



Montana GRG Project Names Program Manager

Dear Friends of the Montana GRG Project,

I'm very happy to let you know that, as of December 2012, I am the Program Manager for the Montana Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Project. I have worked with Sandy Bailey, the GRG Project's Director, for almost five years and, in that time, I have been so fortunate to get to know GRG's, and those who work with them, from all over the state.

I am really looking forward to making even more contacts and bringing support and education to the GRG's of Montana. Please feel free to contact me at any time with any questions or comments about the GRG Project.

I hope to hear from you soon!

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Inside this Issue

Page 2	Policy & Law: Montana Senate Bills & Montana Legal Resources
Page 3	Services: Spotlight Legal Service: Montana Supreme Court Court Help Program
Page 4	Resources: New MontGuides Are Available
Page 5	Health & Nutrition: USDA Nutrition Assistance Programs & Stretching Grocery Funds
Page 6	Useful News: Know What Kids are Watching, Reading, Listening to, and Texting
Page 7	Grandfamily Support Contacts Across Montana



**Policy
& Law**

Remember, Grandparents, You Have Legal Rights!

Many grandparents and other kinship caregivers often feel like they have no rights, especially if they are parenting informally. Passed in the 2007 Montana Legislature and enacted in May of that year, these three laws allow GRG's to make some education and medical decisions and give them the peace of mind that comes with knowing an absent parent cannot suddenly show up and take the child(ren).

Montana Senate Bill 31; Codified in Montana Code Annotated: § 40-6-601 and 602

If grandchildren are left with grandparents for longer than six months, and it is unclear if or when the parent will return and retake custody of the child, the grandchildren do not have to be returned immediately to the parent when the parent returns. If the grandparent files an affidavit with the court containing all of the items required by law, the child may remain with the grandparent for five days while the court reviews the situation and issues an order regarding the custody of the child.

Montana Senate Bill 48; Codified in Montana Code Annotated: § 40-6-501 and 502

Certain medical authority for their grandchildren can be granted to grandparents when the adult children can not be located, if the legal requirements, including completion of a relative medical authorization affidavit, are met.

Montana Senate Bill 49; Codified in Montana Code Annotated: § 20-5-501 through 503

Grandparents are allowed to enroll their grandchildren in school when the adult children cannot be located, if the legal requirements, including completion of an educational authorization affidavit, are met.

Other Statewide Legal Resources

There are many organizations in Montana that can assist you in civil legal matters, including how to fill out and file guardianship papers, report abuse, sign up for the Close Relative Registry, and find low- or no-cost legal representation.

Montana Law Help

www.MontanaLawHelp.org

Montana Legal Services Association

www.mtlsa.org (800) 666-6899

State of Montana Law Library

www.courts.mt.gov/library/

Child Support Enforcement Division

(406) 655-5500

Child and Family Services Division

(866) 820-5437

Disability Rights

www.disabilityrightsmt.org (800) 245-4743

Montana Human Rights Bureau

www.montanadiscrimination.com (800) 542-0807

Lawyer Referral & Information Service

www.montanabar.org (406) 449-6577

Aging Services

www.dphhs.mt.gov/sltc (800) 332-2272



Services

SPOTLIGHT LEGAL SERVICE: Montana Supreme Court – Court Help Program

(www.courts.mt.gov/selfhelp)

The Court Help Program is an initiative of the Montana Supreme Court designed to assist people with civil (non-criminal) legal problems. The Court Help Program cannot give you legal advice or represent you in court but can provide the information you need to understand your legal rights and responsibilities and to help you resolve legal problems on your own.

Self Help Law Centers CAN:

- Give you information on Dissolution of Marriage (Divorce), Parenting Plans (Custody), Consumer Credit, Guardianship of a Minor, Step-Parent Adoption, Landlord or Tenant, Name change...and much more!
- Answer general questions about how the court works; review your forms for errors like missing signatures or pages; tell you how to find state laws and regulations.

Self Help Law Centers CANNOT:

- Give you legal advice; explain a judicial decision; refer you to a specific lawyer; interpret the law or legal terms for you; tell you which laws apply to the specific facts of your case; fill out or correct forms for you; assist in criminal matters.

