

meeting the needs

of **ALL**

families



a resource guide compiled by

**fredla**

FAMILY RUN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
LEADERSHIP ASSOCIATION

[WWW.FREDLA.ORG](http://WWW.FREDLA.ORG)



# introduction

The term “family” is not simply described as it once was.

The description below was developed many years ago by a family leader and advocate in New Mexico. It aptly describes the complexities of family structure and relationships that many children are raised in today.



“Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family. Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one. Families are big, small, extended, nuclear, and multigenerational, with one parent, two parents, and grandparents. We live under one roof or many. A family can be as temporary as a few weeks, as permanent as forever. We become part of a family by birth, adoption, marriage, or from a desire for mutual support.... A family is culture unto itself, with different values and unique ways of realizing its dreams; together, our families become the source of our rich cultural heritage and spiritual diversity.... Our families create neighborhoods, communities, states, and nations.”

— Polly Arango, Family Advocate and Co-founder  
Family Voices, Algodones, NM (1942-2010)

Each family is unique, leaving its members to be the only ones to define it – in their way, from their culture and through their truth. For children and youth with mental health needs, the definition is often complicated by circumstances that propel their journey among various living arrangements. The following resources are provided to highlight the unique needs of today’s diverse families.



## grandfamilies

In 2013, the Pew Research Center reported a 12% increase since 2000 in the number of grandparents with primary responsibility for parenting 2.9 million grandchildren under the age of 18 living with them.<sup>i</sup>

There are many reasons for this increase, including the mental illness, or incarceration of the parent, termination of parental rights or the death of the parent. Substance use by the parent is the most common reason for rights being terminated. A 2016 report from Generations United<sup>ii</sup> describes opioid use as one factor that has increased the number of grandparents assuming the primary parenting role of their grandchildren and sometimes great grandchildren.

### resources

- **Generations United:** Resources include information on existing state laws and policies affecting grandparents raising grandchildren [www.grandfamilies.org](http://www.grandfamilies.org)
- **US Department of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Program:** *Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Doubly Stressed, Triply Blessed.* A multimedia program – with video and written curricular materials [www.extension.org/category/family\\_caregiving\\_grandparents\\_raising\\_grandchildren](http://www.extension.org/category/family_caregiving_grandparents_raising_grandchildren)
- **National Kinship Alliance for Children:** *The Grandkin Guide, Frequently Asked Questions and Answers for Relatives Raising Children* [https://newfoundva.org/images/stories/documents/TheGrandKinGuide\\_lowres.pdf](https://newfoundva.org/images/stories/documents/TheGrandKinGuide_lowres.pdf)

<sup>i</sup> Pew Research Center, 5 Facts about American Grandparents, September 2015, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/09/13/5-facts-about-american-grandparents/>

<sup>ii</sup> Raising the Children of the Opioid Epidemic: Solutions and Support for Grandfamilies, <https://www.gu.org/app/uploads/2018/09/Grandfamilies-Report-SOGF-Updated.pdf>



# fathers

“The modern day father comes in various forms. Today’s father is no longer always the traditional married breadwinner and disciplinarian in the family. He can be single or married; externally employed or stay-at home; gay or straight; an adoptive or step-parent; and a more than capable caregiver to children facing physical or psychological challenges. Psychological research across families from all ethnic backgrounds suggests that fathers’ affection and increased family involvement help promote children’s social and emotional development.”<sup>iii</sup>



## resources

- **The National Fatherhood Initiative:** Provides resources and training to equip providers with knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively engage fathers in their children’s lives.  
[www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org)
- **The National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse:** an Office of Family Assistance (OFA) funded national resource for fathers, practitioners, programs/federal grantees, states and the public at-large who are serving or interested in supporting strong fathers and families.  
[www.fatherhood.gov/about-us](http://www.fatherhood.gov/about-us)
- **Creating Lasting Family Connections Fatherhood Program: Family Reintegration (CLFCFP):** An evidence-based curriculum designed for fathers, men in father like roles, and men who are planning to be fathers who are experiencing or are at risk for family conflict resulting from the individual’s physical and/or emotional separation (e.g., incarceration, substance abuse, military service).  
<http://copes.org/recommended-process-for-reviewing-selecting-and-implementing-the-clfc-fatherhood-program-family-reintegration/>

