

Kansas Department of

Social and Rehabilitation Services

Gary J. Daniels, Acting Secretary

Silver Haired Legislature

October 5, 2005

Grandparents as Caregivers

Gary J. Daniels, Acting Secretary

For additional information contact:
Public and Governmental Services Division
Kyle Kessler, Director of Legislative Affairs

Docking State Office Building
915 SW Harrison, 6th Floor North
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1570
phone: 785.296.3271
fax: 785.296.4685
www.srskansas.org

**Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services
Gary J. Daniels, Acting Secretary**

Silver Haired Legislature
October 5, 2005

Grandparents as Caregivers

Chairman Dean and members of the committee, I am Gary Daniels, Acting Secretary of SRS. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today to discuss grandparents who are caring for their grandchildren. These grandparents play a significant role in the lives of their grandchildren, often at significant personal sacrifice.

You requested testimony on SB 62 - Grandparents as Foster Parents. The bill title and provisions are a bit misleading. Foster parents are individuals who are licensed to provide foster care, on a short term basis, to children in state custody. They are paid for providing this service at a rate established by the foster care contract provider. The provisions of SB 62 provide for payment to grandparents caring for grandchildren who are not in state custody, for what could be extended periods of time. No license is required. Essentially, SB 62 establishes a new assistance program for grandparents caring for grandchildren who are not in state custody.

SRS does not oppose providing financial assistance to grandparents acting as caregivers, but suggests the following be given consideration:

- Equity between other state assistance programs for families. The typical monthly payment for a parent with one child in the Temporary Assistance to Families program is \$202, about \$250 a month less than the provisions of SB 62 would provide to a grandparent whose income level is much higher.
- Fund any Grandparent as Caregiver program using only state dollars. Use of federal dollars not only adds funding constraints, but program complexity for the grandparent. Federal child welfare funds can not be used for this program due to eligibility requirements. A federal waiver of requirements is not a viable option because waivers approved for other states still require the children to have been in state custody or diverted from custody. Waivers also require that no additional federal funds be spent for the waiver program over what was spent on the state's current program. In addition, use of TANF and child welfare federal funds requires SRS to pursue child support from the absent parent.

The attached matrix is provided to assist you in thinking about a Grandparent as Caregiver program. The matrix provides options related to eligibility criteria such as grandparent income and age, as well as possible monthly payment. I hope this information is useful.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this important issue. I would be happy to respond to questions.