

Grandfamilies' Tip Sheet Series

For kinship communities & organizations



Kinship-Centered Research to Inform Practice

Sharing Data Stories to
Educate & Advocate

825 Grandparents
navigate the pandemic

Caregiver-Centered Approaches & Learnings

From GrOW's National Grandfamilies and COVID 19 Survey Wave 1 (600 caregivers surveyed in 2020) and Wave 2 (225 caregivers surveyed in 2021):

- Caregivers were essential partners throughout the GrOW data cycle (see below), including study design, data collection, and sharing of study findings with the broader kinship community
- GrOW learned from caregivers what the needs of their kinship families were in a rapidly changing social and environmental context, as well as their strategies for navigating pandemic-related challenges
- GrOW learned from caregivers how COVID 19 exacerbated existing racial, economic, educational, and age-related inequities experienced by their multi-generational kinship families
- Research and practice assumptions regarding formal and informal placement of kinship children and their relationship to child welfare need to be further unpacked to more accurately consider the dynamic, lived experience that kinship families have with child welfare
- Kinship caregivers relied on trusted sources of information and support in the pandemic context with multiple societal disruptions. This series of GrOW tip sheets aims to connect kinship communities with trusted, relevant information, based on GrOW's learnings from kinship caregivers

“Let the world know there are more families like ours... kinship families are not alone.”

— Kinship Caregiver

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GrOW Data Cycle



Recommendations for Kinship Caregiver-Centered Research During the Pandemic & Beyond

- Identify the purpose of your research — what you are seeking to learn and why — in partnership with kinship caregivers and advisory groups to help inform and shape the priority practice needs of kinship-serving organizations
- Co-design throughout your data cycle, in collaboration with kinship community stakeholders, including caregivers, service providers and advocacy organizations
- Consider culturally responsive, equitable research and evaluation approaches, as well as trauma-informed communications to support an inclusive research data cycle for kinship caregivers and other stakeholders
- Collaborate with your partnership networks for outreach and recruitment to kinship communities for study enrollment and for sharing of findings to inform practice
- Include both quantitative and qualitative methods for a nuanced data story
- Use a prevention lens when designing your program evaluations in order to accurately capture the changing relationship that kinship children may have to child welfare over time
- Explore what counts as well-being from the perspective of kinship families, and include strategies for coping and resilience, as well as needs
- Listen to the multi-generational needs and preferences of kinship caregivers and kinship youth for utilizing technology to stay connected to program supports and to engage in your research process. Make needed adjustments, along the way
- Consider creating multiple waves of a study to capture changes in the landscape and emergent issues as you learn more
- Diversify outlets for sharing of study results, such as conference roundtables, webinars, websites, research briefs (scholarworks.wmich.edu/grandfamilies/vol7/iss1/8/), state and local community meetings, and online interviews
- Tailor communication of findings for specific audiences with diverse interests and needs from the data findings, such as kinship navigators, congressional aides, caregiver advisory groups, and practitioners
- Include practice recommendations that translate research findings and kinship stakeholder input into relevant, actionable practice



The Grandfamilies Outcome Workgroup (GrOW) is a national collective comprised of multi-disciplinary stakeholders that work across systems of care in partnership with kinship families.

GrOW intentionally integrates the lived experiences of kinship caregivers in its evaluation methods, tools, and resources to support best practice in the field of kinship care. GrOW: Research to Inform Practice.

To learn more about GrOW, visit grandfamilieswork.org

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