<sup>iii</sup> American Psychological Association, <https://www.apa.org/pi/families/resources/changing-father>



# families who are immigrants



More than 24 percent of the nation's children — over 17 million — have at least one foreign-born parent.<sup>iv</sup> Families who immigrate are disproportionately likely to experience poverty and other hardships that impede them from getting their needs met.

## resources

- **Bridging Refugee Youth and Family Services:** An online resource for newcomer parents and youth to have easy access to resources that empower families and ensure long-term integration.

<http://www.brycs.org/refugee-portal/>

- **Helping Immigrant Families Overcome Challenges:** The Child Welfare Information Gateway provides information on many aspects of supporting families who immigrate to the US from other countries.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/diverse-populations/immigration/helping-immigrant-families-overcome-challenges>

- **Mental Health Needs of Newcomer Youth:** Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services provides resources on trauma experienced by youth in their country of origin as well as generational differences in adjustment among the children of immigrants.

[https://brycs.org/cr\\_lists/mental-health-and-newcomer-youth](https://brycs.org/cr_lists/mental-health-and-newcomer-youth)

<sup>iv</sup> National Center for Children in Poverty, Immigrant Families, <http://www.nccp.org/topics/immigrantfamilies.html>



## families in the military

The National Military Family Association commissioned a study of military children, revealing that children and youth who experience the deployment of a parent often show higher levels of stress and anxiety than their civilian friends.<sup>v</sup> Younger children may not know where their mom or dad has gone or when or if they're coming back. Older children feel the burden of having to worry about the absent parent while they take on extra responsibilities at home.

### resources

● **National Military Family Association:** An association operated by military families for other military families.  
<https://www.militaryfamily.org/>

● **Military One Source:** Preparing a child for each phase of the deployment cycle  
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/parenting-through-deployment>

● **MilParent Power is Help for Parents:** Information and practical tools to help military parents build family togetherness, readiness and resilience.  
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/parenting-and-children/parenting-infants-and-toddlers/milparent-power>

<sup>v</sup> National Military Family Association, <https://www.militaryfamily.org/info-resources/deployment/>



# families with teen parents



New parents who are teenagers face numerous challenges that set their parenting experiences apart from other new parents. In 2017, a total of 194,377 babies were born to women aged 15–19 years, for a birth rate of 18.8 per 1,000 women in this age group.<sup>vi</sup> Teen mothers and fathers may have limited life skills, knowledge and resources that are critical for a successful parenting experience.

## resources

- **Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health (MI-AIMH)** Baby Stages, Pre-school Stages and Rolling into Fatherhood developmental wheels (English & Spanish) help parents better understand their baby's early social and emotional development, guides interactions that encourage social and emotional health, and build a nurturing, secure relationship with their child.

<https://mi-aimh.org/resources/developmental-stages-wheels>

- **Child Welfare Information Gateway: *Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Teens***: Contains a list of resources for young parents.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/promoting/parenting/pregnant-teens/>

<sup>vi</sup> Martin JA, Hamilton BE, Osterman MJK, Driscoll AK, Drake P. Births: Final Data for 2017. National vital statistics reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System Cdc-pdf[988KB]. 2018;67(8):1–50

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# families with parents who are incarcerated

On any given day, an estimated 2.7 million children in America have at least one parent in prison or jail.

