

FACT SHEET

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, and by enhancing 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 nonrelative adult who has a long-standing relationship or bond with the child and/or family takes over the full-time, substitute care of that child because the parents are unable or unwilling to do so. In many cases, the kinship caregivers are grandparents. It has been estimated that as many as 86,000 children in Ohio are being raised by their grandparents.

Kinship care includes relationships established through informal arrangement, legal custody or guardianship order, relative foster care placement, or kinship 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

The Kinship Permanency Incentive program is designed to promote permanent commitments by kinship caregivers, by helping defray some of the costs of caring for children. Eligible caregivers will receive an initial payment to defray costs of initial placement and may receive subsequent payments at six-month intervals to support the stability of the child's placement in the home. The maximum incentive amount may not exceed six payments and will not be provided for longer than thirty-six consecutive months. Participation in this program does not preclude these families from also receiving child-only Ohio Works First benefits.

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

- A court must have been awarded legal custody or guardianship of the child on or after July 1, 2005, to the kinship caregiver.
- The gross income of the caregiver's family, including the child, may not exceed 300 percent of the federal poverty guidelines.

Kinship caregivers must apply for the program at their local public children services agency or county department of job and family services. They also must submit to both a family home assessment and a criminal background check. To find the agency in your area, call 1-866-886-3537 (option 4) or go to <http://jfs.ohio.gov/County/cntydir.stm>.

Resource Guide

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services has published an extensive guidebook for kinship families. To obtain a copy of "Ohio Resource Guide: Relatives Caring for Children" call 1-866-886-3537 (option 4) or go to <http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/file.asp?id=47881>.