

Perry County Grandparents Raising Grandchildren



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Commonly Asked Questions:

How can I keep track of everything?

Keep good notes about who you talk to and what they say. You may need to go back to your notes when you are seeking help for your grandchildren. Having good, accurate notes will also help you track your progress. Good notes are very helpful when it comes to legal issues.

- 1.) Dedicate a notebook or a binder for documentation and label the cover clearly with the date of the first entry in the notebook. When that notebook is full, mark the date of the last note on the cover as well.
- 2.) Every time you talk to someone about your grandchild, write down:
 - The date
 - The name of the person
 - The person's title and/or relationship to your grandchild (i.e. teacher, case worker, parent, etc.)
 - The person's contact information (phone number, address, email address, etc.)
 - The general topic you talked about (school, illness, money, legal, mental health etc.)
 - Specific notes about your conversation
 - Next steps or "to do" list for follow up after the conversation

What legal documents do I need?

- 1.) Make a binder or folder where you keep all of these important papers so you can easily find them when you need them. You should have:
 - Birth certificates, death certificates (if your grandchild's parent is deceased), marriage records or divorce decrees for their parents
 - Social Security cards (or at least the numbers) for the children
 - Medical and dental records
 - Power of Attorney, custody, guardianship, adoption or other legal papers
 - Consent forms signed by parents for medical care and education
 - School papers, such as report cards, evaluations, (IEP, psychological evaluation) registration, etc.
 - Proof of your grandchild's income and assets (child support payments, trust fund, etc.)
 - Proof of your income and assets (if you apply for public assistance benefits, you will need this information)
 - Citizenship papers for you or for your grandchildren
 - Military papers for you or their parents



What if I don't have legal documents?

In order to apply for public assistance, medical services, and school enrollment for your grandchildren in your care, you will need to have certain documents:

• **Birth Certificates:** Requests can be made by online ordering, by telephone, mail, or in person. In person- Office hours at all locations are Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. (closed on state holidays). Bring a legible photocopy of your valid government-issued photo ID that verifies your name and current mailing address. Examples include a state-issued driver's license or non-driver photo ID, passport. Bring a check or money order made out to VITAL RECORDS for the exact amount of your order. Ordering by phone- call 1-866-712-8238 seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Major credit cards are accepted. Have your card ready when you place your call, delivery options may incur additional fees, based on customer selection. More information can be found at:

http://www.health.pa.gov/MyRecords/Certificates/Pages/11596.aspx#.WleE_X8o7cs

Division of Vital Records
Forum Place Building
555 Walnut St., First Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101-1914

• **Social Security Card:** To get a Social Security number, you will need to provide documents that show your identity, age, and citizenship or lawful alien status. You can get more information 24 hours a day by calling Social Security's toll-free number, 1-800-772-1213. You can call for an appointment or to speak to a service representative between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on business days. If you have a touch-tone phone, recorded information and services are available 24 hours a day, including weekends and holidays. People who are deaf or hard of hearing may call the toll-free "TTY" number 1-800-325-0778, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on business days. Social Security publications are available to users of the Internet. Log onto www.ssa.gov to access these publications.



What is my legal relationship to my grandchild?

The following are options that define various formal "legal relationships"-

These options should be consulted with a family law attorney to determine what type of formal "legal relationship" would be in your best interest.

- **Custody** means you are responsible for supporting and providing care for the child. In certain states, a child's parents may still retain some of their rights — even if you have physical custody. A parent can voluntarily relinquish custody of a child to you through a written legal agreement, or it can be formally ordered by the court.
- **Adoption.** When you adopt a child, you have all the rights and responsibilities of a biological parent. The birth parents no longer have any rights, which means the birth parents can **NOT** go to court later and reclaim those rights and responsibilities.
- **Guardianship.** This designation means that you have the duty to care for a child. The biggest difference between adoption and guardianship is that guardianship does not take

away all the birth parents rights and responsibilities. Parents keep certain rights and the obligation to financially support their child.