<sup>vii</sup> Parental incarceration is now recognized as an “adverse childhood experience” (ACE); it is distinguished from other adverse childhood experiences by the unique combination of trauma, shame, and stigma.<sup>viii</sup>

Caregivers of children with parents in prison bear numerous burdens, including stigma associated with having a family member in prison, increased financial strain, physical and emotional stress, and lack of external resources.<sup>ix</sup>



## resources

- **The National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated** NRCCFI is the oldest and largest organization in the U.S. focused on children and families of people who are incarcerated and the programs that serve them.

<https://nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu>

- **National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse:** Supporting Families and Children of Incarcerated Fathers: This toolkit features information that is based on existing research and qualitative, anecdotal, and secondary data analysis related to field-informed practices, programs, and tools for working with fathers.

<https://www.fatherhood.gov/toolkit/work/incarcerated-and-reentry-fathers/supporting-families-and-children-of-incarcerated-fathers>

- **Youth.gov:** *Children of Incarcerated Parents:* Includes information for families on: Trauma, exposure to violence, exposure to drugs or alcohol, child welfare programs, services and supports, answers questions about child support and provides tools, guides and other resources

<https://youth.gov/youth-topics/children-of-incarcerated-parents>

<sup>vii</sup> National Resource Center on Children & Families of the Incarcerated; Children and Families of the Incarcerated Fact Sheet, <https://nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu/files/nrccfi-fact-sheet-2014.pdf>

<sup>viii</sup> Resilience Beyond Incarceration, Supporting Children of Incarcerated Parents FACT SHEET

<sup>ix</sup> Travis, Jeremy, Solomon, Amy: Families Left Behind, Urban Institute, Justice Policy Center, 2003



# families with parents who identify as LGBTQI2-S



Experts estimate that more than 10 million people have one or more lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) parents.<sup>x</sup> Some children grow up aware of their parent's orientation; others learn about it when they are older.

## resources

- **COLAGE:** A national organization that supports children, youth of all ages and adults with LGBTQI2-S parents through support, education and advocacy by and for people with LGBT parents.

<https://www.colage.org>

- **Families Like Mine: Children of Gay Parents Tell It Like It Is:** The author, Abigail Garner, uses her experience and interviews with other grown children of LGBT parents to address such topics as coming out to children, facing homophobia at school, co-parenting with ex-partners, the impact of AIDS, and the children's own sexuality. (Harper Perennial 2005)

- **Dad #1, Dad #2: A Queerspawn View from the Closet:** This memoir by Natalie Perry, chronicles the highs and lows of growing up with gay dads in one of the most conservative states in the country. Natalie's family kept their secret for two decades, when they finally agreed to share their story. (Red Cricket Press 2017)

<sup>x</sup> GLAAD, <https://www.glaad.org/resources/ally/8>



## families with youth or young adults who identify as LGBTQI2-S

Research shows that the way parents, foster parents, caregivers and families react to their LGBTQI2-S children has a powerful relationship to their children's health, mental health and well-being as a young adult.<sup>xi</sup> Family and caregivers who respond in a more supportive and accepting manner, the better the outcomes for the young adult's health, mental health and well-being.

### resources

- **Parents, Families, Friends, and Allies of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG):** A national organization for parents, families, friends, and allies united with people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ).  
<https://www.pflag.org>
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Division of Adolescent and School Health:** *Parents' Influence on the Health of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Teens: What Parents and Families Should Know:* A fact sheet for families with information to support their LGBTQ youth as a critical factor in promoting a teen's health and safe sex.  
[https://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/protective/pdf/parents\\_influence\\_lgb.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/protective/pdf/parents_influence_lgb.pdf)
- **Supporting Your LGBTQ Youth:** A Guide for Foster Parents An estimated 5-10% of youth in foster care are LGBTQ. The guide is written specifically for foster parents to help them understand and support youth that may be in their care.  
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/LGBTQyouth.pdf>
- **The Family Acceptance Project: Helping Families Support Their Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Children,** Developed and operated by Caitlin Ryan, Ph.D., A.C.S.W. Director of The Family Acceptance Project at San Francisco State University, the Project promotes an approach of acceptance within families for their LGBT children and youth, offering strategies and tools to support the entire family.  
[https://nccc.georgetown.edu/documents/LGBT\\_Brief.pdf](https://nccc.georgetown.edu/documents/LGBT_Brief.pdf)
- **Support of LGBTQ+ Youth Starts at Home: An #AsYouAre Project** An animated short film focused on family acceptance of youth with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression (SOGIE) and the impact of rejection children, youth and young adults can experience in their homes and communities. The film provides examples and strategies to promote support, acceptance and affirmation of youth with diverse SOGIE. Produced by The Institute for Innovation and Implementation at the University of Maryland, Baltimore School of Social Work (The Institute) in partnership with the Biden Foundation.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyXRwX3aeOU&feature=youtu.be>

