Cooperative Extension teaches parenting, nutrition, and healthy lifestyle choices to grandparents and relatives raising children during conferences, support groups, and workshops. Over 700 households accessed community resources for physical and/or emotional health, or legal assistance as a result of attending an Extension program.

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Fayette County Extension has been a partner in the Grandparents and Relatives Raising Children since 2002. The 2017 conference included a young woman speaker, raised by her grandfather from the age of four.
Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability.

Over 57,000 of Kentucky children live in households headed by grandparents, and more than 12,000 are living with other relatives according to the AARP Foundation. Of those combined numbers, more than 30,000 children have no parent present in the home where they live. The underlying causes include parental drug use, imprisonment, and/or illness or death of the parent.

Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) agents for Fayette County serve on the Central Kentucky Grandparent Raising Relatives Coalition comprised of Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, Fayette County Schools, Bluegrass Area Development District, and the Lexington Bar Association. They plan and implement programming to aid grandparents, relatives, and children. The coalition conducts an annual conference with 13 workshops. In addition, five support groups meet monthly throughout the year and reach 400+ relatives, from 21 counties. Family practice attorneys provide 75 hours of free legal counseling valued at over $15,000. FCS organized the Grandparents as Parents (GAP) coalition in 2002 and it is currently the state’s major conduit for parenting information and resources. Over the past two years, the FCS agents have assisted six Kentucky counties to organize community grandparents and relatives as parents groups to address this growing issue. During the 2017 conference, FCS Extension focused on the impact of secondhand drinking and drugging on children.

A collaborative effort of the Kenton County Extension Service, Northern Kentucky Area Development District, Family Nurturing Center, Trinity Episcopal Church, Life Learning Center, Children’s Incorporated, Family Resource, and Youth Service Centers of Kenton County strategized to coordinate the 2nd Annual Grandparents As Parents Conference in Covington. The participants rotated to sessions on Nurturing Families, Legal Rights, Engaging Birth Parents, Childhood Experiences, Substance Abuse, and Healthy Boundaries. Monthly support group meetings followed the conference and provided additional educational resources to families.

Family and Consumer Sciences agents throughout the state conduct Grandparent and Relatives Raising Children support groups, educational programs on parenting, nutrition education, and healthy life choices. One of the newest groups is in Bourbon County, which has already provided beds for three children and secured medical and legal assistance for grandparents.

During 2017, Extension reached 3,866 grandparents or relatives raising children to improve their parenting skills and access to community resources as a result of attending Extension programs.

Kentucky Extension Reporting System