- **Kinship Care.** Children in foster care may be placed with families. If a grandparent becomes an approved foster parent through kinship care, the grandparent is responsible for the day-to-day decisions and care for the child — however the state retains legal custody and pays for the child's care. Children and Youth Services (CYS) and the court system is involved and at times the goal is reunification with the biological parents

How to be prepared for court appointments

- Personal appearance- appropriate dress casual attire
- Personal behavior- be serious, calm- do not raise your voice
- During the hearing- arrive on time, answer questions that you know the answer to, don't answer questions if you don't have the accurate answer, and have prepared documents and information for your reference

Legal Resources:

MidPenn Legal

401 E. Louthier St., #103

Carlisle, PA 17013

<http://www.midpenn.org/default.htm>

(800) 326-9177 or 717-243-9400

Mid Penn Legal is a free legal aid program that provides advice and counsel to help very low-income families solve problems and get back on track. Case Types: handle critical civil matters such as: child custody, domestic violence, housing, elder law, public benefits



Medical

Applying for Medical Assistance (MA) or Children's Health Insurance Plan (CHIP) for physical and behavioral health insurance

Public Benefits are benefits made available from the County Assistance Office (CAO) for eligible low income families and/or for individuals with a documented disability. A child can qualify for CHIP or MA. CHIP provides free or low-cost health insurance for families. The program provides health insurance to uninsured children and teens that are not eligible for or enrolled in Medical Assistance.

The income and/or assets of the guardian do not count in determining eligibility for MA. The CAO has up to 30 days to process your request for MA. Call or visit your local CAO or complete online via the COMPASS. County Assistance Locations:

<http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/findfacilsandlocs/countyassistanceofficecontactinformation/index.htm>

or Apply online: <https://www.compass.state.pa.us>

Perry County Assistance Office

100 Centre Drive

P.O. Box 280

New Bloomfield, PA 17068-0280

OFFICE HOURS: 8:30 AM to 5 PM

Toll Free: 1-800-991-1929

Phone: 717-582-2127

LIHEAP 717-582-5038

FAX: 717-582-4187

What if I apply and I am denied:

You can appeal the decision by filling out and signing the form in your denial packet if you don't agree with the decision. You will need to indicate that you disagree with the decision, but you do not have to give specific reasons why you disagree at this time. You will also need to select either a telephone hearing or a face-to-face hearing. Further support can be obtained by contacting Mid-Penn Legal services.

Special Needs Case Manager under Medicaid (Medical Assistance (MA))

The Special Needs Plan provides Case Management assistance to members. Case Managers are nurses who work with you to improve your ability to manage their health. They help you understand your health care and can coordinate services with your doctor. Care Managers can also help you understand your health condition and help coordinate treatment and services. Below is a list of contacts under your physical health MA plan:

Aetna Better Health	1-855-346-9828
AmeriHealth Caritas Pa	1-800-684-5503
AmeriHealth Caritas Northeast	1-888-498-0766
Geisinger Health Plan Family	1-855-214-8100
Gateway Health Plan	1-800-642-3550
Health Partners Plans	1-866-500-4571
Keystone First Health Plan	1-800-573-4100
United Health Care Community Plan	1-877-844-8844
UPMC for You	1-866-463-1462

Elks Nurse- <http://paelkshomeservice.org/contact.php> Pprovides support and advocacy services to individuals of any age who have a disability. Services are provided by a Nurse and/or Medical Care Coordinator, to Pennsylvania residents, in the person's home environment, at NO CHARGE



Education

CPARC- <http://www.cparc.org/advocacy> 717-249-2611 CPARC's Advocacy Department provides assistance to families with special needs in accessing community services and educational support.

Education consultline- <http://odr-pa.org/parents/consultline/> 1-800-879-2301 ConsultLine is a toll-free information help line for parents and advocates of children with disabilities who have questions or concerns about the education of a school-aged child

Enroll a Child in school if You Are a Non-Parent Caregiver

Fill out the "Enrollment Letter" and the "Affidavit by Non-Parent Caregiver for School Enrollment". The Affidavit must be completed by you and signed in front of a notary. Make copies of these forms to keep for your records.

- To enroll the student in the school where you live, the form states that:
 - The child lives with you year round, not just part of the year, including weekends and summer;

- You will be responsible for school requirements, including making sure the child attends school;
- You are supporting the child as if he or she were your own child.