<sup>xi</sup> Caitlin Ryan, PhD, ACSW, Stephen T. Russell, PhD, David Huebner, PhD, MPH, Rafael Diaz, PhD, MSW, and Jorge Sanchez, BA: Family Acceptance in Adolescence and the Health of LGBT Young Adults. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, Volume 23, Number 4, pp. 205–213

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# families with youth or young adults with substance use disorder



Three in five high school students reports having had at least one drink. By the 12th grade, about half of adolescents have misused an illicit drug at least once.<sup>xii</sup> Research suggests that adolescents with substance use disorders also have high rates of co-occurring mental illness; over 60 percent of adolescents in community-based substance use disorder treatment programs also meet diagnostic criteria for another mental illness.<sup>xiii</sup>

## resources

- **Partnership for Drug-Free Kids:**

A national organization committed to helping families struggling with their son's or daughter's substance use by empowering families with information, support and guidance to get the help their loved one needs and deserves.

<https://drugfree.org>

- **National Family Dialogue on Families of Youth With Substance Use Disorders:** *Family Involvement in Child-Serving Systems and the Need for Cross-Systems Collaboration:*

Written by family members and professionals, the brief focuses on parent-professional partnerships in the adolescent substance abuse prevention, treatment, and recovery system.

[https://www.ncmhjj.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Family-Involvement-Issue-Brief\\_110513.pdf](https://www.ncmhjj.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Family-Involvement-Issue-Brief_110513.pdf)

- **Engaging Family Members into Adolescent Drug Treatment,**

Daniel Santisteban, Ph.D. The successful engagement of family members into treatment can be a critically important component of the adolescent's successful recovery process

[http://sites.education.miami.edu/ciffta/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2014/10/Engaging\\_Families\\_Adolescent\\_Drug\\_Tx\\_FinalWEB.pdf](http://sites.education.miami.edu/ciffta/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2014/10/Engaging_Families_Adolescent_Drug_Tx_FinalWEB.pdf)

<sup>xii</sup> Underage Drinking, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, <https://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/UnderageDrinking/UnderageFact.htm>

<sup>xiii</sup> Common Comorbidities with Substance Abuse Disorders, National Institute on Drug Abuse, <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/common-comorbidities-substance-use-disorders/part-1-connection-between-substance-use-disorders-mental-illness>

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# families with youth or young adults with mental health needs

Mental disorders among children are described as serious changes in the way children typically learn, behave, or handle their emotions, causing distress and problems getting through the day. When untreated, mental health needs can lead to school failure, family conflicts, drug abuse, violence, and even suicide. One in five children suffers from a mental health or learning disorder, and 80% of chronic mental disorders begin in childhood.<sup>xiv</sup>



## resources

- **American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry:**

*Facts for Families:* Provides concise and up-to-date information on more than 100 mental health issues that affect children, teenagers, and their families. Topics range from ADHD, medication, peer pressure, grief and more. Fact Sheets are available in Chinese and Spanish and can be downloaded free of charge.

