



## Zoom Check-In with GRG Support Group Facilitators

Notes from the 4/15/20 Zoom meeting

### Agenda:

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Check-Ins-
  - a. Are people in contact with GRG group members?
  - b. Is anyone hosting zoom meetings? How is that going?
  - c. What trends are you hearing from GRGs?
3. Updates from the GP Commission
4. How can the Commission help you/grandparents?

### Groups Present/Updates:

Fall River, Athol, Worcester, Franklin, Newton, Turners Falls, Milford, Lowell, Beverly, Taunton, Quincy

- Fall River: Reports having first Zoom meeting with GRG group this week at 9 pm per request of the grandparents. The grandparents wanted to check in at night once the kids were in bed. Fall River invited an attorney to be part of the zoom meeting to discuss special needs and access to educational services for kids while home during COVID 19.
- Athol: Have been having Zoom meetings weekly. The grandparents like it, but would rather meet in person. Some families have internet issues which makes the zoom meeting and remote learning for the kids challenging.
- Worcester: Only meets once a month (prior to COVID 19) and the facilitator not available to host a zoom meeting. The organizer of the meeting may try reach out through e-mail and ask if folks want a zoom meeting just to check-in.
- Franklin: Facilitator reports that today is actually the one-year anniversary of the start of the Franklin group. They have been in contact by phone and will be having a zoom meeting tonight.
- Newton: Facilitator is sending out weekly e-mails to check-in, only hearing back from a few families which is a concern. May try to have a zoom meeting.
- Turners Falls: Facilitator having phone-call and e-mail check-ins with families. Realized that she doesn't have everyone's e-mail address and this has made it difficult to check in with some families. They are having their first zoom meeting this week.
- Milford: Facilitator checking in via e-mail with families. The group/agency is having funding issues, group may lose funding for child care once meetings resume. \*Franklin and Milford will connect to collaborate possibly.
- Taunton: Facilitator is creating short videos for families on topics like self-care.
- Lowell: Used to have telephone support group in the past and just started an in-person group to meet in Lowell. During COVID 19 may go back to telephone support group. Facilitator has been reaching out through phone calls and will try to set up a zoom meeting.
- Beverly: Facilitator recently took over the group from the previous facilitator. Has been reaching out by phone to check-in with families. Some of the grandparents have some technology challenges.

- Quincy: Facilitator has been having zoom meetings to check-in with families. Zoom is working out well for now.

#### Issues/Concerns from Grand-families:

- ❖ Many grand-families are having trouble with food, whether that is planning to go food shopping, affording to go food shopping, going to school lunch sites, etc.
- ❖ Grandparents report worrying about their own job status and the impact of not-working could have on their family.
- ❖ Some grand-families are already making plans/have made plans for the grandchildren in their custody to live with others for fear of getting sick.
- ❖ Grandparents report that working out visitation between bio parents and the kids has been challenging, but most report that bio parents have been good about contact with their children being through face-time or the phone for now. Worry about how long bio parents will be agreeable to this.
- ❖ Grandparents report being very concerned for their adult child regarding substance abuse treatment and mental health services.

#### Information Sharing:

- SNAP: Due to COVID 19, SNAP recipients will receive the maximum/additional \$\$.
- Cities/Towns opening food pantries and supermarkets opening at earlier hours for seniors. For information, see attached by town.
- Some Aging Service Access points (ASAPs) are providing extra meal on wheels, including increase in frozen meals. This may be a good resource for grandparents who are 60 years old or older. There has been a waiver to deliver or receive food at congregate sites only, now meals are door to door. For Meals on Wheels, eligibility is based on a person being 60 years old or older, person is homebound (unable to leave home), and unable to prepare meals due to low-income. It is suggested that grandparents contact the ASAP that covers their town (see attached).
- Grief groups and Learn to Cope groups are meeting via zoom.
- A national online support group for families who lost a loved one due to COVID 19 is supposed to be starting.

#### **News from The Commission on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren:**

1. All Spring workshops have cancelled
2. The 2020 Conference scheduled in June has been cancelled
3. Webinar for grandparents/relative caregivers this Friday with The Federation for Children with Special Needs – “Coping with Children’s Anxiety”
4. Will work on other webinars to offer – send suggestions
5. Sending out weekly newsletters with information and links to services and resources

#### **How Can the Commission Help You and Grandparents:**

- Suggested getting a speaker/webinar on helping children cope with grief and loss during COVID 19.
- Facilitators would like to “meet” again