Full Service Regional Self Help Law Center Locations

Cascade County Self Help Law Center 401 Third Avenue North, Great Falls
(406) 205-0347, cascadecountyselfhelp@gmail.com

Flathead County Self Help Law Center Flathead County Justice Center, 920 South Main, Kalispell
(406) 758-2496, flatheadcountyselfhelp@gmail.com, selfhelp@flathead.mt.gov

Gallatin County Self Help Law Center Gallatin County Law and Justice Center, 615 South 16th Avenue, Bozeman
(406) 582-2158, gallatincountyselfhelp@gmail.com

Missoula Family Law Center Missoula County Courthouse, 200 W Broadway, Rm. 271, Missoula
(406) 258-3428, missoulaselfhelp@gmail.com

State Law Library Self Help Law Center Montana State Law Library, 215 North Sanders, Helena
(406) 444-9300, statelawlibraryselfhelp@gmail.com

Yellowstone County Self Help Law Center 3021 3rd Ave North, Billings
(406) 869-3532 or (406) 869-3532, yellowstonecountyselfhelp@gmail.com

There are also other locations around the state where you can access legal information. Visit www.courts.mt.gov/selfhelp for locations and contact information for the following:

Self Help Law Station Locations These locations interact with regional Self Help Law Centers. They contain self representation forms along with directions to assist customers in obtaining the correct forms, review documents before filing, and answer questions.

Self Help Law Center Traveling Locations These locations are visited periodically by the staff of regional Self Help Law Centers.

Legal Service Kiosk Locations These kiosks have computers that allow people access to free online legal help and forms. People who have questions can use the computer to link to a “live chat” with a staff member of Montana Legal Services Association, an organization that provides free legal assistance for civil cases to low-income residents.



Resources

Two New MontGuides Are Now Available!

Helping Children Cope with Natural Disasters

-by Sandra Bailey, Ph.D., CFLE,
Family & Human
Development Specialist

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Navigating Adolescence

-by Sandra Bailey, Ph.D., CFLE, Family & Human
Development Specialist and Jesse Marquis,
Department of Health & Human Development

Natural disasters can be traumatic events for families due to impacts from evacuations, displacement if the home is lost, loss of family incomes, and injuries or death. Children do not have the skills to process these events like adults. Additionally, children rely on their parents to take care of problems and when they see their parents not coping well, this further adds to their anxiety and stress.

Stress is inevitable during a natural disaster. There are things you can do for yourself and your child during and following a natural disaster. Here are some suggestions:

Be prepared. If there is a threat of evacuation, gather important items such as family photos, valuables, and important documents.

Heed warnings. Listen to what officials are saying about evacuations and abide by their notices.

Make a plan. Let all members of the family know what you will do should you need to evacuate.

Maintain routines. Follow routines as much as possible.

Take care of yourself. We cannot take care of our children well if we do not take care of ourselves.

Listen to your child. Allow your child to express his/her feelings about the situation.

Talk to your child. Let them know your feelings too, although limit what you say.

Limit media exposure. Avoid having a television or radio on that regularly shows the disaster.

Accept help from others. Montanans tend to be independent people who do not like to rely on others. During and after a natural disaster is a time when reaching out for help is necessary.

See this MontGuide in its entirety at www.montana.edu/wwwhd/msu_montguides.html

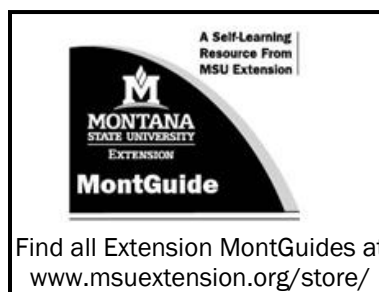
Grandparents raising grandchildren find themselves in an interesting position as they are parenting “off time”, meaning that their age group is typically finished with day-to-day parenting. Parenting in this context can be more challenging as their grandchildren navigate adolescence.

The journey through adolescence is a unique part of life. Youth have more outside influences and become more independent as they move through adolescence. Today’s technological advances make for greater outside influences than when the grandparents were teens. The teen years bring significant physical, cognitive and social changes. Here are some suggestions for navigating those years:

- Openly and honestly discuss physical changes.
- Talk about the consequences associated with risk taking.
- Get to know your teen’s friends and their families.
- Get involved with your teen’s school and encourage participation in extracurricular activities.
- Teach decision making and encourage responsibility.
- Familiarize yourself with teen interests.
- Promote good conversation skills and communication.
- Help your teen find their identity.
- Take care of yourself!

The adolescent years are exciting and full of changes. They can be more difficult when teens are being raised solely by their grandparents; however, this does not mean the family is headed for years of challenges. Generational differences provide an opportunity for learning on the part of grandparents and youth. Use this to build relationships and support for your teen.