[https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families\\_and\\_Youth/Facts\\_for\\_Families/AACAP/Families\\_and\\_Youth/Facts\\_for\\_Families/FFF-Guide/FFF-Guide-Home.aspx](https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/FFF-Guide-Home.aspx)

- **Child Mind Institute:** An independent, national nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives of children and families struggling with mental health and learning disorders. Website contains parent guides and topics for parents on children's mental health needs. Online newsletter available.

<https://childmind.org/audience/for-families/>

- **Family-Run Executive Director Leadership Association (FREDLA):** Provides contact information on locating family organizations in states and communities. Family-run organizations employ staff members who are family members trained to support other families and assist them to access services for their children.

<http://www.fredla.org/resources/>

- **Mental Health America:** A national organization that works to promote mental health through advocacy, education, research and services. The website provides screening tools, mental health treatment and resources.

<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/finding-help>

- **National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH):** The lead federal agency for research on mental disorders website contains information on mental health disorders, treatment, therapies, special populations and research.

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/index.shtml>

- **National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health:** Provides resources for families and caregivers on a range of mental health topics. The Federation also hosts an annual conference for families.

<https://www.ffcmh.org/resources-parentsandcaregivers>

- **Centers for Disease Control:** A federal agency that works to protect health through health promotion, prevention of disease, injury and disability, and preparedness for new health threats. Website includes information on specific child mental health conditions, treatments, prevention, and public health research on children's mental health.

<https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/>

<sup>xiv</sup> Merikangas, K.R., He, J., Burstein, M., Swanson, S.A., Avenevoli, S., Cui, L., Benjet, C., Georgiades, K., Swendsen, J., (2010). Lifetime Prevalence of Mental Disorders in US Adolescents: Results from the National Comorbidity Study-Adolescent Supplement (NCS-A). *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*. 49(10): 980-989. doi: 10.1016/j.jaac.2010.05.017



# families with a child with special health care needs



One in five U.S. families has a child with a special health care need. Children and youth with special health care needs and their families often need services from multiple systems — health care, public health, education, mental health, and social services.<sup>xv</sup>

## resources

- **Family Voices:** A national family-led organization of families and friends of children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) and disabilities.

<http://familyvoices.org>

- **Bright Futures:** American Academy of Pediatrics, *Promoting Health for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs*: The individual health care professional or practice cannot meet the needs of the child with special needs and her family alone. High-quality pediatric care occurs when children, families, and professionals forge trusting, caring partnerships that fully use the knowledge and expertise of all.

[https://brightfutures.aap.org/Bright%20Futures%20Documents/BF4\\_CYSHCNHealth.pdf](https://brightfutures.aap.org/Bright%20Futures%20Documents/BF4_CYSHCNHealth.pdf)

- **Parenting Children With Health Issues: Essential Tools, Tips, and Tactics for Raising Kids With Chronic Illness, Medical Conditions, and Special Healthcare Needs:** Authored by Foster Cline MD and Lisa Greene;

a book for parents to help with essential parenting skills to help your child understand and follow medical requirements, cope well with health challenges, avoid power struggles and promote responsibility without nagging or lecturing, with the goal to live a hope-filled life. <https://www.loveandlogic.com/catalogsearch/result/?q=Health+Issues+and+Special+Needs>

<sup>xv</sup> Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health, Children with Special Health Care Needs, <https://mchb.hrsa.gov/maternal-child-health-topics/children-and-youth-special-health-needs>

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# fredla

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LEADERSHIP ASSOCIATION

**FREDLA** is a national association of executive directors and leaders from family-run organizations (FROs) across the country committed to children and youth with behavioral health needs and their families.

**OUR MISSION** is to build strong, sustainable FROs and together influence policy and practice to support children and families.

**OUR APPROACH** considers and respects the strengths in families and their communities.

**OUR EXPERTISE** includes finding innovative solutions to complex challenges, and being partners in fostering success.

Visit FREDLA's website for resources and a listing of family-run organizations:

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