

# FACT SHEET



## 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 nearly 9% of all children in Ohio are being raised by kinship caregivers.

Kinship care includes relationships established through an informal arrangement, legal custody, 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.

Ohio offers assistance for eligible kinship caregivers. To apply for services, contact your county public children services agency or department of job and family services. To find your local agency, visit [jfs.ohio.gov/county](https://jfs.ohio.gov/county).

## Kinship Support Program

The Kinship Support Program provides temporary payments to eligible kinship caregivers of children in the temporary, permanent, or legal custody of a public children services agency (PCSA). Caregivers may receive payments for up to six months. During that time, they may work to become certified foster caregivers, if they choose. If they become certified foster caregivers, they can then receive foster care maintenance payments. Eligible kinship caregivers will receive the payments until the caregiver becomes a certified foster caregiver, the child is no longer in the home, the PCSA no longer has custody of the child, or the six-month time frame has been exhausted, whichever happens first.

## Kinship Permanency Incentive Program

The Kinship Permanency Incentive Program supports kinship caregivers by helping defray some of the costs of caring for children. Eligible caregivers receive a one-time payment to reduce the costs of the initial placement. They may receive up to seven subsequent payments every six months to support the stability of the child's placement in the home. Participation in this program does not prevent families from also receiving child-only Ohio Works First cash assistance. To be eligible, a kinship caregiver must have:

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

## Ohio Kinship and Adoption Navigator Program (OhioKAN)

The Ohio Kinship and Adoption Navigator Program (OhioKAN) is a statewide, flexible, and responsive kinship and adoption navigator program designed to assist children, caregivers, and families. Navigators help connect families to resources to meet their individualized needs. All relative and nonrelative caregivers providing kinship care are eligible to work with a navigator. To contact OhioKAN, call 1-844-OHIOKAN (1-844-644-6526) or visit [ohioKAN.jfs.ohio.gov](https://ohioKAN.jfs.ohio.gov).

### 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 visit [jfs.ohio.gov/form08146](https://jfs.ohio.gov/form08146). You also can view and download the brochure “Resource Family Rights” (JFS 08065) at [jfs.ohio.gov/form08065](https://jfs.ohio.gov/form08065). It explains the rights of resource families, which includes both foster and kinship caregivers.