

Illinois Department on Aging



Governor Pat Quinn
Director Charles D. Johnson

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State Applauds Grandparents in observance of National Grandparents Day

Touts a Department on Aging program helps grandparents who raise grandchildren

SPRINGFIELD - Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) Director Charles D. Johnson said in observance of this Sunday's Grandparents Day, we should thank some special grandparents for their sacrifice of taking on another round of parenthood. Director Johnson wants to assure grandparents raising their grandchildren that the state has resources to assist.

"There are estimates that more than 100,000 grandparents in Illinois are caring for their grandchildren, while more than 200,000 children under the age of 18 are living in a grandparent-headed home," said Director Johnson. These special grandparents have stepped up to be the primary caregivers for their grandchildren when the parents are unable to. For more than ten years, the Department on Aging's *Grandparents Raising Grandchildren* program has provided support to help them provide a stable environment. We recognize the added sacrifice these grandparents are making and want to let them know there is help."

The *Grandparents Raising Grandchildren* (GRG) program helps with efforts to locate, assist and promote awareness of older caregivers, as well as other relatives, who are currently raising their family's children. Created in 1996, the *Grandparents* program offers numerous services that may help during difficult times. The program provides financial assistance for emergency needs, utility bills, medications, food and clothing. And *GRG* provides referral services to local resources, such as support groups and legal assistance.

IDoA awards grants to not-for-profit organizations through the *Grandparent Raising Grandchildren* program to provide legal assistance, child care, emergency needs, case management, workshops, training and to establish support groups. In fiscal year 2010, more than \$300,000 in grants was awarded to support groups and fund initiatives addressing the needs of kinship families in Illinois.

Grandparents who are raising their grandchildren may also take advantage of supplemental services provided through the Illinois Family Caregiver Support Program, which include legal assistance, assistance with purchasing prescription drugs, transportation, school supplies and any other gap filling services, which attempt to address a short-term caregiver emergency.

For more information about programs and services, that visit www.state.il.us/aging or call the Senior HelpLine at 800-252-8966 (for hearing impaired 888-206-1327.)

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