

***A Resource Guide for Kinship  
Caregivers in Arkansas***

**What Every Grandparent  
or  
Relative Caregiver  
Needs to Know,  
When a Parent is Arrested,  
Incapacitated, or Involved in a  
Dependency-Neglect Proceeding**

[www.arkansasvoices.org](http://www.arkansasvoices.org)

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## Foreword

Dear Grandparents and Other Relative Caregivers,

Arkansas Voices for the Children Left Behind is pleased to provide you with this printed resource and information guide for grandparents and other relatives who are caring for their relatives' children when the parents are unavailable or incapacitated. Historically, relatives have always stepped up to care for children in their families, but never to the extent we now see occurring, not just in the United States, but worldwide. There are many reasons: Parental incarceration, abandonment, parental death, economic distress, military deployment of the parent(s), and incapacity, such as mental illness, addiction, physical or developmental challenges.

Thousands of grandparents and other kinship caretakers like you are making great sacrifices to keep your family together by offering these children your love and support. Caring for someone else's children is difficult, especially when they are in such distress and you have no time to prepare. You may not know until years later what a difference you have made in their lives. You may receive very little appreciation or thanks for the tremendous amount of work you do and all you give up along the way. Sometimes it will be hard to remember why you took on this responsibility. We are here to help remind you of the importance of what you are doing and the respect you deserve. We know that you are not only invaluable to these children, but also to our community. As you know better than anyone, the effects of being left behind for these children extend far beyond childhood.

We hope the information in this guide will help you understand some of the complicated choices you may face and to find the resources you need. Please do not hesitate to call us for assistance - we offer resources and support groups for children and their caretakers, as you can see in the section about our agency. At the end of this guide, you will find examples of forms, form letters and petitions you may need to fill out during the process of becoming a relative caregiver.

You are not alone on this journey.

Best wishes to each of our readers.

*Dee Ann Newell and Paula Pumphrey*

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Mission: *Justice for children left behind, including social, racial, economic, educational, and family justice.*

Serving children left behind since 1994.

### **A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO ARISTOTLE FOR OUR WEBSITE**

The board members of Arkansas Voices for the Children Left Behind wish to thank the owner, Marla Johnson Norris, and the staff of Aristotle, a national internet provider company, based in Arkansas, for their donation of the website for Arkansas Voices, and for their investment of time, energy, and concern for the children left behind in our state of Arkansas. We are most indebted for your support and services and hope that our web presence and this Resource Guide will better serve all of those who seek to better practices and policies when children are left behind. January 2010

## Helpful Suggestions from Several Relative Caregivers

### Caring for Children in Distress

The situation you are in as a caregiver for a child is hard on everyone, regardless of the circumstances. For both you and the child, it means a major upheaval in your everyday lives. Just as you have time to concentrate on yourself instead of taking care of others, you suddenly find yourself parenting a young child, or children, again. For whatever reason the children you are caring for are not with their parents, they are experiencing a tidal wave of emotions, such as a great sense of loss, grief, shame, anger, fears of abandonment and uncertainty. They have no way to make sense of what has happened and are probably unable to manage their feelings. In addition, children often feel they have done something to cause the loss of their parent, leading to an overwhelming sense of guilt. Most likely their emotions will lead to some behavioral problems.

**One of your most important jobs is to give them permission to talk about what has happened to them and let them express their grief. Their loss needs to be discussed in a way that is age-appropriate. When families keep secrets or do not allow certain topics to be raised, tension builds on both sides. Letting the children and their parents express their feelings, even ones of anger, is an important step to help them begin the healing process.** If you raised the grandchild's parent, you may blame yourself, wondering where you went wrong and thinking everything is your fault. You may be feeling overwhelmed and even angry that you've had to start caring for children again just when you thought life would take a different direction. If your child is going to prison, you probably feel very scared for her. Feeling angry and resentful and scared are all normal reactions. However, it's most important not to take out your anger and frustration on the children, even if their behavior makes you want to strike out at them. They are having enough trouble sorting out how they feel and making sense of what happened to them. They depend on you to help them feel better about the situation, although it can be a very slow process.

It is also important for you to have another adult to talk to, however. If you do not have another friend or relative with whom you can talk, Arkansas Voices offers a Grandparent Resource Center, a WARM Line (1-866-9-VOICES), and several support groups for caretakers in five counties of the state. See the listings under Arkansas Voices for the Children Left Behind in the next section. We also provide Technical Assistance for groups to set up other Relatives as Parents Programs (RAPP) in un-served areas of the state.

### Discipline

Keep in mind that the term discipline does not mean punishing a child for wrong behavior; it means training by instruction and practice, especially when teaching self-control. The same goes for the term consequences: It is important to let children know that consequences are both positive and negative. A consequence for good behavior might mean watching a child's favorite TV show together, and a consequence for misbehaving might mean that the child is not allowed to watch his favorite show.

Disciplining children in distress is stressful for both children and adults. Consistent rules and clear expectations of what is and is not acceptable behavior can help children develop a sense of safety and order during a time when they are feeling scared, uncertain and vulnerable. You should be clear with the children about what behaviors are and are not acceptable, and what the consequences will be. Expect the children to test the rules a lot.

You may be caring for children who have been abused. They may become fearful or aggressive when disciplined. Spanking a child who has been abused is never helpful. Simply saying "No" may not work either. So what do you do when children act up or are disobedient?

Set very simple and clear rules when the children first come to live with you. For older children, it might be helpful to write down the rules and the consequences of breaking them in advance, and placing them in a prominent place. More rules can be added over time, but do not overwhelm children and youth with rules. Keep them simple and clear.

It is often helpful to assign chores to the children immediately. Chores and responsibilities help children feel a sense of belonging and importance. For example, chores for younger children may include putting their toys and books away, taking their dishes to the sink, and picking out their own clothes. Older children, in addition to these chores, might be expected to get the mail, help set the table, sort and fold laundry, empty the trash, make their beds, etc. It can be helpful to have a weekly checklist so they can mark off their chores.

For more information, see Behavior Management Tips later in this guide.

### **Other Children in the Household**

You might be caring for other children in your home in addition to your grandchildren/relative's children. This is a very difficult time for them, too, and they may feel resentful, angry and even betrayed when they have to adjust to new children in the home. Their feelings can erupt into behavioral problems, causing even more stress in the family. These children also should be encouraged to talk about their feelings.

### **Arkansas Voices for the Children Left Behind, Inc.**

Arkansas Voices is a 501©3, not-for-profit organization, established by a coalition of 32 advocacy and service organizations throughout Arkansas in 1994, and becoming a formal non-profit organization in 2002, with initial funding for board training from the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, and community organizing of grandparent and relative caregivers from the U.S. Catholic Bishop's Campaign for Human Development.

