grandchildren. WIC provides free food and formula to eligible low income children up to age five. The grandchildren must have certain types of health conditions, like anemia or growth problems, or another condition that requires them to eat more nutritious food. Children must get a health screening when they apply to see if their condition qualifies.

For more information on CalFresh or WIC or to apply you can contact:

### **Santa Barbara County Dept. of Social Services**

Lompoc      Santa Barbara  
737-7080      681-4401

Santa Maria  
346-7135

**Brown Bag Supplemental Food-** This program is free and distributes groceries to low income seniors 60 and over twice monthly at sites in the community

For more information on the Brown Bag food program or to apply you can contact:

**Food Bank of Santa Barbara County**  
967-7863 x102

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## Health Insurance

**Medi-Cal-** Medi-Cal is a state and federally funded health coverage program that includes coverage for infants less than one year of age with family incomes up to 200% of the federal income guidelines, children between the ages of one and nineteen with family incomes up to 133%. In some situations Medi-Cal eligibility is based on the child's income independent of the primary caregiver.

For more information on the Medi-Cal program or to apply you can contact:

### Santa Barbara County Dept. of Social Services

Lompoc Santa Barbara  
737-7080 681-4401

Santa Maria  
346-7135

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**Covered California™-** is an easy-to-use marketplace implementing the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in California. Families with incomes between 138% and 400% of the Federal Poverty Level may be eligible for premium assistance/ advanced tax credits to help them find affordable health insurance.

**www.coveredca.com**  
**800-300-1506**

## Child Care Assistance



Raising a child is a 24 hour a day job. There are times when grandparents cannot be available to provide that care. Finding affordable and appropriate child care can be difficult. The following resources are available to help.

### Child Care Referrals

These organizations maintain an up-to-date listing of licensed child care providers. Referrals are free and available to all parents. Referral Counselors can help you decide what type of care is best for your child and give you information about what to look for and what questions to ask when visiting a potential child care provider.

**Referrals are not to be confused with recommendations.**

For resources on licensed child care providers contact the following referral providers:

### Santa Barbara Family Care Center Resource Center

Santa Maria  
925-1989

Santa Barbara  
962-8988



### **TrustLine:**

The TrustLine Registry is a database of nannies and babysitters that have cleared criminal background checks. TrustLine can be used to find a registered caregiver, see if a caregiver is already registered with TrustLine or have a caregiver screened.

**1.800.822.8490**

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

### **Subsidized Child Care**

#### **Alternative Payment Program**

The Alternative Payment Program is a subsidized child care program that serves:

- low-income families who are employed, seeking employment, or participating in a job training or education program.
- children who are "subjected to" or "at risk of" abuse, neglect, or exploitation and have a referral from a legally qualified professional from a medical or social services agency, or an emergency shelter may also be eligible.
- parents who are incapacitated and families that are homeless. Child Protective Services and "At Risk" families shall be served first.

The Centralized Eligibility List (CEL) Program is designed to be a central application point for all publicly subsidized child care programs.

#### **Santa Barbara Family Care Center Resource Center**

[www.sbfcc.org/](http://www.sbfcc.org/)  
Santa Maria  
(805)925-7030

Santa Barbara  
(805)898-3665  
Toll-Free 1-877-535-3665

### **Child Development/ Education**



Child development and education resources are critical to giving children the opportunity to succeed. Once children enter primary school, many of the services are directed through their school, and information about programs can be found by contacting the school counselor. The following information is focused on early child development resources available in your community:

#### **Low Income Pre School Programs**

**Head Start-** Created in 1965, Head Start is the most successful, longest-running, national school readiness program in the United States. It provides comprehensive education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families.

For information on Head Start sites contact:

#### **Community Action Commission**

[www.cacsb.org/](http://www.cacsb.org/)  
800-655-0617

**State Pre-Schools**– Are open to preschool children three to five years of age. They provide a three-hour per day, parent/child education program (expanded day programs offered in some locations). They are free to families whose gross monthly income does not exceed the income ceilings established by the California Department of Education. Proof of income and birth certificate are required to determine eligibility

The following is a list of sites in Santa Barbara County:

Lompoc

De Colores State Preschool  
Lompoc  
735-5636

Just for Kids State Preschool  
735-5653

La Honda State Preschool  
742-0433

Los Alamos

Los Alamos State Preschool  
344-1024

Santa Barbara

Las Flores State Preschool  
965-1446

Santa Maria

Bruce State Pre-School  
361-6995

Fairlawn State Pre-School  
361-7528

Miller State Pre-School  
361-7560

Rice State Pre-School  
361-7794

Ontiveros State Pre-School  
361-6818

## Disability Resources

Raising a child with a developmental disability or delay can be challenging. There are resources to help caregivers with training and additional programs for child development and care. The following resources may be helpful for families with a child with a disability.

**Case Management** –Is assistance in coordinating state and federal services for persons with developmental disabilities. Children who have been diagnosed with a developmental disability or need assessment to determine if they have a developmental disability can receive case management services from Tri Counties Regional Center.

### Tri- Counties Regional Center

Santa Barbara  
962-7881 or (800) 322-6994

Santa Maria  
922-4640 or (800) 266-9071

**In Home Care** - Children with profound care needs may require paid care services. In Home Supportive Services may be available to assist with the in home care of a child with a disability. The child must qualify for Medi-Cal. The In Home Supportive Services Program is operated by the county's Department of social services

For more information on the IHSS or to apply you can contact:

### In Home Supportive Services

Lompoc     Santa Barbara  
737-6020    681-4550

Santa Maria  
346-8303

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## Emotional Supports

### Support Groups and Caregiver Education

Raising children later in life can be a major shift in plans for many people and can result in challenging emotions. Many caregivers report high levels of stress, depression and frustration. The following services are available to help adjust and get on going emotional support.



