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New Website Offers Resources for Ohio's Kinship Caregivers

COLUMBUS, OHIO – As Kinship Care Month kicks off in September, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) today announced a new resource for grandparents and other relatives caring for children: **FosterAndAdopt.jfs.ohio.gov/kinship**.

“Every child deserves to grow up in a safe and loving home, but there are far too many Ohio children that can’t remain at home because of parental substance use disorders,” said Ohio Governor Mike DeWine. “This new resource adds to the supports available for kinship caregivers because the need is greater than ever.”

Current and prospective kinship caregivers can visit the website for answers to frequently asked questions, use an interactive map to find local services, view a calendar of events and trainings, and fill out a “Contact Us” form for one-on-one assistance.

“Ohio has an estimated 100,000 grandparents and other relatives who have volunteered to care for children when their own parents cannot,” said ODJFS Director Kimberly Hall. “They have made a courageous, life-changing decision, and we are honored to provide this resource so that they can more easily access information and supports.”

Ohio has about 16,000 children in the custody of county children services agencies and a continuing need for more families to care for them. When children must be removed from their homes, caseworkers first try to place them with a family member or close family friend. This “kinship” care offers the greatest level of stability by allowing children to maintain their sense of belonging and to continue their family culture and traditions. Kinship care can be temporary or permanent, depending on the children and families’ needs. More than 4,000 children in children services custody are being cared for by kinship caregivers.

As a result of the recently passed biennial budget and new federal legislation, ODJFS is developing a statewide Kinship and Adoption Navigator Program that is expected to launch in 2020. The program will provide more personalized help in directing kinship caregivers and adoptive parents to local resources and supports.

Ohio offers a range of assistance for eligible kinship caregivers. To apply for services, families should contact their county public children services agency or department of job and family services. Contact information for county agencies can be found on the **Service Providers Map** on the new website.

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The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services manages vital programs that strengthen Ohio families. These include job training and employment services, unemployment insurance, cash and food assistance, child care, child and adult protective services, adoption, and child support services.