Arkansas Voices for the Children Left Behind (Voices) is dedicated to justice for children left behind, to include: 1.) children of arrested, incarcerated and re-entering parents; 2.) children in the care of relatives, 3.) children of undocumented parents who have been arrested, incarcerated, or deported, and 4.) children in kinship foster care or foster care. Our mission is "Justice for the children left behind, supporting social, racial, and economic, and family, educational, and judicial justice." Since 1994.

Our services are offered to help families heal from past traumas, develop a vision of hope for the future, and help increase family stability to prevent further trauma. We provide direct services and advocacy for policy reforms that create safety and well-being for the children left behind and their families. Arkansas Voices has three locations in the Arkansas, one in Fayetteville, one in Forrest City, and the main office in Little Rock, Arkansas at 1114 Garland Street.

### ***Direct Services Offered for Children and Youth in Central Arkansas:***

- Weekly support group meetings for children, some based in local high schools, others community-based, serving children whose parents are absent, arrested, or incapacitated and cannot care for them;
- Counseling services, as needed;
- The Youth Advisory Board, a group of youths who have experienced parental loss, to provide guidance to AV's board in policy and programmatic areas;
- Speaker's Bureau of Youth with experience with parental loss.
- Critical Response Team for children and youth in the event of an arrest of undocumented parents. Translators and volunteers trained in trauma reduction can be available in the state

within five (5) hours of Homeland Security and Immigrations and Custom Enforcement (ICE) raids.

**Direct Services Offered to Grandparent Caregivers, Relative Caregivers (and foster parents), held in Central Arkansas**

- Support groups for caregivers, including child care for the younger children and groups for the older children and youth, meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month. Pre-Enrollment assessment is required.
- Family case management.
- Legal advocacy and education.
- Leadership, parenting support, and self-advocacy trainings.

**Direct Services Offered to Arrested, Incarcerated, and Re-Entering Parents in Central Arkansas:**

- Parenting Inside classes in correctional facilities;
- Parenting after Release classes, with child care. This is a six-week module offered three times per year;
- Opportunity to serve on the board of Arkansas Voices;
- Speaker's Bureau;
- Family Re-Entry Support Groups. 1x per month. Peer-directed.
- Family case management.
- Legal advocacy and education.
- Access to library resources concerning children of the incarcerated and policies for family re-entry, employment, access to public assistance;
- Leadership and self-advocacy trainings.

***Advocacy and Public Education Services***

- Arkansas Coalition for the Bill of Rights for Children of the Incarcerated sponsored by Arkansas Voices, a partner in the Open Society Institute of the Soros Foundation National Campaign for Implementation of the Bill of Rights for Children of the Incarcerated. See the Bill of Rights later in this guide.
- Pathways to Home: A Re-Entry Policy Agenda for Parents Returning to their Children after Release.
- Law enforcement training module to support arresting officers in their response to children who witness their parent's arrest
- Arrest protocols for law enforcement, being implemented throughout the nation.
- Trainings for community groups and targeted groups that impact the children, e.g., teachers and school counselors, social workers, mental health professionals, correctional officers, members of the judiciary, attorneys, prosecutors, public defenders, and other child advocates
- DVDs and documentary films that further understanding of these families.
- Newsletter and updates on policy issues and research findings.
- Scholarships for children of incarcerated parent(s).
- Sponsor of Annual Mothers in Prison, Children in Crisis event (for 14 consecutive years at the Capitol).
- Comcast television program on community station, The Children Left Behind (for seven years).
- Annual Southern Summit Conference: Research-based Practices for Children of the Incarcerated and their Caregivers and Parents. The Annual Conference will be held every other year, with support from the Arkansas Head Start collaborative and the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation of Arkansas. National practitioners, policymakers and researchers are invited to speak at the event.

For referrals or further information, please contact the main office in Little Rock, 501.603.0244 or 1.866.9.VOICES ((1.866.986.4237).

### **School Enrollment**

To enroll children in school, you must go in person to the district office – you cannot enroll them at the school they will attend. For schools in Pulaski County, contact one of the following and make sure that what you need to bring is the same as the information listed below:

Little Rock  
501 Sherman  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
501.324.2155

North Little Rock  
2700 Poplar  
North Little Rock, AR 72215  
501.771.8010

Pulaski County  
925 E. Dixon Rd.  
Little Rock, AR 72206  
501.490.2000

#### **You must take ONE of the following:**

- ✓ A letter from the child's parent, notarized if possible. Look for Notary Publics in the phone book for the one closest to you. If you have a bank account, the bank may offer free notary services.
- ✓ Power of attorney, which is a written document authorizing you to take certain legal actions on behalf of the other person (in this case, the incarcerated parent) giving the power of attorney. Basically, this gives you the authority to act on behalf of the incarcerated parent. See Power of Attorney under the Guardianship section later in this guide for more information.
- ✓ Court papers showing you are the child's guardian

#### **You must also take ALL of the following:**

- ✓ Child's birth certificate
- ✓ Child's shot record
- ✓ Child's social security card
- ✓ Proof of residence such as a current utility bill or lease agreement
- ✓ Child's immunization records, which will be provided to the school after the child is assigned

### **Child Care Programs**

Some schools have programs for children whose caregivers begin their workday before school starts, after school programs, and programs for pre-schoolers. Ask someone at your district office about this.

Many schools also provide free and reduced fee lunches to those who qualify. Children in households getting Food Stamps and most foster children can get free meals regardless of your income. Also, your children can get free meals if your household income is within the free limits on the Federal Income Guidelines. Ask your school district if you want to apply.

## **If You Suspect Your Child Has a Disability**

If you suspect the child you are caring for has a disability or a learning problem, write a letter to the principal of the child's school asking that he be tested for special education. Keep a copy of this and all other letters about children in your care. The school has seven (7) days to notify you of a conference, which should be held within 21 days of the date of your letter. If the school denies the testing, write a letter asking the reason for the denial.

For more detailed information about this process, request a copy of A Parent's Guide: Civil Rights/Education from Advocacy Services, Inc. at 501.269.1775 or 1.800.482.1174. This guide explains commonly used terms, the process of having a child evaluated, parents' rights to independent evaluation, the child's legal right to services, how to file complaints, and self-advocacy.

## **Medicaid**

Medicaid provides limited medical services and contributions towards the cost of medical care for eligible persons. Children with special health care needs whose families are partly or wholly unable to provide for those services may be eligible to receive assistance from Children's Medical Services (CMS).

Eligibility for Medicaid depends on a number of factors and is determined on a case-by-case basis.

Medicaid A, which has been around since the 1960s, has fuller coverage than Medicaid B (ARKids First), which is intended for children whose parents are up to 170% of the Federal Poverty level. If you are given an option, choose Medicaid A.

## **What to Take with You**

- ✓ Child's birth certificate
- ✓ Medical bills for the past three months
- ✓ Documents that show your relationship to child
- ✓ Proof of income

See the section of this guide on Temporary Employment Assistance (TEA) for information on where to get necessary documents.