You need to know!! Even if you receive payments for the child, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), pre-adoptive or adoptive support, support from parents who are in the military, public or private health insurance, or child support payments, you can still be supporting the child as your own.

Go to the registration office in the school district where you live. Take the Enrollment Letter and Affidavit with you and give it to the school district register.

Take documents with you that prove the age of the child, a record of the child's immunizations ("shots"), and proof of your residency in the school district. If you do not have written documentation of the child's shots, inform the school district to call the child's former school or the doctor's office where the child's medical records are maintained.

If the school district asks for proof of the statements in your affidavit, the following are some suggestions:

- **Proof of Residency in the school district area:**
 - A driver's license, lease, utility bill, credit card bill, car registration, tax bill, or a form showing that you are enrolled in a government program, on which your listed address is in the school district.
- Proof of Support of the child:
- Receipts for food, clothes, or medical bills that you paid for the child.
- Papers that show you claimed the child as a dependent on your taxes.
- Papers that show the child is being covered under your health insurance.

Request that the administrative office at the child's old school send the education records to the new school. ***This is an important step!!*** The child's old school has ten (10) business days to send the records to the new school.

What If the Child is NOT Enrolled in Five Business Days?

If the school district has not allowed the child to attend school within five (5) business days of completing this procedure, call the district's registration office and ask them to explain why the child has not been enrolled. The law states that the child **MUST** be enrolled within five (5) business days of the school receiving all documents for enrollment.



Financial: Where do I find financial help?

Do I have to have legal custody or guardianship of my grandchildren to apply for public benefits or get tax credits?

Formal legal relationship is not necessary to apply for *some* public benefits or tax credits

Can I get child support payments from my grandchild's parent (s)?

You may be able to get child support payments to help raise your grandchild. Talk with a family law lawyer about getting child support if you go to court for custody or guardianship. Learn about the pros and cons of child support in terms of finances and also the effect on your grandchild's parent. (see legal section for additional information and TANF: Temporary Aid for Needy Families (more information below))

- **MA:** Medical Assistance- a variety of programs with different eligibility and resource criteria- can access behavioral health (mental health services) and/or physical health (medical services)

Perry County Office of Aging Department

(717) 582-5128
315 Keystone Way
New Bloomfield, PA 17068
717-582-5128

Perry County Office of Aging has a grandparent financial program. This financial program is a reimbursement program for specific needs of the child. The grandparent must be 55+ and the program is income based. The grandparent needs to call the Perry County Office of the Aging to see if they qualify.

Support Services: Where do I find support services?

- Schools- Talk to the social worker or guidance counselor at your grandchild's school about what kind of help/assistance that might be available
- Perry County Family Center- <http://pcfamiliycenter.org/> 717-582-3656
 - 8391 Spring Road, Suite 3R
P.O. Box 673
New Bloomfield, PA 17068
- Perry County Children and Youth Services 717-582-2076
- Faith-based churches & organizations
- CASSP Elementary Program (Elementary Age ONLY)
 - West Perry, Greenwood, Newport 717-580-3303
 - Susquentia 717-580-6503
- Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and other youth groups
- Big Brothers and Big Sisters- (717) 258-4417
- Mental Health Base Service Unit
 - Geisinger Holy Spirit 717-763-2221
 - Merakey (Formally NHS Stevens Center) 717-243-6033
- 211 <http://pa211.org/> 2-1-1 is a FREE, accessible, 3-digit telephone number available to everyone. All residents have easy access to customized health, housing and human services information in one place

- Ready Rosie app- <https://www.readyrosie.com/> (West Perry School District) ReadyRosie is an early education tool that helps families, schools, and communities across the nation deepen their family engagement efforts. This tool includes video modeling, family workshops, professional development opportunities, and mobile technology to build powerful partnerships between families and educators, resulting in Ready Families, Ready Educators, Ready Children.
- Perry Human Services- <http://perryhumanservices.org/> (717)582-8703
 - Parent/ Family Support Group- Families who need support regarding a loved one with addiction. This group is held on the 2nd Monday of each month 7-8:30 PM
 - Perry Human Services- Drug and alcohol counseling- Child of Alcoholic (COA) & Adult Child of Alcoholic (ACOA) counseling
 - Perry County- ALA-NON support group 717-497-0628 Tuesday: 6:30PM
Shermansdale UMC
40 Windy Hill Road Shermansdale, PA



Basic Needs

What if I can't afford nutritious, well-balanced meals for my grandchildren?

