Generations

American Society on Aging

Generations Journal | Winter 2024-25
Grandparents Raising Grandchildren in the United States



A Note from Leanne Clark-Shirley, PhD



Dear Readers,

Each day, more than 2 million grandparents across the country wake up as the primary caretakers of their grandchildren, preparing breakfast, getting them to and from school, and managing a constellation of joys and trials from emotional, to behavioral, to financial. Sometimes referred to as "kinship care" or "skipped generation households," the new issue of *Generations Journal* dives into the modern realities and needs of **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren in the United States**, with a special focus on African American, Black, Latino, and Indigenous grandparents. At the helm of this issue are two remarkable scholars, Wendy Lustbader

of the University of Washington and Gaynell Simpson of Georgia Gwinnett College, who combined their deep professional expertise and passion for Advocating for Grandparents Who Step in to Parent to assemble a collection of articles that will be invaluable to practitioners, policymakers, students, and anyone who has experienced grandparenthood in any form.

The first section elevates the voices and stories of African American grandmothers. Jean C. Accius of Creating Healthier Communities opens the issue by offering a The Power of Strength: A Tribute to My Grandmother and All Grandparents through his story of her sacrifice, strength, and legacy. Guest Editor Gaynell M. Simpson zooms out to give us A Glimpse into the Lives of African American Grandmothers Caring on the Margins, sharing findings from her research on grandmothers' experiences, coping mechanisms, and the factors that threaten their ability to thrive. And Tina L. Dothard Peterson of the University of Cincinnati shares A Case Study of Compound Caregiving by an African American Grandmother, highlighting the very real health risks faced by grandmothers who are taking care of multiple family members simultaneously.

Next, we read about The Impact of Latino Culture on the Experiences of *Abuelitas* (Grandmothers) as Nancy Mendoza of The Ohio State University explains how Latino cultural values of familismo, machismo, and *marianismo* can shape grandmothers and their needs. Georgia State University's Deborah Marie Whitley describes the importance of considering family composition in Family Dynamics When Grandchildren Are Not Siblings: An Opening Discussion. And Sandra Edmonds Crewe of Howard University discusses the intertwining constraints of poverty and adverse childhood experiences for many African American grandparents in Getting By Is Not Enough. Then, in examining Keeping Families Together Via Better Guardianship Rules, Deirdre M. Smith of the University of Maine explains shortcomings and reform needs of minor guardianship laws.

LaShawnDa Pittman of the University of Washington leads us through an embedded mini-series of articles based on her nearly 20-year portfolio of research and advocacy with grandfamilies. We start with Skipped Generations Households: A Snapshot Preface for Three Articles to frame the discussion. Each article explores how Black grandmothers' support their grandchildren's development and needs, in 'I Wanna Put That Education in Them,' Getting Grandchildren Back on Their Feet, and 'Your Grandma Is Here for You.'

We turn to an exploration of several programs designed to support grandparents raising grandchildren. Fordham University's Carole Cox shares how culture is critical to Empowering Grandparent Caregivers Via In-Person and Virtual Programs, and Cheryl A. Miller, director of Children & Family Services for the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe and colleagues describe the successes of A Culturally Adapted Kinship Navigator Program. A broader view of Washington State's cultural adaptations for Latine and tribal kinship

caregivers follows in Supporting Kinship Caregivers, written by a team of state, academic, and tribal government authors led by Amanda Krotke-Crandall. Then Donna Butts and Robyn Wind of Generations United share how GRAND Voices—Powerful Advocates for Change have so effectively used storytelling to shape public policy.

The issue concludes with a feature from Bert Hayslip, Jr., of the University of North Texas, tying together what we know and proposing an agenda for greater appreciation of and support for Diversity Among Grandparent Caregivers: What We Need to Learn.

Please continue learning from this incredible group of authors and guest editors in a Beyond Generations Summit at On Aging, Wednesday, April 23, from 1:30–3:00 p.m.

Warmly,



Leanne Clark-Shirley, PhD
President & CEO
American Society on Aging

Read the latest Generations Journal



Advocating for Grandparents Who Step in to Parent

By Alison Biggar



The Power of Strength: A Tribute to My Grandmother and All Grandparents

By Jean Accius



A Glimpse into the Lives of African American Grandmothers Caring on the Margins

By Gaynell M. Simpson



A Case Study of Compound Caregiving by an African American Grandmother

By Tina L. Dothard Peterson



The Impact of Latino Culture on the Experiences of Abuelitas (Grandmothers)

By Nancy Mendoza



Family Dynamics When Grandchildren Are Not Siblings: An Opening Discussion

By Deborah Whitley



Getting By Is Not Enough

By Sandra Crewe



Keeping Families Together Via Better Guardianship Rules

By Deirdre M. Smith



Skipped Generation Households: A Snapshot Preface for Three Articles

By LaShawnDa Pittman



'I Wanna Put That Education in Them'

By LaShawnDa Pittman



Getting Grandchildren Back on Their Feet

By LaShawnDa Pittman



'Your Grandma Is Here for You'

By LaShawnDa Pittman



Empowering Grandparent Caregivers Via In-Person and Virtual Programs

By Carole Cox



A Culturally Adapted Kinship Navigator Program

By Cheryl A. Miller, Joylina J. Gonzalez, Star Hagen, Sierra Wollenhall, and Angelique Day



Supporting Kinship Caregivers

By Amanda Krotke-Crandall, Rosalyn Alber, Sierra Wollenhall, Angelique G. Day, John Fowler, Cheryl Miller, and Greene Delaplane



GRAND Voices—Powerful Advocates for Change

By Donna M. Butts and Robyn Wind



Diversity Among Grandparent Caregivers: What We Need to Learn

By Bert Hayslip

Read Generations Journal



On Aging 2025

Join us at On Aging 2025 in Orlando this April! The On Aging conference is our annual opportunity to come together to drive meaningful change, strengthen our communities and advance an age-inclusive society. The power of On Aging 2025 is in the people who show up—leaders, innovators, and advocates shaping the future of aging. We hope to see you there!

Learn More

Get to Know Generations

Members have unlimited access to all of our Generations publications on our digital publications platform. We hope you not only read for your own enjoyment and professional development, but that you also share articles that you find especially meaningful with your colleagues.

Here's a refresher on our three publications, all available digitally at generations.asaging.org to our members.

Generations Journal provides in-depth research and views on aging with journal articles written and edited by leaders in our space. New issues are released quarterly.

Generations Today explores timely trends and the people having direct impact on the aging space with Op-Eds and feature articles. Expect a new edition every other month.

Generations Now features short-form, member-driven commentary on timely aging-related issues. Check back often for the latest posts.

Generations is the publications brand of the American Society on Aging.

Copyright 2025: American Society on Aging

www.asaging.org

Unsubscribe from this Email

AMERICAN SOCIETY ON AGING

548 Market Street, PMB 85589, San Francisco, CA 94104