## **Where to Apply**

You can apply at the appropriate DHS office between 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. You can find a complete listing of state offices later in this guide.

## **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) provides a basic monthly income to children or adults who meet the Social Security Administration's definition of disabled if their income falls within eligibility limits. In addition to cash assistance, a person who receives SSI also receives Medicaid.



## Social Security Disability (SSD)

Social Security Disability (SSD) provides a basic monthly income based on the number of Social Security quarters reflected in your work history.

### Definition of Disability

Social Security defines a person as disabled if the individual has a physical or mental impairment that is expected to keep him from doing any substantial work for at least a year, or a condition that is expected to result in death. A person's medical records must indicate the presence of impairment, or several impairments, either physical or mental in nature.

In the eyes of the Social Security Disability and Supplemental Security Income programs, individuals are considered disabled when:

- They have a severe impairment that has lasted, or will last, twelve months.
- They are unable to perform the type of work they have done in the past while earning in excess of \$900 per month.
- They are unable to perform other types of work, typically work related to their past work (for example, a car mechanic might be expected to switch to motorcycle engine repair if the job duties are similar enough).

The following is a list of some disabilities for which an individual might receive SSI:

- |                                  |                                      |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ✓ HIV                            | ✓ Downs Syndrome                     |
| ✓ Blindness                      | ✓ Diabetes (with amputation)         |
| ✓ Deafness (in some cases)       | ✓ Significant mental deficiencies    |
| ✓ Cerebral Palsy (in some cases) | ✓ Muscular Dystrophy (in some cases) |

When applying for SSI for a child, you will be asked to describe how the child's disability affects his or her ability to function as a child of similar age normally would.

### What to Take With You

The applicant's (you or your grandchild's):

- |                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| ✓ Social Security Card | ✓ Birth certificate        |
| ✓ Proof of income      | ✓ Medical records (if any) |
| ✓ School records       | ✓ Day care records         |

### Where to go in Pulaski County:

**Little Rock**  
Social Security Office  
700 West Capitol  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
501. 324.5827

**North Little Rock**  
Social Security Office  
8000 JFK Blvd.  
North Little Rock, AR 72113

**Social Security Disability**  
701 S Pulaski St  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
501.682.3030

**Disability Rights Center**  
Disability Rights Center (DRC)  
1100 N. University, Suite 201  
Little Rock, AR 72207  
800.482.1174  
501. 296.1775

Call before you go! If you think you or your grandchild might be eligible for SSI, call Social Security at 1.800.772.1213 before visiting the office. This process takes a long time, so be patient and don't give up. If your first application is denied, you can appeal the decision. Many people are denied the first time but are approved in an appeal process.

### **Temporary Employment Assistance (TEA)**

Welfare reform ended Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and created the Temporary Employment Assistance (TEA) program. The TEA program is a time-limited assistance program to help needy families with children become more responsible for their own support and less dependent on public assistance. In addition to monthly cash assistance, employment-related services are provided to parents, including job-readiness activities, transportation assistance, childcare assistance, and other supportive services so that the parent can engage in work or education and training activities.

To receive TEA, you must sign a Personal Responsibility Agreement. You will work with a case manager on a plan for finding work unless you receive assistance as a Child Only Case or meet other conditions for being exempted from the requirement to work.

The Division of County Operations takes care of cash assistance payments. The Department of Workforce Services performs all other TEA activities listed above. See Phone Numbers for DHS and ADWS later in this guide.

### **Who is Eligible**

Eligibility is based on a person's income and resources. In most cases, cash assistance is limited to a total of two years in a lifetime, if the adult is a part of the case. Day care and Medicaid may continue beyond the two years.

### **Child Only Cases**

When you apply for TEA, you can receive assistance only for the children you are caring for, which is called a Child Only Case. You, the adult caregiver, are not counted in the case. In Child Only cases, your income and resources are not counted in determining whether you are eligible for assistance – only the children's resources and income are counted. Also, the amount of assistance you receive would only be for the number of children in the case. Since there is no adult in the case, the work requirements and lifetime limits do not apply.

### **Who Is Exempt From the Work Requirement?**

If you decide that you want to be included in the TEA case (as a kinship caregiver), you will receive benefits for yourself and your grandchildren, but you will be expected to meet the work

requirement. The following are cases for which you (and other relative caregivers) could be included in the case and exempted from the work requirements:

- ✓ If you are caring for a child less than one month old who is receiving assistance.
- ✓ If you are medically incapacitated or have a disability that prevents employment. The Social Security definition of disability is used.
- ✓ If you must remain in the home to care for a family member who is seriously ill or unable to care for himself; for example, caring for an elderly relative and/or a relative's child.
- ✓ If the parent is under 18 and living with you, the work requirement does not apply to the parent as long as the parent is in full-time education or training.

### **Who is Exempt from the 2-year Lifetime Limit?**

If you receive assistance as a Child Only Case, the 2-year lifetime limit does not apply. The limit does apply, however, if you receive assistance for yourself and the children unless you qualify for an exemption. The exemptions include:

- ✓ Parents and caregivers over 60 years of age
- ✓ Parents and caregivers caring for a disabled child or adult relative
- ✓ Disabled parents and caregivers
- ✓ A child when necessary to protect the child from risk or neglect
- ✓ A parent less than 18 years old who is living in a parent's home or in an approved adult-supervised setting, if the parent is in full-time education or training

### **Protective Payee**

If the child's parent is receiving TEA but you are caring for the child, ask a case manager about becoming the child's protective payee. This will enable you to receive the assistance check to help with the expenses of the child.

### **What To Take With You**

- ✓ Child's Social Security Card
- ✓ Proof of income for all people in your household. This includes wages, unemployment, SSI, child support, and any other source of income.
- ✓ Phone numbers and addresses of people who can be reached during the day who know that the children are living with you.
- ✓ Child's birth certificate to prove who the parents are.

Important! TEA Child Only assistance is only available to relatives within two degrees of separation from the children (for example, third cousins are not eligible).

If you are a grandparent, you will also need your son or daughter's birth certificate to show that you are related to the child's parents.

If you are the child's aunt or uncle, you will need a copy of your birth certificate and the child's parent's birth certificate to show that you are the parent's brother or sister.

If you don't have the social security cards or birth certificates you need, ask the person at DHS who takes your application to help you get these.

## **Cooperation with Child Support Enforcement**

When you apply for TEA, you must tell Child Support Enforcement about any child support being paid. If the parents aren't paying child support, you must cooperate with Child Support Enforcement in such things as establishing the father's paternity and testifying at child support hearings. When you go to Child Support Enforcement, take BOTH the parents' social security numbers, where they last worked, information about existing child support orders, date and place parents were divorced, and anything else that will either help locate the parents or establish whether there is a child support order.