See this MontGuide in its entirety at www.montana.edu/wwwhd/msu_montguides.html





Health & Nutrition

USDA Nutrition Assistance Programs Can Help Make Ends Meet

Many families are concerned about the rising cost of food. Being uncertain about your ability to put nutritious food on the table can be a major cause of anxiety and stress but the USDA's Nutrition Assistance Programs can offer relief.

You may qualify for more than **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** benefits. If you get SNAP benefits and have children in school, they qualify for free lunch and breakfast. If you are low-income and pregnant, breastfeeding, a new mom or have children under five years old, you might qualify for **Women, Infants and Children (WIC)** benefits. The **Emergency**

Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a Federal program that provides food to low-income persons. For more information on these programs, contact:

SNAP - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

For: Eligible low-income people and their families.
Call 1-800-221-5689
To find your nearest SNAP office visit:
www.fns.usda.gov/snap/outreach/default.htm

WIC - Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children

For: Eligible low-income pregnant or breastfeeding women, new moms, and children under age 5
Visit: www.fns.usda.gov/wic/contacts/tollfreenumbers.htm

School Nutrition Programs

For: Eligible low-income school-aged children
Contact your local school or school district

TEFAP - The Emergency Food Assistance Program

For: Eligible low-income persons
Visit: www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/tefap/tefap_eligibility.htm

Stretch That Grocery Dollar....

Breads and Grains

Look for bargains on day old bread. It costs less but is still nutritious. Buy regular rice, oatmeal, and grits instead of instant to save on money, sugar, and calories.

Vegetables and Salad

Buy large bags of frozen vegetables. Seal tightly in the freezer between uses. Avoid pre-bagged salad mixes; they are usually more expensive and spoil faster.

Fruits

Buy fresh fruits in season when they generally cost less. Frozen and canned fruits are a smart choice all year round.

Low-Fat Milk Products

Buy fresh, low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese in the largest size that can be used before spoiling. Larger containers cost less than smaller sizes. Ultra-pasteurized milk has a longer expiration date and won't spoil as fast.

Meat and Beans

Dried beans and peas are a good source of protein and fiber. They last a long time without spoiling. Chuck or bottom round roast has less fat and is cheaper than sirloin. Buy meat in large bulk packages to save money. Freeze portions you might not use right away to prevent spoiling.

MyPlate

features practical information and tips to help Americans build healthier diets. MyPlate is designed to remind Americans to eat healthier.



Check it out at
www.ChooseMyPlate.gov

Information adapted from
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/>



Useful News

What Are Your Grandchildren Watching, Listening to & Reading? Here's How to Find Out...

Every once in a while we find a resource with information that everyone in the family can use. **Common Sense Media** is, according to their website, *“dedicated to improving the lives of kids and families by providing the trustworthy information, education, and independent voice they need to thrive in a world of media and technology. We exist because our nation's children spend more time with media and digital activities than they do with their families or in school, which profoundly impacts their social, emotional, and physical development. As a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization, we provide trustworthy information and tools, as well as an independent forum, so that families can have a choice and a voice about the media they consume.”*

This informational website—www.commonsensemedia.org—is one-stop shopping for kids, parents, grandparents and teachers who want to learn what electronic and print media is best for kids and families. Some of the features include:

- **Reviews** of movies, games, apps, websites, TV programs, books and music. These reviews feature information on whether or not the MPAA rating is appropriate, if learning opportunities are present, and if more suitable alternatives are available.
- **Educational tools** for educator and parents. These include ready-to-use curriculum, interactive videos and a blog.
- **Advice** on how to talk to kids about a variety of subjects. Articles and videos are available on topics such as “Impact of Media Violence”, “How to Talk to Kids About the News”, “Horror Movies and Your Teens”, and “Video Violence and the Internet”.
- **Policy and advocacy** information on both a state and federal level as well as research information on topics such as kids and media violence.

Do You Know Your Text and Chat Acronyms?

Today, it seems like kids almost always have their faces buried in a cell phone or computer. What are they doing? Chances are they are texting or chatting with their friends and, sometimes, strangers. But what are they saying? Many texts and chats look like gibberish to the unfamiliar eye but hold real meaning.

