



Kinship Care

What is Kinship Care?

When a child must be removed from his or her home, caseworkers first try to place the child with a family member or close family friend. This is known as kinship care, and it represents the most desirable out-of-home placement option for children who cannot live with their parents. Kinship care offers family preservation and the greatest level of stability by allowing a child to maintain his or her sense of belonging and by enhancing the child's ability to identify with his or her family's culture and traditions.

Kinship care can be a temporary or permanent arrangement in which a relative or nonrelative adult who has a long-standing relationship with the child and/or family takes over the full-time substitute care of that child when the parents are unable or unwilling to do so. In many cases, kinship caregivers are grandparents. It has been estimated that almost 200,000 children in Ohio are being raised by their grandparents or other kinship caregivers, which is at least 7 percent of all children in the state.

Kinship care includes relationships established through an informal arrangement, legal custody or guardianship order, foster care placement, or adoption. Regardless of the type of arrangement, the kinship caregivers' voluntary commitment to devote their lives to the children in their care is a courageous, life-changing decision.

Kinship Permanency Incentive Program

The Kinship Permanency Incentive Program (KPIP) is designed to support kinship caregivers in their decision to make permanent commitments by helping defray some of the costs of caring for children. Eligible caregivers receive a one-time payment to reduce costs of initial placement. They may receive subsequent payments every six months to support the stability of the child's placement in the home. Kinship caregivers may receive a maximum of eight payments, for a maximum of 48 months. Participation in KPIP does not prevent these families from also receiving child-only Ohio Works First cash assistance.

To be eligible for KPIP, a kinship caregiver must have:

- Legal custody or guardianship of the child on or after July 1, 2005, and
- A gross family income of less than 300 percent of the federal poverty guideline.

Kinship caregivers may apply for the program at their county public children services agency or department of job and family services. They must submit to both a family home assessment and a criminal background check. To find your county agency, call 1-866-886-3537 (option 4) or go to jfs.ohio.gov/County/County_Directory.pdf.

The Ohio Resource Guide

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services publishes an extensive guidebook for kinship families called "Relatives Caring for Children: Ohio Resource Guide." To obtain a copy, call 1-866-886-3537 (option 4) or go to odjfs.state.oh.us/forms and search for JFS 08146.