Even if the parent isn't paying child support, you can receive TEA assistance as long as you are working with Child Support Enforcement to help them recover child support or get child support started. If you can show through police reports, counseling records or other official sources a reason that you are afraid that cooperating with Child Support Enforcement would result in you or the child being harmed, you may be able to receive a Good Cause Exemption.

## **Where to Apply**

You can apply at the appropriate DHS office between 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. You can find a complete listing of state offices later in this guide.

If you have problems or questions, contact your local county DHHS office for more information or call 1.800.482.8988. You can also call Arkansas Voices for the Children Left Behind at 501.603.0244 /Toll Free 1.866.9VOICES (1.866.986.4237).

## **Juvenile Court Dependency / Neglect Proceedings**

Dependency / neglect hearings are held in the Juvenile Division of Chancery Court. There are a number of reasons a child may be involved in these proceedings, such as:

- ✓ The child's parent is incarcerated.
- ✓ The child was taken into protective custody by a worker from the Department of Human Services or a law enforcement officer who has reason to believe the child is at risk of being severely maltreated.
- ✓ The child's parent is mentally or physically unable to care for the child
- ✓ The child's parent is institutionalized and has been unable to arrange for safe and appropriate care for the child.

## **When a Parent is Arrested**

When a parent is arrested and taken to jail, it is important for the parent to contact someone to care for their children. If no one is able, willing and suitable to care for the children, they will be taken into the care of the Department of Human Services. If the parent is incarcerated, the parent should talk to her lawyer about a transport order so they can attend proceedings affecting their children.

### **If you want the children released into your care:**

1. Call an assessment worker at the Department of Human Services (DHS) in the county where the children are taken into custody as soon as possible. The phone number for your county is in the back of this guide.
2. Tell the worker that you want to care for the children, and ask her to begin a home study, which must be complete before the children will be released to you. Tell your DHS worker if you want the children released to you but need assistance to care for the child. After the home study is completed and approved, the children can be released to your custody. The children's parent(s) have the right to visit the children and make decisions about them, but will not be able to take the children from your care without the judge's permission. During the home study, the case worker will meet with each family member, and criminal background checks will be performed on all members over the age of 14. See Home Studies on the next page for more information.
3. Attend the Probable Cause Hearing to let the DHS assessment worker, lawyers and judge know you are available to care for the children. The children's parent(s) will receive a summons with the place, date and time, or you can call DHS or the court to find out this information about the hearing. The Department of Human Services must file a petition and affidavit with the juvenile court within 72 hours of the child being picked up, stating the facts that led to the children being taken from their home. If evidence exists that the children are at risk, the judge will issue an emergency order. Within five (5) days of the date the emergency order is issued, a Probable Cause Hearing will be held. During this hearing, the judge will decide if there is enough evidence of abuse or neglect to require keeping the child out of the home. The judge could:
  - ✓ Return the children to the parent
  - ✓ Put the children in someone else's custody
  - ✓ Put the children in foster care

### **Home Studies**

A home study must be completed before you adopt or become a foster parent. An Adoption Specialist, who will visit with you in your home, meets with household members individually and as a family. You will be asked to think about and discuss many issues, including ones such as your life experiences and lifestyle, relationships, strengths, why you want to adopt, child development issues, problem solving skills, support systems, expectations for children and your parenting skills.

#### **Requirements:**

- ✓ A medical evaluation on all household members is necessary by your doctor. An illness or disability will not prevent you from adopting, as long as it would not interfere with your ability to parent.
- ✓ A criminal background check must be completed on everyone in the household who is 14 years of age or older

- ✓ A child abuse and neglect check must be completed on everyone in the household who is 10 years of age or older.
- ✓ You do not have to own your home, but it must have adequate space, and safety measures must be in place concerning firearms, dangerous pets, and water hazards.
- ✓ You must have sufficient income/resources to meet the needs of a child.
- ✓ There are no educational or religious requirements. You must be mature, stable, and have appropriate parenting skills.
- ✓ You must complete adoption training that DHHS/DCFS provides at no cost. Completion of CPR and First Aid training is required.

The home study process can take from four to six months to complete. Although it may sound overwhelming, remember that DHHS/DCFS adoption staff does not expect perfect families.

## Family Reunification

If the children are put in foster care, a family reunification plan will be written that describes exactly what the parents must do to get their children back. This plan will be regularly reviewed to determine whether the plan is working and whether the parent is doing the requested activities in the plan. If it becomes clear that within 12 months the children cannot be reunited with their parent(s), a hearing will be held to make a decision about permanent arrangements for the children. At the preliminary hearing, DHS may recommend one of the following:

- ✓ A person other than the parent, such as a kinship caregiver, takes permanent custody of the children
- ✓ The children are put in foster care. However, children may no longer remain in foster care beyond 15 of the past 22 months. After that time, a permanent placement is required by federal law according to the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997.
- ✓ The parent's rights are terminated, and the children are put into an adoptive home

DHS does not have to provide family reunification services if the parent was convicted of certain acts, such as murder or voluntary manslaughter of another child, aiding or abetting such acts, or a felony assault that resulted in serious bodily injury. In most cases, however, parents and children are entitled to family reunification services even if the parent is incarcerated. A lawyer may request that the juvenile judge order family reunification services such as visitation and phone calls and, if needed, request funding for collect calls and transportation costs.

The parent should call or write both the children and caregiver on a regular basis, being mindful of the expense of collect calls. The parent should also stay in contact with the social worker and request reports of the child's progress. As the caregiver, you may want to send pictures, copies of school reports, and medical records to the parent. You may want to encourage the parent to send cards, handmade items, art or other items the child would enjoy.

The parent should keep copies of all legal documents, a record of calls and letters to the children and contacts with the lawyer, social worker and the court. While the parent is serving time, he should take advantage of programs such as parent education, substance abuse treatment, and domestic violence groups – and keep an attendance record. A detailed record will better prepare the parent for periodic hearings.

## Termination of Parental Rights

When parental rights are terminated, the parent no longer has any legal right to care for or even visit the child, and the child can be placed for adoption. Unless a grandparent is granted the right to adopt the child, when the parent's rights are terminated, grandparents' rights are also legally terminated.

## Who to Contact for More Information

For more information about dependency / neglect proceedings, contact the Department of Human Services. You may also want to contact the clerk at the court where the hearings are being held and ask to speak to an attorney ad litem, who is appointed by the court to represent the children's best interests and wishes. If the children's best interests are different from the children's wishes, the attorney ad litem will represent the children's wishes.

## Kinship Foster Care

When a child has been abused or neglected by a parent, the judge may give legal custody of the child to the state after a hearing has been held. When this happens, children may go into foster care, which is run by the Department of Human Services, Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS). State law requires that DCFS attempt to place children who are in their care into the custody of a relative.

