

## Kinship Caregivers



### What Is Kinship Care?

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.

Kinship care can be established by an informal arrangement, a legal custody or guardianship court order, a relative foster care placement, or a kinship adoption. For more information on the topics below, and additional topics such as education and medical services, check out the Ohio Resource Guide for Relatives Caring for Children:

<http://ocwtp.net/PDFs/ProtectOHIO/OhioResourceGuideforRelatives.pdf>



### Education Options for Kinship Caregivers

Children under your care may face challenging educational experiences. It is important for caregivers to have a good grasp of the rights and protections available to children in public schools, so they can effectively advocate for the children's needs.

#### *Special Education Options*

Children exhibiting learning and behavioral problems may qualify for federally mandated identification and individualized services. These children are entitled to appropriate evaluations, interventions, and free public education from ages 3 – 21, as outlined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Kinship caregivers can seek school intervention by a written request for an evaluation and services. The letter should be mailed to the child's school principal and superintendent, and the school district must act upon the request. Under IDEA, school districts must act within 90 days on testing, reporting, and if eligible, a special education plan must be developed for the child. To be eligible for services, the child must have one of the following: mental retardation, hearing impairment, speech or language impairment, visual impairment, serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, specific learning disability, or developmental delay for children ages 3 to 9.

Special Education Regional Resource Centers provide timely and specialized assistance to parents and school personnel. They play an essential role in statewide networking, advocacy on behalf of students with disabilities, and state and national outreach information dissemination. Page 29 of the linked document provides contact information for centers throughout Ohio: [Ohio Resource Guide](#)

### *Additional Services*

1. Head Start: this program provides early childhood education, medical, dental, nutrition, parent, and other social services to children ages 3 – 5 who live at or below the federal poverty level, as well as children with disabilities and their families. To learn more about this program, contact your local Head Start program, which can be located at: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/center-locator>
2. High School Equivalency Diploma: Individuals over the age of 18 who have not completed high school can take courses to earn a High School Equivalency Diploma. More information about the Adult Basic Literacy Education Program can be found at 1-800-228-READ (7323).
3. Grants and Scholarships for Higher Education: Ohio Works First (OWF) recipients, children in foster care, and other low-income children can qualify for government grants, scholarships, and low-interest loans to help support the cost of college or other post-secondary education. For a free information packet, call the Ohio Board of Regents' State Grants and Scholarships Department at 1-888-833-1133.
4. Kinship Care Support Programs: Additional kinship care support services may be available through your county public children services agency. The Public Children Services Agency directory is found at the following link: <https://www.pcsao.org/membership/agency-directory>. Support groups in your area can also be found at <https://ohiograndparentkinship.org/> under the "Resources" tab.



### **Seek Help!**



Your local county or region has a Kinship Navigator that can help you, answer questions, and provide information on available resources for kinship caregivers. To find your local Navigator, call **1-844-OHIO-KAN (1-844-644-6586)** or visited at [ohiokan.jfs.ohio.gov](http://ohiokan.jfs.ohio.gov). The link can be opened by scanning the QR code to the left with a smartphone camera.

**The information on this flyer is not legal advice.**

**If you are seeking representation or legal advice, please contact LASC or SEOLS.  
An attorney-client relationship does not exist between you and LASC or SEOLS.**

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**Contact for Services: Intake line: 1-844-302-1800**

[www.columbuslegalaid.org](http://www.columbuslegalaid.org)

[www.seols.org](http://www.seols.org)

LASC provides services in Central Ohio and has offices in Columbus and Marion.

SEOLS provides services in 34 counties in Southeastern Ohio and has offices in Athens, Chillicothe, New Philadelphia, Newark, Portsmouth, and Steubenville