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program helps women, infants and children up to age 5 who have low incomes and/or receive MA and are not able to eat well.

Perry County - Tapestry of Health WIC Office

51 South Church Street

New Bloomfield, PA 17068

Phone: (717) 243-0523 or (800) 882-8812

Fax: (717) 243-6625

<http://www.tapestryofhealth.org/>

• **The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** is the new name for the Food Stamp program. These benefits are used to buy food and help eligible low-income households in Pennsylvania obtain more nutritious diets by increasing their food purchasing power at grocery stores and supermarkets. If you are eligible, you will receive a Pennsylvania Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) ACCESS Card which is used to make food purchases at grocery stores and supermarkets. If you have questions about SNAP you may call the Department of Human Services Helpline toll-free at **1-800-692-7462** (1-800-451-5886 TDD number for individuals with hearing impairments) or at the Perry County Assistance Office at 100 Centre Drive P.O. Box 280 New Bloomfield, PA 17068-0280 OFFICE HOURS: 8:30 AM to 5 PM. Additional information can be located at:

<http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/supplementalnutritionassistanceprogram/index.htm> If your grandchild is school age, talk with the school about the school meal programs. Schools can provide healthy low-cost or free lunches each school day to children whose families have lower incomes. There is also a school breakfast program. Additional food programs:

Bread of Life	717-567-9181	Emergency & Monthly Food
Perry County Food Bank	717-582-9978	Emergency & Monthly Food

• **TANF:** Temporary Aid for Needy Families- has a 5 year limit (with some exceptions). The non-financial criteria includes that the family must have dependent children living with them or with other specified relatives blood relatives, usually where one parent is absent and children are deprived of parental support. Parents and Specified Relative can receive TANF even if their child is on Social Security Income (SSI). Specified Relatives that have a closed blood relationship to the child – Grandparents, Aunt, Uncle, sibling over 18. A Specified Relative’s income does not count when determining eligibility for TANF or MA. A child support order must be filed for against any absent parent in order to get TANF. If the absent parent is incarcerated an order still needs to be file but it can be suspended until they are released from prison. Further information can be found at:

<http://dhs.pa.gov/citizens/cashassistance/tanfandmovingtoindependence/>

How can I help my grandchildren with behavioral and mental health issues?

Ask your grandchildren's school counselor, pediatrician/family doctor about mental health services. Further assistance can also be obtained from the Mental Health Base Service Unit (BSU):

- Geisinger Holy Spirit 717-763-2221
- Merakey (formally NHS) 717-243-6033

In order to access services you must have primary medical rights and have proof of custody. Access to services is funded through primary insurance. Please call the BSU if you have further questions



Parenting Help

- Perry County Children and Youth 717-582-2076
- Perry County Family Center- <http://pcfamilycenter.org/> 717-582-3656 Home Visitation program for families with children from Birth through Kindergarten. Visits are in the home twice a month, the program provides caregiver-child activities, developmental screenings, resources and a great support system.
- Pressley Ridge - Support Group in Dauphin County 717- 541-0828 Ask for Deb Lidle
- CASSP Elementary Program (Elementary Age ONLY)
 - West Perry, Greenwood, Newport 717-580-3303
 - Susquentia 717-580-6503
- GRANDS Support Group- helping families impacted by the Opioid Crisis. 1st Tuesday of the month 6-7pm at YWCA Carlisle located at 301 G St Carlisle Pa 17013. Childcare provided, call for more information (717) 243-3818
- Grief Support- Highmark Caring Place <https://www.highmarkcaringplace.com> The Highmark Caring Place is where grieving children and families can come together and be with others who understand what they are experiencing. An essential community resource, the Caring Place offers services at no charge to grieving families throughout the community.