Relatives who are approved to become foster parents receive payments to help with the children in their care. Kinship foster care payments may include money for food, clothing, shelter, daily supervision, school supplies, personal needs of the child, medical and dental care, incidentals, social services and supportive services such as counseling.

Grandparents and other relatives who become kinship foster parents have certain duties and responsibilities. While the child is in foster care, her placement will be supervised by the Department of Human Services. As a foster parent, you cannot make major decisions about the child's life without the approval of the state since the state has legal custody of the child. If DHS at any time disapproves the home of the kinship foster parent, the child can be removed from the home.

Important! If you want to be the child's kinship foster parent, the child must first be in the care, custody or guardianship of the state. You may be caring for a child whose parent has been abusive or neglectful, but you are NOT eligible for assistance as a kinship foster parent unless the state has legal custody of the child. Do not take physical custody of your relative's child if you want to become her foster parent.

## Becoming a Kinship Foster Parent

A relative who wants to become a kinship foster parent must go through an approval process identical to the process for becoming a foster parent. There is no difference in the foster program for a relative vs. a stranger. This process includes:

- ✓ Checking to see if there has ever been a charge of child abuse or neglect that was found to be valid against anyone living in your household.

- ✓ Checking the criminal background of members of the household.
- ✓ Checking to make certain the house meets certain standards.
- ✓ Checking that family members are in good physical and mental health.
- ✓ Attending 10 weeks of training for foster parents.

## **Reunification**

When children are placed in foster care with a relative, a plan will be created that the parent must follow in order for the children and parent to be reunited. A relative who is a kinship foster parent is expected to cooperate with this plan.

## **Terminating Parental Rights**

As mentioned previously, when children are placed in foster care, a plan will be written that defines exactly what the parent must do to get the children back. DCFS will review the case periodically to decide whether it is in the best interest of the children to end the rights of the parents. This might be done when the problems that led to the children being removed from the parent's home have not been corrected. One possibility is that the children will be placed in permanent foster care after parental rights have been terminated. It is also possible that the children will be placed for adoption after the parent's rights have been terminated. See the sections of this guide on Juvenile Court Dependency/Neglect Proceedings and Adoption.

For more information on Kinship Foster Care:

Arkansas Voices Caregiver Support System

1.866.9.VOICES  
(outside Pulaski  
County)

Inside Pulaski County

501.603.0244

## **Guardianship**

Legal guardianship occurs when a court orders someone to be responsible for raising a child. Unlike adoption, where the parent's right to custody is permanently terminated, legal guardianship suspends the parent's right to custody. A guardian must be 18 or older and cannot be a convicted or unpardoned felon.

To establish guardianship, you must file a petition with the court (usually in the county court where the child resides) and ask the judge to appoint you as guardian. The petition must contain the following:

- ✓ Child's name
- ✓ Why you are seeking guardianship
- ✓ Whether there is already an appointed guardian
- ✓ Your name and address
- ✓ Names and addresses of those most closely related by blood or marriage
- ✓ Name and address of person with custody of the child



As a legal guardian, you have the right and responsibility to make important decisions about the children. As guardian, you are also responsible for the care, custody, control and education of the children and may be held responsible for their behavior.

If you are the child's legal guardian, the parent does not have the legal right to remove the child from your care without the court's permission. The parent must go to the probate court that approved the guardianship and ask that the guardianship order be terminated. If the parent takes the child before the court modifies or terminates the guardianship, the parent may face criminal prosecution.

If the parent can demonstrate that she or he has adequate housing, a legal and stable income, and is responsible to resume custody, the court may discharge the guardian and return the child to the parent.

Unlike many states, Arkansas does not have a guardianship subsidy.

### **Becoming a Legal Guardian**

1. You or your attorney (see Legal Help below) will fill out several legal forms.
2. You must notify the parents, any current legal or actual guardians, the children and all relatives named in the petition that you are filing for legal guardianship.
3. Your attorney will file papers with the Probate Court in the county in which the children reside or are present.
4. A hearing date will be set.
5. An investigation will be held to determine if you are a suitable guardian. This investigation may include checking to see if you have a criminal record or if there has ever been a confirmed allegation of child abuse against you. Having a felony conviction automatically disqualifies you as a guardian.
6. You must pay a fee of about \$120, depending on the county in which you file the petition for guardianship. If you cannot afford this fee, you can apply for a waiver of court fees and costs (also called in forma Pauperis application). Applications are available from the County Clerk's Officer. You may qualify for the waiver if you are receiving financial assistance under many government programs, including SSI, TEA, or Food Stamps. You may also be eligible for a waiver if your monthly income meets a certain limit or if your income is not enough to pay for the common necessities of life for yourself and your children or grandchildren you support.

### **Legal Help**

The typical out-of-pocket expenses for an attorney range from \$1,500 to \$2,000 if the guardianship is not contested. If the parent or another relative contests your becoming a guardian, the attorney costs will increase.

You may feel that the process of preparing and filing the guardianship and petition and asking the court to grant the petition may be too complicated to do without professional help. If you cannot afford an attorney to help you file a guardianship petition, contact one of the following organizations. They may be able to provide free (pro bono) or inexpensive services, or they may be able to refer you to an attorney with Family Court experience who can help without charge.

**Center for Arkansas Legal Services**

209 West Capitol, Suite 36  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
1-800-950.517 or  
501.376.3423

**UALR School of Law Legal Clinic**

1201 McAlmont  
Little Rock, AR 72203  
501.324.9441

**Arkansas Bar Association**

400 West Markham  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
501.375.4606

**Power of Attorney**

Birth parents may use Power of attorney to give someone they trust legal authority to make certain decisions: for example, it would allow a caregiver to make medical and school decisions. It also allows the child to qualify for Medicaid on the basis of the child's resources and income, as long as no adult in the household owes a legal duty of child support. Receiving power of attorney does not generally require a home study.

Granting power of attorney usually does not involve a court hearing, although you may be required to record the power of attorney at a county office. In Arkansas, you must get the document notarized.

Power of attorney does not sever the parent-child legal relationship, and it can allow the birth parent to have court-ordered visitation. It is often not enforced in the same manner as a court order of custody, it can be for a limited time, and the parent can revoke it at any time.

**Adoption**

Adoption is a legal status granted by a judge after the rights of the children's birth parents have been terminated. The birth parents no longer have any rights, and can visit their children only if the adoptive parents agree. The adoptive grandparent becomes the children's legal parent with the same rights, duties and responsibilities as a birth parent. An adoption can be terminated during the first year after the adoption if there is proof that fraud was committed. After the first year, the adoption cannot be ended.

Adoptions require a home study. For more information on home studies, see Home Studies under the Juvenile Court Dependency / Neglect Proceedings section in this guide.

