

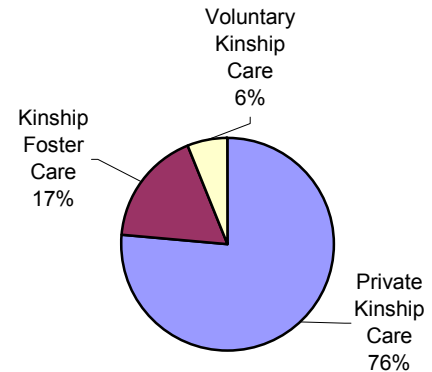
Children in Kinship Care

How Many?

2.3 million children lived in kinship care in 2002. This includes all children living with relatives without a parent present. There are three types of kinship care arrangements:

- *Private Kinship Care* (1,760,000 children). The family made this arrangement privately, without the involvement of a social service agency.
- *Kinship Foster Care* (400,000 children). Social services helped place the child with the relative and a court made the relative responsible for the child's care.
- *Voluntary Kinship Care* (140,000 children). Social services helped place the child with the relative, but the courts were not involved.

Children in Kinship Care by Type



(Percentages add up to 99 due to rounding)

Who Are They?

Most children in kinship care (59 percent or 1,360,000 children) live with grandparents. About a fifth (19 percent or 440,000 children) live with aunts and uncles. The remaining 22 percent live with other relatives, such as siblings or cousins.

The majority of children in kinship care are minorities. Forty-three percent are black non-Hispanic and 17 percent are Hispanic. Thirty-seven percent of children in kinship care are white non-Hispanic and 3 percent are of another non-Hispanic race.

About half (52 percent) of the children are teens or preteens. Thirty-two percent are aged 11 to 15 and 20 percent are 16 to 17 years old. 28 percent are 6 to 10 years old and 20 percent 5 years old and younger. Less than 2 percent of children in kinship care are infants under age 1.

Nearly half (46 percent) of children in kinship care live in the South. Twenty percent live in the Midwest, 16 percent in the Northeast, and 18 percent in the West.

How Are They Doing?

Children in kinship care often live in families experiencing hardships. More than half (54 percent) live in families with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Fifty-five percent live with a single caregiver. And 52 percent live with a caregiver who is over 50 years of age. About a quarter (24 percent) live with a caregiver without a high school degree.

Foster care payments, monitoring by a child welfare agency, and permanency planning to reunite children with their parents are provided to children who have been taken into the state custody. According to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), the federal system for collecting data from states on the number of children in foster care, only 131,000 children were in state custody and living with relatives in September 2001. The NSAF, however, reveals that more than half a million children living with kin have been involved with social services. These differences suggest many abused and neglected children are not taken into state custody and may not be receiving needed services.

Children in private kinship care are even further removed from the service system. Despite experiencing similar levels of hardship as children in other kin arrangements, they often do not receive needed services.