

## Resources & Support Services

- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Information Center of Louisiana – information, resources, and support group services for kinship caregivers. [www.lagr.org](http://www.lagr.org) or 225-810-3555
- Medicaid and LaChip – Health insurance programs that provide health coverage to eligible low-income, uninsured children or families and families with disabled children. <http://www.Louisiana.gov/LDH/Medicaid>
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides income eligible families with children under age 5 food benefits and nutrition education. [www.louisianawic.org](http://www.louisianawic.org) or 1-800-251-BABY
- Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) helps low-income families pay for child care while working or attending school or training. [www.louisianabelieves.com/early-childhood/child-care-assistance-program](http://www.louisianabelieves.com/early-childhood/child-care-assistance-program) or 1-877-453-2721
- Social Security Survivor Benefits, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), benefits for disabled children and children of disabled parents, and social security cards. [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) or 1-800-772-1213
- Information on legal topics and locating low cost legal aid in your community. [www.LouisianaLawHelp.org](http://www.LouisianaLawHelp.org)
- Obtaining a birth certificate [www.lah.gov/publichealth/vitalrecords](http://www.lah.gov/publichealth/vitalrecords)

For information on the following programs, visit [www.dcfslouisiana.gov](http://www.dcfslouisiana.gov) and select IAM/RelativeCaregiver or FamilySupport, or call 1-888-LA-HELP-U (1-888-524-3578).

- Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP) provides cash assistance for each eligible child who resides with a qualified relative other than a parent.
- Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP) provides cash assistance to families with children when the family's financial resources are insufficient to meet subsistence needs.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides eligible low-income families monthly benefits to help buy food.
- Child Support Enforcement Services - Child Support is an obligation of a parent to provide emotional, financial and medical support for a child or children. DCFS offers parent locator and paternity establishment services, as well as assistance to establish and enforce child support orders and collection and distribution of child support payments.



LOUISIANA  
**KINSHIP  
NAVIGATOR**



# Kinship Care

**Maintaining  
Connections to  
Family, Community  
and Culture**

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## What is Kinship Care?

**Kinship Care** is the full-time care of children by relatives, tribal members, godparents, stepparents, or others who have a kinship bond with a child and whose parent is not living in the home. Children receiving appropriate care from relatives benefit by receiving care and affection from someone known to them and by having important attachments, family ties, and relationships preserved. Additionally, when parents are unable to do so, kinship caregivers are often able to provide the safe care needed, eliminating the need for formal child welfare intervention. However, should children have to enter foster care, relatives may be best able to provide care as certified kinship caregivers within the Department of Children and Family Services.

## What are the types of Kinship Care?

Kinship Care can be provided on a formal or informal basis. Parents and relative caregivers are sometimes able to voluntarily agree on care and informal custody arrangements that enable the relatives to meet the child's needs. When this is not possible, relatives must sometimes secure formal or legal custody in order to provide the level of care needed or enroll the child in school, secure medical care, etc... While relatives may be able to obtain certain temporary custodial documents without the aid of an attorney, it may be in the best interest of all to secure legal advice through a private attorney or public legal aid office.

## Why do children need relative placements?

It is well accepted that children whose parents cannot provide care for them, do better when they are able to receive safe and nurturing care from people who know and care about them. Caregivers who have a connection to the child through trusting and caring relationships and shared family ties, cultural experiences and beliefs are often better able to help the child adjust to being away from his or her parents, reducing trauma to the child.

## How to best serve as a Kinship Caregiver

Providing care to a relative child can often occur under very stressful circumstances, either following an isolated event or a chronic series of events including parental mental health issues, drug and substance abuse issues, etc. The impact to you and your family may also be very stressful, so it is critical to locate support services that can assist you with your specific situation. Community counseling agencies, churches and faith-based organizations, local and governmental agencies providing financial resources, food banks, and legal aid programs are all there to assist families such as yours. It is widely accepted that children do better when living with relatives who safely care for them, so reach out to resources to assist you in providing for these children.

## What are the responsibilities of a Kinship Caregiver?

If you accept a relative child into your home, it is the expectation that you will provide safe and adequate care to meet the physical, emotional and overall needs of the child. Relatives often find themselves in a difficult position- trying to provide for the child's needs while addressing the parents' involvement or lack thereof.

Fulfilling the many responsibilities in rearing a child can be a very difficult and long-term process, yet also very rewarding for relatives and especially the children in their care. Generally, as a relative or kinship caregiver, you agree to serve in all aspects of the parental role to meet the needs of the child including:

- Providing for daily needs of food, clothing, and shelter as well as emotional care and support
- Monitoring the child's medical, dental, psychological and emotional needs and securing appropriate treatment as needed
- Assuring the child, as age appropriate, is enrolled and attending school
- Providing guidance, supervision, nurturance, and affection.

As a kinship caregiver, you are also able to apply for certain benefits for the child or for assistance to help you in providing care to the child. Some of these benefits and resources are included on the back of this brochure. Contact these resources to determine your eligibility for assistance or for information that can assist you in better meeting the needs of the child and reducing the stress on your family.