Highmark Caring Place
3 Walnut Street, Suite 20
Lemoyne, PA 17043
(866) 613-4673

Childcare/Pre-K Support

Head Start: Head Start programs generally provide free half-day school-year care for eligible low-income children ages 3 – 5. Some programs also provide full-day, year-round programs. Grandparents may have to prove legal guardianship of their grandchildren in order to enroll them in a Head Start school. Some communities have pre-kindergarten programs that help prepare children for kindergarten. Contact: Keystone Service Systems, Inc (717)541-1795 or <http://dhs.pa.gov/citizens/childcareearlylearning/headstart/>

Child Care Network:

Cumberland-Perry County Child Care Network
220 S. Spring Garden Street, Carlisle, PA 17013
717-243-4014

The subsidized child care program helps low-income families pay their child care fees. The state and federal governments fund this program, which is managed by the [Child Care Information Services](#) (CCIS) office located in your county.

If you meet the guidelines:

- The CCIS will pay a part of your child care cost. This payment is called a subsidy payment.
- You will pay a part of the cost. This payment is called the family co-pay.
- The subsidy payment and the family co-pay go directly to the child care program.

West Perry Pre-K (free program)

As a PreK Counts recipient, West Perry School District operates prekindergarten classrooms in each of the elementary schools. Classes of seventeen students are led by a teacher and paraprofessional. Students attend for 5.5 hours, 180 days each year.

Students are selected from applications during the enrollment process that occurs every Spring. Priority is given to students based on family income and other risk factors. Transportation is provided. Information about the application process will be available when the application window opens.

If you have a child who is age 3 or 4, you can receive periodic mailings that provide news and information about school readiness as well as PreK events and offerings, including applying for PreK. Please call the district office to add your name to the mailing list. Through this process you can also request to have a PreK application mailed to you automatically when the new enrollment period opens.

Capital Area Head Start - (free program)

If you are pregnant or have a child age 0-5, call 717-541-1795 to enroll in Head Start. The Head Start pre-kindergarten programs are comprehensive, state and federally-funded child development programs serving children ages 3-5.

Classes are provided in two locations in Perry County

- Newport School - 5 days a week from 8:45 – 2:45 (9:00 - 1:00 pm) - The classroom is in the Newport Elementary School. Transportation is not provided.
- Susquenita - 5 days a week from 9:00 – 3:00 - The classroom is in the Susquentia Elementary School. Transportation is not provided.

Perry County Generations (Pre-K and Childcare)

Phone: 717-789-0009
1326 Landisburg Rd.
Landisburg, PA 17040

Messiah Pre-k Program (Pre-K and Childcare) - (scholarships available)

Phone: (717) 582-9093
70 Limestone Ridge RD
Elliottsburg, PA 17024

Newport Assembly Of God (Pre-K and Childcare) - (scholarships available)

Phone: (717) 567-3333
253 N. 6th St.
Newport, PA 17074

Duncannon Assembly of God Day Care Center (Pre-K and Childcare)

Phone: 717-834-3338
500 N. High St.
Duncannon, PA 17020

Blue Goose Children's Learning Center (Pre-K and Daycare)

Phone: (717) 319-5803
11 Church Rd.
Newport, PA 17074

Precious Little Angels (Pre-K and Childcare)

Phone: (717) 957-3000
1635 Old State Rd.
Duncannon, PA 17020

Footprints Playschool (Pre-K and Childcare)

Phone: 717-589-3565
23 S. High St.
Millerstown, PA 17062

Roseglan Christian Nursery School (Pre-k and Childcare)

Phone: (717) 834-6411
722 New Bloomfield Rd.
Duncannon, PA 17020

Other Online Resources

AARP: American Association of Retired Persons - A non-profit organization that is dedicated to helping people ages 50 and older.

<https://www.aarp.org/relationships/friends-family/info-08-2011/grandfamilies-guide-getting-started.html>

Perry County Resource Guide-

<http://www.health.pa.gov/My%20Health/Documents/Perry%20County%20Resource%20Guide.pdf>

Perry County website

www.perryco.org

State Representative Eddie Day Pashinski – Sign up for email updates for issues relating to Grandparents

www.PAHouse.com/Pashinski

Pa House of Representatives- link below can help you find your local PA Legislators to personally reach out for any support.

<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/>