Some of the more playful acronyms have entered popular culture—**LOL** (laugh out loud), **TGIF** (thank god it's Friday) and **BFF** (best friend forever)—but many remain mysterious to everyone but the kids using them. Once you become familiar with many of the popular acronyms you can better monitor your grandchild's conversations and know that he or she is being safe while texting and chatting.

Here is a sample of acronyms everyone should know:

POS—parents over shoulder
GF—good friend or girl friend
NOOB—new person
***\$**—Starbucks
PAW—parents are watching
LMFR—let's meet for real
SLOS—someone looking over shoulder
BF—best friend or boyfriend
PWNT—parents watching, not tonight

ASL—Age, sex, location
PAL—parents are listening
ZZZ—sleeping, bored, tired
GLB—good looking boy
KMP—keep me posted
WF—way fun
XXCC—kiss, kiss, hug, hug
GAL—get a life
511—too much information



These acronyms are listed on www.netlingo.com. Check out this website for a complete dictionary and many helpful tips. Also, go to www.netlingo.com/top50 for a list of the top 50 acronyms and many other useful lists.

Grandfamily Support Contacts Across Montana

Western Region

Flathead County—Kalispell
Nikki Roth
The Nurturing Center, Inc.
(406) 756-1414

Lake County—Ronan
Nori Pearce
MSU Extension
(406) 676-4271

Lewis & Clark County—Helena
Janet Coughlin
Rocky Mountain Development
Council, Head Start
(406) 457-7308

**Madison/Jefferson Counties—
Whitehall**
Andrea Sarchet
MSU Extension
(406) 287-3282

Ravalli County—Hamilton
Brenda Fisher
Family Services
(406) 363-1961 ext. 107

Ravalli County—Florence
Allison Dunne
WORD—Local Living Family Center
(406) 273-0142

Silver Bow County—Butte
Brenda Hergott
Butte 4-C's
(406) 723-4019
1-800-794-4061

Central Region

**Blaine County—Harlem & Fort
Belknap Indian Reservation**
Liz Werk
MSU Extension
(406) 353-2656

Cascade County—Great Falls
Jona McNamee
MSU Extension
(406) 454-6980
Mariellen Ritts
(406) 453-3554

Central Region, cont.

Fergus County—Lewistown
Denise Seilstad
MSU Extension
(406) 535-3919

***Gallatin County—Bozeman**
MSU Extension Family &
Human Development
(406) 994-3395
grg@montana.edu

**Glacier County—Browning &
Blackfeet Indian Reservation**
Carrie Jackson/Connie Bremner
Eagle Shield Center
(406) 338-7257

Hill County—Havre
Lea Ann Larson
MSU Extension
(406) 265-5481

**Hill County—Rocky Boy
Indian Reservation**
Mary St. Pierre
Stone Child College &
MSU Extension
(406) 395-4875

Stillwater County—Columbus
Lisa Terry
MSU Extension
(406) 322-8035

Teton County—Choteau
Jane Wolery
MSU Extension
(406) 466-2491

Eastern Region

Big Horn County—Wyola
Kristy Old Coyote
LBHC Extension
(406) 638-3114

Jacinta Stewart
(406) 629-0794

Eastern Region, cont.

Big Horn County—Hardin
Janice Eckman
Parent Place
(406) 665-4151

**Big Horn & Rosebud Counties—
Northern Cheyenne Indian
Reservation**
Ryhal Rowland
MSU Extension
(406) 477-6498

Custer County—Miles City
Don & Vivian Westall
(406) 234-6727

Dawson County—Glendive
Pete Bruno
Family Life Institute
(406) 939-5591

Richland County—Sidney
Ludmila Keller
MSU Extension
(406) 433-1206

Roosevelt County—Culbertson
Ardis Oelkers
MSU Extension
(406) 787-5312

**Roosevelt County—Fort Peck
Indian Reservation**
Carol Bemer
(406) 768-2430

Rosebud County—Forsyth
Jennifer Anderson
MSU Extension
(406) 346-7320

Valley County—Glasgow
Roubie Younkin
MSU Extension
(406) 228-6239

Yellowstone County—Billings
Shaye Skovgaard
MSU Extension
(406) 256-2828

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Non-Profit
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www.montana.edu/wwwhd/grg.html

www.msuextension.org

Montana State University Extension is an
ADA/EO/AA Veteran's Preference Employer
and provider of educational outreach.

Montana Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Project

**Call it a clan, call it a network,
call it a tribe, call it a family.
Whatever you are, whoever you are,
you need one.**
~Jane Howard