



Outcomes of the Advisory Council to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren April 2020 Meeting

The Advisory Council to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (SGRG) held their second full Council [meeting](#) on April 23, 2020. During the meeting, which was also attended by 150 members of the general public, the Advisory Council discussed the terminology they will use to consistently and inclusively describe the families raising children on which their work is focused. The Advisory Council also solidified their vision statement and adopted a set of guiding principles that will shape their work on the Report to Congress and other efforts they undertake to improve our nation’s response to the needs of grandparents and older relative caregivers.

Glossary of Terms Discussion:

In previous meetings, Advisory Council members had noted the limitations of using terms such as “grandparents” or “grandfamily” to describe older relatives who are caring for children. For example, in the case of a relative or family friend raising a child, the term “grandparent” does not necessarily apply. In addition, the Advisory Council noted that a person or persons raising a child in the role of grandparents may not even be an older adult. The Advisory Council articulated a commitment to developing a shared, or “harmonized,” term that shows respect for, and reflects the diversity of, all caregivers raising children today.

During their discussion the Advisory Council began by considering existing terms and their relevant definitions. Table 1 provides an overview of the terms discussed.

Table 1. Family Caregiver Terminology Reviewed During the April 2020 SGRG Advisory Council Meeting.

TERM	DEFINITION
Grandparent	A parent of one's father or mother.
Grandfamily	Term used to describe a situation where children are being raised by their grandparents.
Kin	Refers to a group of persons of common ancestry.
Fictive Kin	An individual who is not related by birth, adoption, or marriage to a child, but who has an emotionally significant relationship with the child.
Kinship families	Families in which children reside with and are being raised by other extended family members and adults with whom they have a close family-like relationship, such as godparents and close family friends.
Relative Caregiver	Typically includes "grandparents, siblings, stepparents, stepsiblings, uncles, aunts, first cousins, nephews, and nieces," and persons of preceding generations, and spouses of any of these relatives."
Kinship care	Commonly defined as "the full-time care, nurturing, and protection of a child by relatives, members of their Tribe or clan, godparents, stepparents, or other adults who have a family relationship to a child."



After a nuanced discussion of the value and limitations of each of the terms, the Advisory Council agreed upon adopting the blended term “**Kinship Families and Grandfamilies**” to describe the families and extended families raising children that will be addressed in the Report to Congress and the future work of the Advisory Council.

Note: The Advisory Council agreed that these terms will be treated as proper nouns and, therefore, will be capitalized in all reports and ancillary communications materials.

Create and Adopt a Vision Statement:

The Advisory Council then moved on to refining and finalizing their vision statement. The final vision statement adopted is as follows:

*The **Advisory Council to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (SGRG)** will be a leader for identifying and sharing resources to support, educate, empower, and advocate for Kinship Families and Grandfamilies. The Council will increase awareness and understanding of the needs of these families to ensure that they are treated with respect and dignity. By honoring cultures, values, and diversities, we will create a better future so that families can flourish.*

Develop and Adopt Guiding Principles:

The final portion of the meeting focused on an intensive revision and editing session during which time the Advisory Council discussed and collectively drafted, edited, and adopted a set of principles that will guide their work and the recommendations it makes in their Report to Congress.

The agreed-upon guiding principles of the **Advisory Council to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren** are as follows:

- 1. We recognize and define Kinship Families and Grandfamilies as families in which children reside with and are being raised by grandparents, or other extended family members, and adults with whom they have a close family-like relationship.*
- 2. Activities will promote greater adoption of person- and family-centered supports that place Kinship Families and Grandfamilies at the center of every support system, while also acknowledging the challenge of possible conflicting goals.*
- 3. Efforts will aim to empower Kinship Families and Grandfamilies to advocate for themselves to meet the needs of the child and family members. With improved access to resources they may engage and contribute meaningfully in their communities.*
- 4. Recommendations should recognize and support Kinship Families and Grandfamilies in a fair and impartial manner considering the physical, cultural, emotional, and financial impacts.*
- 5. The National Family Caregiving Strategy will include and amplify the voices of Kinship Families and Grandfamilies.*