If you adopt your grandchild, you can recommend someone to take care of the children when you die by making a will. You can also recommend a standby guardian to take care of your grandchild if you are sick. The court will consider these preferences but will make a decision based on what it believes to be in the best interest of the child.

**Public Benefits**

After you adopt your grandchild your income will generally be counted in figuring the child's eligibility for public benefit programs such as food stamps, SSI and Temporary Employment Assistance. If the child was receiving assistance from a public benefit program, there is the chance that she may not be eligible when your income and resources are counted. Also, if the child was in foster care and you received a foster care payment, the payment will stop when you adopt the child.

## Adoption Subsidies

Adoption subsidies are payments that help cover the costs of raising children, and they continue until the child turns 18. To receive an adoption subsidy, the children must have been in foster care and have special needs that have made it difficult to find an adoptive home. Special needs might include the child's age, race, or physical, mental or emotional disabilities. Not all children in foster care are eligible for this subsidy.

### **For more information about adoption subsidies, contact:**

Department of Human Services  
Division of Children and Family Services  
626 Donaghey Plaza South  
P.O. Box 1437  
Little Rock, AR 72203-1437  
501.682.8984

## FINS

FINS stands for Families in Need of Services. When you file a FINS petition you are asking (petitioning) the juvenile court for help. The three usual grounds to file a FINS petition are when a juvenile is skipping school, is habitually disobedient at home or school, or is leaving school without permission.

When you contact the juvenile court about a FINS petition, you will talk with a case manager. The case manager may know of places that can help without filing a petition with the court. If you decide to file a FINS, you will be referred to an intake officer / attorney who will help you prepare the petition. There is a fee for filing this petition.

If the judge grants your petition and orders the child to receive a service such as residential treatment, the child can apply for Medicaid to help pay for that service. In this case, only the child's income is used to determine his eligibility for Medicaid. This can help if you need assistance but have too much income to qualify for Medicaid, or if your private insurance does not cover this type of care.

This does not guarantee that Medicaid will pay for the treatment. Before the child begins to receive services, you should ask the provider what will happen if the service turns out to not be covered by Medicaid.

## What You Should Take With You

You should make a list of the problems the child has had, along with the dates the problems occurred. Also take any documents or records about the problem. These might be school attendance records showing that the child has been skipping school or disciplinary documents. If the child has been in counseling, take information about where the child was seen and what she was being seen for.

## Who to Contact:

For more information, call FINS at the number below and ask to speak to a case manager. If the child you are caring for is having problems, don't wait for the problems to get worse. Arkansas Voices for the Children Left Behind has legal advocates (not attorneys) who can help you prepare for filing the FINS petition. Call **1.866.9VOICES** toll-free or 501.603.0244 in Pulaski County.

You will find a list of phone numbers for DHS offices in the state later in this guide.

**Juvenile Justice Complex**  
3001 West Markham, Second Floor  
Little Rock, AR 72204  
501.340.6700

## State Laws

There are many new pieces of legislation being enacted concerning relative caregivers, emanating from the 2008 federal legislation concerning Family Connections. The federal laws are providing impetus for state legislation, especially regarding grandparent notification of a child entering the child welfare system, permanency options for grandparents and family members whose children are in the child welfare system, visitations among family members and children in the child welfare system, and possibly guardianship subsidies for relatives who children enter foster care. Please contact us to keep abreast of the legislative changes that may be helpful for relative caregivers.

And, if you wish to participate in the advocacy and lobbying efforts to provide more support and services to Arkansas kinship caregivers, again, contact us. Specifically, Dee Ann Newell, at 501-366-3647 or [deeann@arkansasvoices.org](mailto:deeann@arkansasvoices.org) or contact your state legislator (See [www.arkleg.state.ar.us](http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us) to identify your representative or senator at the state legislature.)

The following state laws may be helpful to grandparents and other relatives raising children:

**Standby Guardianship (ARK Code §28-65-221):** This law states that any parent chronically ill or near death may nominate a standby guardian to be legally responsible for his child. The parent and guardian share legal authority.

**Incarceration Prevention (ARK Code §9-30-102 et seq.):** This law establishes services to prevent child abuse and neglect and to help prevent children of prisoners from future incarceration. The law provides specifically for funds to be used to offer support programs for the caregivers of children whose parent is incarcerated in a detention or correctional facility, the children themselves, and the incarcerated parent. It is the first state legislation to provide funding for support services for these families.

## Behavior Management Tips

Compiled by Michelle Young, M.S. Ed.

We've all heard the sayings: "Parenting is the hardest job we will ever do." "Children do not come with an instruction manual at birth." While these statements are very true, there is help for parents when it comes to dealing with behavior problems. Disciplining a child is not like repairing a car. There is no one particular way to "fix" a problem. However, there are many tools that are effective in managing behavior and helping parents and children survive the early years. The following tips, which are not listed in any particular order, are suggestions for parents and kinship caregivers who want to improve behavior problems and who are willing to put forth the effort to do so. Since there are quite a few, it's best to choose a few tips at a time to implement. Then add a few more until all tips are in place.

### Be Fair, Firm and Consistent

Establish and post house rules early. Modify as the child gets older. Always be fair, firm and consistent with enforcing rules and daily discipline. Keep a positive attitude and do not be punitive. Never put down your child.

**Listen**

Just as you want your child to listen to you; you should listen actively to your child. This sets a good example and helps the child feel important and valued.

**Give Short and Simple Directions**

Young children are unable to process multiple steps. Assign one direction, using as few words as possible, at a time and praise your child when that direction is followed. Then, assign another direction until the task is completed.

**Assign Chores and Responsibilities**

Even very young children can help around the house. As the child grows older, the chores/responsibilities should be adapted to fit the age. Chores and responsibilities help children feel a sense of belonging and importance.

**Provide reminders, but not too many**

When your child has been asked to complete a task, give a gentle reminder if he/she gets distracted but do keep repeating. If necessary, implement a consequence such as time-out. If reminded too often, children learn to only do what has been asked when the adult gets frustrated and/or yells, threats, etc.

**Help your child be organized**

Just as being an organized adult is crucial to smoother daily living, children need to learn to do the same. Teach your child to put like things together when cleaning up and to put his/her backpack, lunchbox, coat, etc. in the same place when coming home from school. Allowing him/her to help with putting dishes, groceries and laundry away is a great way to teach organization.

**Teach patience**

Just as some adults have more patience than others, children also do. However, you can help teach patience by modeling it yourself. When in traffic or a long line at the grocery store, do not grumble and fuss out loud. Emphasize that everyone must learn to wait his turn.

**Avoid potential problems by careful planning**

If you know your child is tired or hungry, reschedule outings to the grocery store or mall for another time. If you have to go to a store that is not kid friendly, plan to go when someone else can watch your child or when he is at daycare or school.

