



KINSHIP CARE

Kinship care represents the most desirable out-of-home placement option for children who cannot live with their parents. It offers family preservation and the greatest level of stability by allowing children to maintain their sense of belonging. It enhances their ability to identify with their family's culture and traditions. Kinship Care refers to a temporary or permanent arrangement in which a relative or any non-relative adult who has a long standing relationship or bond with the child and/or family has taken over the full-time, substitute care of a child whose parents are unable or unwilling to do so for reasons such as death or chronic illness (e.g., HIV/AIDS), substance abuse, incarceration, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, teenage pregnancy, unemployment, poverty, and other problems. Kinship care includes those relationships established through an informal arrangement, a legal custody or guardianship order, a relative foster care placement or a kinship adoption. The 2000 U.S. Census reports that 86,000 children are being raised by their grandparents in Ohio. Regardless of the type of kinship care 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

The Kinship Permanency Incentive program is designed to promote a permanent commitment by the kinship caregiver by becoming a guardian and custodian over a minor child who would otherwise be unsafe or at risk of harm if the child remained in their own home. The Kinship Permanency Incentive program provides time-limited incentive payments to families caring for their kin. Eligible families will receive an initial payment of \$1,000 per child to defray the costs of initial placement and may receive five hundred dollars per child at each six-month interval to support the stability of the child's placement in the home up to a maximum of \$3,500. Participation in this program does not preclude these families from receiving Child Only TANF benefits; time-limited incentive payments are in addition to TANF benefits.

Eligibility requirements for Ohio's Kinship Permanency Incentive Program include:

- Child must be adjudicated by the juvenile court as being abused, neglected, dependent, or unruly
- Court must have awarded legal custody or guardianship of the child on or after July 1, 2005 to the kinship caregiver, based on the best interest of the child.
- Child must be considered "special needs" (same criteria as for adoption subsidies).
- Public children services agency must have completed the Relative or Non-Relative Substitute Placement Approval Process, inclusive of a criminal background check, as well as completion of an application form.
- The gross income of the caregiver's family, including the child, may not exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines.

For more information, please contact your local public children services agency or call 1-866-886-3537 (Option 4).

Relatives Caring for Children: Ohio Resource Guide

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services has published a statewide resource guide for kinship families. Information is provided about the availability of programs for kinship providers through local agencies. The resource guide can be requested by calling 1-866-886-3537 (Option 4) or accessed on the web at: <http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/file.asp?id=42566>