### Kinship Care Programs

These programs provide a forum for families providing kinship care to secure training and practical support. They are also a place for families acting as foster parents to receive training in order to meet the requirements of the foster placement as well.

The following are Kinship Care programs available in the Santa Barbara County area.

#### **Santa Barbara City College**

Judy Osterage  
965-0581 xt 3433

#### **Allan Hancock College**

Foster & Kinship Care Program  
805-922-6966 x 3568

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### Support Groups

Support groups consist of people with similar needs or goals who have come together to share information, coping skills and offer each other emotional support. They can be a valuable emotional support network. Support groups help people to feel less isolated and alone. In addition it can be a resource for developing coping skills and communication skills.

The following are support group programs available in the Santa Barbara County area.

#### **Santa Barbara City College**

Judy Osterage  
965-0581 xt 3433

#### **Allan Hancock College**

Foster & Kinship Care Program  
Joe Pollon  
805-922-6966 x 3568

#### **Family Service Agency**

Lompoc                      Santa Barbara  
735-4376                      965-1001

Kincares  
Santa Barbara  
957-1116

#### **California Kinship Navigator-**

This program provides kinship caregivers state wide with free confidential and personalized phone support to enable them to be self sufficient , sustainable families and thriving community members. Callers can be matched with a peer support navigator to help them understand the challenges they may face.

**[www.edgewood.org/kssp](http://www.edgewood.org/kssp)**  
**800-546-0047**

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## Counseling

Many people experiencing difficulty adjusting to their new role or need a more private setting to share difficult feelings choose to get counseling. Counseling can provide a safe place to discuss difficult issues, find direction or get more comprehensive therapy.

The following is a list of resources available for counseling.

### **Center for Successful Aging Senior Peer Counseling**

Free counseling services provided by a trained, non professional counselor.  
898-8080

### **Community Counseling Center**

Santa Barbara  
962-3363

### **Jewish Family Services of Santa Barbara**

Santa Barbara and Santa Ynez  
957-1116

### **New Beginnings Counseling Center**

Santa Barbara  
963-7777

### **UCSB Hosford Clinic**

Santa Barbara  
893-8064

### **Valley Community Counseling**

Solvang  
688-2186 or 688-7779

### **Family Therapy Institute**

Los Olivos  
688-6549

### **Family Service Agency**

Lompoc                      Santa Barbara  
735-4376                      965-1001



## Legal Resources

### **Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)**

- CASA volunteers are appointed by judges to watch over and advocate for abused and neglected children. They stay with the child until the case is closed and the child is placed in a safe, permanent home.

Volunteers get to know the child and meet with the people who are important in that child's life: family members, teachers, medical professionals and others. Their research informs the decisions of the judge and ultimately helps the child to find a safe, permanent home.

### **CASA of Santa Barbara County**

118 E Figueroa St  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 845-8364

120 E Jones St  
Santa Maria, CA 93454  
(805) 739-9102



## Self Help Legal Resources

**Legal Information and Referral-** Attorneys at the Legal Aid Foundation are available to answer questions and give legal direction to Grandparent Caregivers through a grant from the Area Agency on Aging. This service can help the client frame the legal issue and get information to help them to make decisions regarding how to proceed. If it is necessary for them to have legal representation they can receive a referral to a competent attorney.

### Legal Aid Foundation

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

301 E. Canon Perdido  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
963-6754

301 S. Miller #121  
Santa Maria, CA 93454  
922-9909

604 E. Ocean Ave, Ste. A  
Lompoc, CA 93436  
736-6582

**Family Law Facilitator (FLF)**- is an attorney who can help people to represent themselves in limited family law matters. The FLF help with an existing case or in starting a case. They can help the petitioner and/or the respondent.

The FLF does not represent cases. The Facilitator can help people to select the proper legal forms and to complete them, serve them and get them filed with the clerk's office. If you need to go to court to present your case to a judge or commissioner, however, you will present your case alone.

There is no attorney-client relationship between you and the FLF. If the facilitator is subpoenaed to court, there is no attorney-client privilege that would protect your conversation and make it confidential.

To contact a Family Law Facilitator:

### Family Court Services

1100 Anacapa Street, Santa Barbara  
882-4660

201 South Miller St., Ste. 208, Santa Maria  
614-6442

**Legal Resource Center** is staffed by a California licensed attorney, and open to the public on a first-come, first-served basis. Assistance is offered in the completion of legal and court documents for various civil matters and infractions, and in properly presenting your case to the court. The following are LRC sites and hours:

### Santa Barbara County Superior Court

McMahon Law Library  
1100 Anacapa Street 2nd Floor  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-3303

*M* 10am-12pm & 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm  
*T, W, Th* 9 am - 12 pm & 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Santa Maria Law Library  
312 E. Cook Street Building C  
Santa Maria, CA 93456  
(805) 349-1289

*M* 9 am - 12 pm  
*T, W, Th* 9 am - 12 pm & 1 - 4 pm

115 Civic Center Plaza  
Lompoc, CA 93436-6967  
(805) 737-5454

*M & T* 10 am - 12 pm & 1 - 4:30 pm  
*W* 9 am - 12 pm & 1 - 4:30 pm

<http://www.sbcourts.org/srl/>

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Mimi Feliciano Hix  
Cuesta Community College

Adele Prior and Marta Nielsen  
Kinship Center

Yvonne Cudney  
Legal Aid Foundation of Santa Barbara County

Colleen Sinclair  
Allen Hancock College



**(800) 510-2020**

**Central Coast Commission For Senior Citizens**

**Senior Connection**

528 South Broadway

Santa Maria, CA 93454

800) 510-2020

(805) 928-2552

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