**Ensure adequate rest**

Children need a lot of sleep. Without it, they become tired, irritable and difficult to manage. Children from two to 10 need between 10 and 12 hours of sleep each night. Check with your pediatrician about the required amount for your child.

**Insist on daily exercise/physical activity**

Children have so much energy and we must help them burn off the excess. Running, biking, swimming, sports, playing at the park, etc. are great for warm weather. When it's cold, try to find a gym or someplace inside that allows physical activity.

**Establish set routines**

Children, even babies, thrive when routines are in place. They love knowing what's happening next. Set and follow routines with daily activities from morning to bedtime. Adjust as the child becomes older.

**Recognize and accept your child's limitations**

Every child is different, so be aware of your child's limits. Accept what your child can and cannot do.

### **Recognize strengths**

Focusing on what a child can do instead of what he/she can't do will help build self-esteem and reinforce desirable behaviors.

### **Praise/Reward good behavior immediately**

Children love to be praised. Try to praise actions – “You did such a good job picking up your toys!” instead of more general praise. Use both verbal and physical praise (such as a pat on the back, a hug, a thumbs up or a high five) to reinforce the behavior. Rewards such as a toy are okay occasionally, but be careful. Typically with rewards, children expect them to get bigger and bigger. For example, a sticker is great for a 2-year old, but a 10-year old would rather have a video game. Social rewards like a play date with a friend or a visit to a park, zoo, and playground are great.

### **Implement consequences immediately**

When undesirable behavior occurs, a consequence should be given immediately. A time-out or removing a privilege (such as watching TV, playing on the computer, or talking on the phone) is much more effective than shouting or spanking.

### **The Bill of Rights for Children of the Incarcerated**

San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership, distilled and written by Nell Bernstein, author of *All Alone in the World: Children of the Incarcerated*. These rights are also applicable, in many instances, to children in foster care.

1. I have the right to be kept safe and informed at the time of my parent's arrest.
2. I have the right to be heard when decisions are made about me.
3. I have the right to be considered when decisions are made about my parents.
4. I have the right to be well cared for in my parent's absence.
5. I have the right to speak with, see and touch my parent.
6. I have the right to support as I face my parent's incarceration.
7. I have the right not to be judged, blamed or labeled because my parent is incarcerated.
8. I have the right to a lifelong relationship with my parent.

### **Transitional Issues for Relative Caregivers**

Adapted with permission from original material developed by Joseph Crumbley, M.S.W, D.S.W.

<b>Transitional Issue:</b>	<b>Examples of Behaviors and Feelings:</b>
Hopes and dreams: the caregivers wishes and desires	The caregiver hopes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the birth parent will resume responsibility for raising the child.</li><li>• that soon her life will go back to normal.</li><li>• the child will grow up to have a good life and be able to care for herself.</li><li>• the child will not become involved with drugs.</li></ul>
Grief and adjustment: the caregiver grieves over	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The caregiver must now place the child's priorities over her own.</li></ul>

changes in lifestyle and relationships. The caregiver must make adjustments as a result of assuming responsibility for the child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifestyle changes from that of a single person or a couple to that of parents with young children.</li> <li>• The caregiver must postpone short- and long-term plans for retirement, second career or relocation.</li> <li>• The caregiver must share physical space in the home, often having to change rooms or furnishings to accommodate the child.</li> </ul>
Shifting parental roles and responsibilities: the caregiver, the birth parent and the child all must adjust to changes in their relationships to each other. The caregiver now has primary parenting responsibilities.	<p>The caregiver now changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• from a friend to someone who must discipline the birth parent's child and act as the authority figure in the child's life. The caregiver must help the child understand this new responsibility.</li> <li>• from a peer to the birth parent to someone with more authority over the child than the birth parent. For example, the caregiver may have to tell the birth parent when he can or cannot see the child.</li> </ul>
Guilt: the caregiver feels some responsibility for the birth parent's problems that have resulted in that parent's current situation.	<p>The caregiver feels guilty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• about replacing the birth parent by assuming primary parenting responsibility for the child</li> <li>• about placing the child's needs over the birth parent's needs.</li> <li>• about giving the child special treatment that others in the family, such as other grandchildren, their own older children or adult brothers and sisters of the birth parent do not receive.</li> <li>• when she must report the birth parent for abuse or neglect or when she must ask the birth parent to leave the home.</li> <li>• about the birth parent's inability to care for her child, presuming the birth parent was not properly parented (by the caregiver).</li> </ul>
Embarrassment: the caregiver feels embarrassed about the reasons for and various aspects of her current living condition.	<p>The caregiver feels embarrassed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that the birth parent cannot raise her own child.</li> <li>• When she must explain to family and friends why the child is in her care.</li> <li>• About being dependent on agencies and having to apply for services.</li> </ul>

Transitional Issue:	Examples of Behaviors and Feelings:
Carrying over past issues: the caregiver's past problems and emotional issues with the birth parent interfere with the caregiver's relationship with the child.	<p>The caregiver may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• respond negatively to the child when the child does something that reminds the caregiver of the birth parent's negative traits.</li> <li>• perceive the child to be just like the birth parent.</li> <li>• still harbor anger over birth parent's past actions, such as becoming a teen parent, dropping out of school or using drugs at school.</li> </ul>
Loyalty: the caregiver feels as if she has betrayed the birth parent.	<p>The caregiver may feel disloyal because she:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• feels that that has replaced the birth parent by assuming primary parenting responsibility for the child.</li> <li>• feels that she is betraying the birth parent in reporting that parent for abuse or neglect.</li> <li>• must follow through on court orders by limiting contact or visits between birth parent and child.</li> </ul>
Adjusting to child-rearing demands: the caretaker must	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The caregiver must understand that what was not considered abuse years ago may now be considered</li> </ul>

<p>understand and adapt to new and different approaches to raising children.</p>	<p>abusive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the child has special needs, such as being overly active or needing medical treatment, the caregiver must be able to use creative discipline alternatives.</li> <li>• The caregiver must work with professionals from multiple agencies in caring for the child.</li> <li>• The caregiver must adhere to agency policy on discipline methods.</li> <li>• The caregiver needs to find support and respite in order to avoid overtaxing herself.</li> </ul>
<p>Anger: the caregiver has intense, negative feelings about the reasons for and various aspects of her current living conditions.</p>	<p>The caregiver may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not agree with agency plans to reunify the child with the birth parent.</li> <li>• feel angry that the birth parent has maltreated the child and has done such a poor job of raising the child.</li> <li>• feel angry that the child expresses the desire to go back to the birth parent.</li> <li>• feel angry because of the conflict and rivalry between herself and the birth parent.</li> </ul>
<p>Planning for illness or death: the caretaker must make plans for who will care for the child if the caregiver becomes ill.</p>	<p>The caretaker should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify who else in the family could care for the child if she becomes ill or dies, and then make specific plans with that person(s).</li> <li>• talk honestly with the child about what would happen if the caregiver became ill or died and help the child understand who would take care of him in those situations.</li> <li>• involve the alternative caregiver in the child's life through activities, sleepovers, etc., so they can develop a relationship.</li> </ul>
<p>Sabotage: the caregiver must deal with her own feelings or actions, or those of the birth parent or child that can undermine the child's current living situation, case plan or family relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The caregiver and the birth parent may compete in the parenting role.</li> <li>• The birth parent may not want to accept the caregiver's role as the decision-maker in the child's care.</li> <li>• The caregiver may feel frustrated or left out when the agency makes plans for the child without the caregiver's involvement or agreement.</li> <li>• The child resists the caregiver's efforts to discipline him or refuses to submit to the caregiver's authority.</li> </ul>



