

AN ACT concerning State government.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The Children and Family Services Act is amended by changing Section 34.11 as follows:

(20 ILCS 505/34.11)

Sec. 34.11. Lou Jones Grandparent Child Care Program
~~Grandparent child care program.~~

(a) The General Assembly finds and declares the following:

(1) An increasing number of children under the age of 18, including many children who would otherwise be at risk of abuse or neglect, are in the care of a grandparent or other nonparent relative.

(2) The principal causes of this increase include parental substance abuse, child abuse, mental illness, poverty, and death, as well as concerted efforts by families and by the child welfare service system to keep children with relatives whenever possible.

(3) Grandparents and older relatives providing primary care for at-risk children may experience unique resultant problems, such as financial stress due to limited incomes, emotional difficulties dealing with the loss of the child's parents or the child's unique behaviors, and decreased

physical stamina coupled with a much higher incidence of chronic illness.

(4) Many children being raised by nonparent relatives experience one or a combination of emotional, behavioral, psychological, academic, or medical problems, especially those born to a substance-abusing mother or at risk of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment.

(5) Grandparents and other relatives providing primary care for children lack appropriate information about the issues of kinship care, the special needs (both physical and psychological) of children born to a substance-abusing mother or at risk of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment, and the support resources currently available to them.

(6) An increasing number of grandparents and other relatives age 60 or older are adopting or becoming the subsidized guardians of children placed in their care by the Department. Some of these children will experience the death of their adoptive parent or guardian before reaching the age of 18. For most of these children, no legal plan has been made for the child's future care and custody in the event of the caregiver's death or incapacity.

(7) Grandparents and other relatives providing primary care for children lack appropriate information about future care and custody planning for children in their care. They also lack access to resources that may assist them in developing future legal care and custody plans for

children in their legal custody.

(b) The Department may establish an informational and educational program for grandparents and other relatives who provide primary care for children who are at risk of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment or who were born to substance-abusing mothers. As a part of the program, the Department may develop, publish, and distribute an informational brochure for grandparents and other relatives who provide primary care for children who are at risk of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment or who were born to substance-abusing mothers. The information provided under the program authorized by this Section may include, but is not limited to the following:

(1) The most prevalent causes of kinship care, especially the risk of substance exposure or child abuse, neglect, or abandonment.

(2) The problems experienced by children being raised by nonparent caregivers.

(3) The problems experienced by grandparents and other nonparent relatives providing primary care for children who have special needs.

(4) The legal system as it relates to children and their nonparent primary caregivers.

(5) The benefits available to children and their nonparent primary caregivers.

(6) A list of support groups and resources located

throughout the State.

The brochure may be distributed through hospitals, public health nurses, child protective services, medical professional offices, elementary and secondary schools, senior citizen centers, public libraries, community action agencies selected by the Department, and the Department of Human Services.

(c) In addition to other provisions of this Section, the Department shall establish a program of information, social work services, and legal services for any person age 60 or over and any other person who may be in need of a future legal care and custody plan who adopt, have adopted, take guardianship of, or have taken guardianship of children previously in the Department's custody. This program shall also assist families of deceased adoptive parents and guardians. As part of the program, the Department shall:

(1) Develop a protocol for identification of persons age 60 or over and others who may be in need of future care and custody plans, including ill caregivers, who are adoptive parents, prospective adoptive parents, guardians, or prospective guardians of children who are or have been in Department custody.

(2) Provide outreach to caregivers before and after adoption and guardianship, and to the families of deceased caregivers, regarding Illinois legal options for future care and custody of children.

(3) Provide training for Department and private agency

staff on methods of assisting caregivers before and after adoption and guardianship, and the families of older and ill caregivers, who wish to make future care and custody plans for children who have been wards of the Department and who are or will be adopted by or are or will become wards of those caregivers.

(4) Ensure that all caregivers age 60 or over who will adopt or will become guardians of children previously in Department custody have specifically designated future caregivers for children in their care. The Department shall document this designation, and the Department shall also document acceptance of this responsibility by any future caregiver. Documentation of future care designation shall be included in each child's case file and adoption or guardianship subsidy files as applicable to the child.

(5) Ensure that any designated future caregiver and the family of a deceased caregiver have information on the financial needs of the child and future resources that may be available to support the child, including any adoption assistance and subsidized guardianship for which the child is or may be eligible.

(6) With respect to programs of social work and legal services:

(i) Provide contracted social work services to older and ill caregivers, and the families of deceased caregivers, including those who will or have adopted or

will take or have taken guardianship of children previously in Department custody. Social work services to caregivers will have the goal of securing a future care and custody plan for children in their care. Such services will include providing information to the caregivers and families on standby guardianship, guardianship, standby adoption, and adoption. The Department will assist the caregiver in developing a plan for the child if the caregiver becomes incapacitated or terminally ill, or dies while the child is a minor. The Department shall develop a form to document the information given to caregivers and to document plans for future custody, in addition to the documentation described in subsection (b) (4). This form shall be included in each child's case file and adoption or guardianship subsidy files as applicable to the child.

(ii) Through a program of contracted legal services, assist older and ill caregivers, and the families of deceased caregivers, with the goal of securing court-ordered future care and custody plans for children in their care. Court-ordered future care and custody plans may include: standby guardianship, successor guardianship, standby adoption, and successor adoption. The program will also study ways in which to provide timely and cost-effective legal

services to older and ill caregivers, and to families of deceased caregivers in order to ensure permanency for children in their care.

(7) Ensure that future caregivers designated by adoptive parents or guardians, and the families of deceased caregivers, understand their rights and potential responsibilities and shall be able to provide adequate support and education for children who may become their legal responsibility.

(8) Ensure that future caregivers designated by adoptive parents and guardians, and the families of deceased caregivers, understand the problems of children who have experienced multiple caregivers and who may have experienced abuse, neglect, or abandonment or may have been born to substance-abusing mothers.

(9) Ensure that future caregivers designated by adoptive parents and guardians, and the families of deceased caregivers, understand the problems experienced by older and ill caregivers of children, including children with special needs, such as financial stress due to limited income and increased financial responsibility, emotional difficulties associated with the loss of a child's parent or the child's unique behaviors, the special needs of a child who may come into their custody or whose parent or guardian is already deceased, and decreased physical stamina and a higher rate of chronic illness and other

health concerns.

(10) Provide additional services as needed to families in which a designated caregiver appointed by the court or a caregiver designated in a will or other legal document cannot or will not fulfill the responsibilities as adoptive parent, guardian, or legal custodian of the child.

(d) The Department shall consult with the Department on Aging and any other agency it deems appropriate as the Department develops the program required by subsection (c).

(e) Rulemaking authority to implement this amendatory Act of the 95th General Assembly, if any, is conditioned on the rules being adopted in accordance with all provisions of the Illinois Administrative Procedure Act and all rules and procedures of the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules; any purported rule not so adopted, for whatever reason, is unauthorized.

(Source: P.A. 88-229; 88-670, eff. 12-2-94; 89-507, eff. 7-1-97.)

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.