

LEGAL INFORMATION & RESOURCES - CONTINUED

- » Legal aid may be able to arrange loans and/or subsidies for those with slightly higher incomes

Where can I get more information?

- » Call: **1-800-668-8258**
- » Use the Internet at:
www.legalaid.on.ca/en/getting/

Community Legal Clinics in Ontario

To locate a community legal clinic near you, use the Internet at:

www.cleo.on.ca/english/links.htm

Lawyer Referral Service

- » If you are having a hard time finding a lawyer, referral services can be used to help find lawyers which can take on your case
- » Before you talk to a lawyer ask about the cost of a *consultation*
- » Also, ask for a printed copy of the cost of each of the legal services they will provide
- » Two popular services are:
The Lawyer Referral Service of the Law Society of Upper Canada (Ontario)
Call: **1-900-565-4577** (\$6.00 for a call)
E-mail: lawrefer@lsuc.on.ca

- » *Canlaw*
A free online referral service that can find lawyers anywhere in Canada
Use the Internet at:
www.canlaw.com/referrals/referralindex.htm

FOR UPDATED INFORMATION ON:

Legal information & resources

Financial resources

Resources for children with special needs

Support groups

Other issues facing grandparent caregivers

Use the Internet at www.cangrands.com

Legal Information & Resources For Ontario Grandparents* Raising Their Grandchildren

This pamphlet provides you with important legal information and resources to help you and your grandchildren.

* or other adults raising the children of relatives



National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly
222 College Street, Suite 106, Toronto, Ontario M5T 3J1
Tel: 416-978-2197 • Website: www.nicenet.ca



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LEGAL INFORMATION & RESOURCES

FOR ONTARIO GRANDPARENTS*
RAISING THEIR GRANDCHILDREN

LEGAL INFORMATION & RESOURCES - FOR GRANDPARENTS RAISING THEIR GRANDCHILDREN

Many grandparents in Ontario are raising their grandchildren. If you have taken on this important task, you are entitled to some assistance.

This brochure provides legal information and a list of resources that may help you.

LEGAL INFORMATION

The way you take on the role of caregiver for your grandchildren may affect:

- » Your ongoing right to raise your grandchildren
- » Your ability to get financial assistance

Here is some important information to help you understand the legal issues of raising your grandchildren.

Definitions:

What does **ADOPTION** mean?

- » Adoption ensures that your grandchildren will not be taken away from you
- » When you adopt your grandchildren they become your children *under the law*
- » But, when you adopt your grandchildren, the government no longer has to provide you with certain types of assistance
- » If the child was a *crown ward* you may be eligible to receive some assistance based on the child's specific needs (i.e. counseling)

What does **LEGAL CUSTODY** mean?

- » Having legal custody gives you the right to make legal decisions for your grandchildren

- » It allows your grandchildren to be included on medical insurance and to travel out of the country
- » There are two ways you can get legal custody of grandchildren
 - *You can apply for custody through a lawyer the way divorced couples do, or*
 - *The Children's Aid Society (CAS) can ask you to take legal custody because the children are not safe with their parents.*
- » Once CAS is involved with your grandchild, they may be able to assist you with getting legal custody
- » If you are asked by CAS to take custody, make sure you understand what is expected and whether they will help. You don't have to agree.
- » Having legal custody means you will not be able to get monthly foster payments

The grandchildren's parents can challenge your legal custody any time. The judge may decide the parents are capable of parenting again.

To make sure you are making the right choice, get legal advice.

LEGAL RESOURCES

Published Legal Information

- » Use the Internet at:
www.cleo.on.ca/english/pub/onpub/online.htm
www.cleonet.ca/

Family Court Information

- » You may be able to use a *duty counsel lawyer* to help you in court. It depends on your income and your circumstances.
- » Advice from staff is also available at certain times.
- » The forms you will need to prepare for court are available online or at any family law court.
- » Free information about family law issues, resources, and court procedures is also available at each courthouse where family law is practiced

Where can I get more information?

- » Call toll-free: **1-800-518-7901**
- » Use the Internet at:
www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/family/
- » See the free publication "Family Law Resources in Ontario" at: <http://www.cleo.on.ca/english/pub/onpub/PDF/family/familyresource.pdf>

Legal Aid Ontario

- » If you cannot pay for a lawyer, Legal Aid may be able to help.
- » You will have to complete an 'eligibility test' at the legal aid office closest to you.
- » The test will ask you about the nature of your legal problem and your ability to pay for a lawyer
- » Your ability to pay for a lawyer is decided by your assets, income and expenses
- » Only those with the lowest incomes will be able to get all their legal costs paid for