**Phone Numbers for Department of Human Services**

<b>County</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>City</b>
Arkansas	870-946-4519	Dewitt
Arkansas	870-673-3597	Stuttgart
Ashley	870-853-9816	Hamburg
Baxter	870-425-6011	Mtn. Home
Benton	479-273-9011	Bentonville
Boone	870-741-6107	Harrison
Bradley	870-226-5878	Warren
Calhoun	870-798-4201	Hampton
Carroll	870-423-3351	Berryville
Chicot	870-265-3821	Lake Village
Clark	870-246-9886	Arkadelphia
Clay	870-598-2282	Piggott
Cleburne	501-362-3298	Heber Springs
Cleveland	870-325-6218	Rison
Columbia	870-234-4190	Magnolia
Conway	501-354-2418	Morrilton
Craighead	870-972-1732	Jonesboro
Crawford	479-474-7595	Van Buren
Crittenden	870-732-5170	W. Memphis
Cross	870-238-8553	Wynne
Dallas	870-352-5115	Fordyce
Desha	870-222-4144	McGehee
Drew	870-367-6835	Monticello
Faulkner	501-730-9900	Conway
Franklin	479-667-2379	Ozark
Fulton	870-895-3309	Salem
Garland	501-321-2583	Hot Springs
Grant	870-942-5151	Sheridan
Greene	870-236-8723	Paragould
Hempstead	870-777-8656	Hope
Hot Spring	501-332-2718	Malvern
Howard	870-845-4334	Nashville
Indep.	870-698-1876	Batesville
Izard	870-368-4318	Melbourne
Jackson	870-523-9820	Newport
Jefferson	870-534-4200	Pine Bluff
Johnson	479-754-2355	Clarksville
Lafayette	870-921-4283	Lewisville
Lawrence	870-886-2408	Walnut Ridge
Lee	870-295-2597	Marianna
Lincoln	870-628-4105	Star City
Little River	870-898-5155	Ashdown
Logan	479-963-2783	Paris
Logan	479-675-3091	Booneville
Lonoke	501-676-5643	Lonoke
Madison	479-738-2161	Huntsville
Marion	870-449-4058	Yellville
Miller	870-773-0563	Texarkana

<b>County</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>City</b>
Miss.	870-763-7093	Blytheville
Miss.	870-563-5234	Osceola
Monroe	870-747-3329	Clarendon
Monroe	870-734-1445	Brinkley
Montgomery	870-867-3184	Mount Ida
Nevada	870-887-6626	Prescott
Newton	870-446-2237	Jasper
Ouachita	870-836-8166	Camden
Perry	501-889-5105	Perryville
Phillips	870-338-8391	Helena
Pike	870-285-3111	Murfreesboro
Poinsett	870-578-5491	Harrisburg
Polk	479-394-3100	Mena
Pope	479-968-5596	Russellville
Prairie	870-998-2581	DeValls Bluff
Pul. South	501-682-9200	Little Rock
Pul. North	501-682-0100	No. Little Rock
Pul. SW	501-371-1100	Little Rock
Pul. East	501-371-1300	Little Rock
Pul. Jax.	501-371-1200	Jacksonville
Randolph	870-892-4475	Pocahontas
Saline	501-315-1600	Benton
Saline	501-847-6056	Bryant
Scott	479-637-4141	Waldron
Searcy	870-448-3153	Marshall
Sebastian	479-782-4555	Fort Smith
Sevier	870-642-2623	DeQueen
Sharp	870-856-1053	Cherokee Village
St. Francis	870-633-1242	Forrest City
Stone	870-269-4321	Mtn. View
Union	870-862-6631	El Dorado
Van Buren	501-745-4192	Clinton
Wash.	479-521-1270	Fayetteville
Wash.	479-442-4029	Fayetteville
White	501-268-8696	Searcy
Woodruff	870-347-2537	Augusta
Yell	479-495-2723	Danville

**Phone Numbers for Arkansas Department of Workforce Services (ADWS)**

ADWS provides employment-related services, including job-readiness activities, transportation assistance, childcare assistance, and other supportive services so that the parent or caregiver can engage in work or education and training activities.

<b>Office</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>County</b>
Arkadelphia	870-246-2481	Clark
Batesville	870-793-4156	Fulton, Izard, Independence, Stone and Sharp
Benton	501-776-2974	Saline
Blytheville	870-762-2035	Mississippi
Camden	870-836-5024	Calhoun, Dallas and Ouachita
Conway	501-730-9897	Faulkner and Van Buren
El Dorado	870-862-6456	Union
Fayetteville	479-521-5730	Madison and Washington
Forrest City	870-633-2900	Cross, Monroe, Prairie and St Francis
Fort Smith	479-783-0231	Crawford, St. Franklin, Logan and Sebastian
Harrison	870-741-8236	Boone, Carroll, Newton and Searcy
Helena	870-338-7415	Phillips and Lee
Hope	870-777-3421	Hempstead, Howard, Nevada and Pike County South
HMFLC	870-777-5630	All
Hot Springs	501-525-3450	Garland, Montgomery and Pike County North
Jacksonville	501-982-3835	Lonoke and Pulaski
Jonesboro	870-935-5594	Craighead and Poinsett
Little Rock UI	501-682-8030	Pulaski
Little Rock ES	501-682-7719	Pulaski
Magnolia	870-234-3440	Columbia and Lafayette
Malvern	501-332-5461	Hot Spring
Mena	479-394-3060	Polk and Scott
Monticello	870-367-2476	Ashley, Bradley, Chicot, Desha and Drew
Mountain Home	870-425-2386	Baxter, Marion
Newport	870-523-3641	Jackson and Woodruff
Paragould	870-236-8512	Greene and Clay
Pine Bluff	870-534-1920	Arkansas, Grant, Cleveland, Jefferson and Lincoln
Rogers	479-636-4755	Benton
Russellville	479-968-2784	Conway, Johnson, Perry, Pope and Yell
Searcy	501-268-8601	Cleburne and White
Walnut Ridge	870-886-3556	Lawrence and Randolph
West Memphis	870-400-2269	Crittenden