



HAMILTON COUNTY
JOB & FAMILY SERVICES

Kinship Care Fact Sheet

What is Kinship Care?

A kinship placement occurs when children who cannot live with their parent/caregiver(s) safely live full-time with kin (a relative or any non-relative who has a long-standing relationship with the child or family). Kinship care is the most desirable living arrangement for children who cannot live with their parent/caregiver(s). It helps children have a sense of family and belonging. It can help children identify with their family's culture and traditions.

Types of kinship care:

- **Kinship non-court involved safety plan** – A safety plan is an out of home placement with kin. This arrangement can occur when Hamilton County Children's Services does not have custody of the child.
- **Kinship caregiver** – Hamilton County Children's Services has custody of the child(ren) and have placed the child(ren) in a kinship caregiver(s) home.
- **Kinship guardian** – The kinship caregiver received legal custody of the child(ren) with intention to raise the child(ren) until their 18th birthday. Hamilton County Children's Services typically closes the case.
- **Kinship foster care** – Hamilton County Children's Services has custody of the child(ren). The kinship caregiver is a licensed foster parent and has placement of the child(ren).
- **Kinship adoption** – The biological parents' rights are terminated, and the kinship caregiver adopts the child.

If I accept a child into my home as a kinship caregiver, do I have custody of the child(ren)?

- **Placement** – The child(ren) lives with a kinship caregiver who has input into decisions, but Hamilton County Children's Services holds custody and makes all decisions affecting the child. Children's Services will be actively involved with your family and the child.
- **Legal Custody** – Kinship caregivers must go to court, and the court grants legal custody or guardianship. As the legal custodian, you have the authority to make most major decisions regarding the child. Parents/caregivers may maintain visitation, medical and educational rights.

Can I become a licensed foster parent for the kinship children in my care?

- Please ask your caseworker for a copy of [HCJFS 7807 - If you are also interested in becoming a foster parent](#) or
- Log onto the HCJFS website www.hckids.org
 - Click on "Foster Care & Adoption Information"
 - Click on "Interested in foster parenting?"

Once you chose an agency, contact the agency's foster care training representative to determine their training requirements and schedule. Licensed kinship foster parents are ineligible for kinship stipends.

What kind of financial support is available to kinship caregivers?

The following financial support may be available to kinship caregivers:

- **Hamilton County Kinship Stipend:** for Kinship Caregivers with a child placed in the home when the child is in the legal custody of HCJFS.
 - \$350.00 Stipend is paid per child per month while the child is placed in the home
 - Kinship family must complete and [Kinship Caregiver Agreement](#), an [HC Vendor Registration](#) and if applicable a [Direct Deposit Agreement](#) and submit back to the Agency to initiate the stipend payment.
 - For more details on Hamilton County Kinship Stipend see: [HCJFS 4120 Kinship Stipend Program Frequently Asked Questions and Answers](#)
- **State Kinship Support Program (KSP)**

Beginning in April 2021, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) issues monthly kinship support payment to Kinship Caregivers for each kinship child placed in the home. The amount of payment is \$10.20/day per kinship child in the home. These (KSP) payments are time limited. KSP is intended to allow the caregiver time to work with local organizations to become licensed as a foster parent. Once licensed, the caregiver will receive foster care payments for the child for the duration of the placement. See: [State Kinship Support Program \(KSP\) Frequently Asked Questions and Answers](#)
- **Medicaid**

Medicaid is state and federally funded health care coverage.

 - Kinship caregivers, both relative and non-relative, may apply for a Medicaid card for the child or sibling group in their care.
 - Income and assets are not considered when determining eligibility unless the kinship caregiver also chooses to apply for themselves.

- Kinship caregivers who qualify for cash assistance will automatically qualify for a Medicaid card.
- Call 946-1000 to request an application or visit www.hcjfs.org.

- **Food Assistance**

Food assistance is a state and federal funded monthly benefit provided to eligible families.

- Kinship caregivers may apply, but the entire household's income and assets are considered for eligibility. Kinship caregivers cannot receive food assistance for just the child or sibling group in their care.
- Call 946-1000 to arrange to request an application or visit www.hcjfs.org.

- **Cash Assistance (Ohio Works First)**

NOTE: OWF cannot be received for the same child/period the kinship caregiver receives KSP.

Cash assistance is a federal program that provides a fixed monthly check to low-income families. Kinship caregivers may apply for cash assistance for a child or sibling set in their care.

- Income and assets are not considered for child only cash assistance eligibility.
- Child-only OWF payments are paid on a sliding scale based on the size of the sibling group.
- You must be a blood relative to receive child-only Ohio Works First cash payments.
- Non-relative kinship caregivers are not eligible unless they take legal custody and become the child's guardian.
- **Families who need to apply for assistance due to child placements may:**
 1. File online at <https://benefits.ohio.gov/>;
 2. Access an application at www.HCJFS.org;
 3. Come to the agency lobby to complete an application ([JFS 07200](http://JFS07200)); or
 4. Call 946-1000 to request an application
Mail or fax (513-946-1076) the application to HCJFS. Local libraries can also fax applications and verifications to HCJFS for **FREE**.

- **Supplemental Security Income or Social Security**

- In rare instances, a child is eligible for SSI due to a disability or for social security benefits due to the death or disability of a parent.
- Kinship caregivers may receive payments based on Social Security payments for the child's
- The child's case worker can find out if the child receives or is eligible to receive these benefits.

- **Publicly Funded Child Care**

Publicly funded Child Care Services is intended to partially cover the cost of childcare for eligible low and moderate-income families.

- Caregiver must have physical custody of the child

- Need is established by caregiver's participation in work, school, or training.
- The gross monthly household income for the family size must be at or less than 130% of the Federal Poverty Level for initial eligibility. This increases to 300% to maintain ongoing eligibility.
- Refer to [HCJFS 7969 – Child Care: Income Guidelines Fact Sheet](#) for additional information.
- Call 946-1800 for an application packet.

- **Kinship Child Care**

Kinship child care is available for children placed in the home of a kinship caregiver.

- Children must be active in an open Children's Services case and on a safety plan or in agency custody and placed with a kinship caregiver.
- At the time of initial approval, income must be below 500% of Federal Poverty Level.
- Child care is tied to employment, educational or respite needs of caregiver or social/developmental needs of the child.
- Care is for children under age of 13, unless a professionally verified need exists for a child age 13-18 with a physical or mental disability.
- Kinship caregivers should check with their caseworker if interested in Kinship Child Care.

Can I become an adoptive parent for the kinship children in my care?

Sometimes children placed in foster care with kin or with a kinship caregiver become available for adoption. Ohio law gives preference first to the child's suitable family members, then to a child's foster parents and finally to others who express interest in the child.

- Log onto the HCJFS website www.hckids.org
 - Click on "Adoptive Parenting "
 - Click on "Adoption 101"
- If a child placed with you becomes available for adoption and you are already an approved adoptive parent, you can complete an expedited application to adopt. Your foster care agency will then work with JFS to complete the expedited home study and adoption process.

What do I do if I can no longer maintain care of the children in my home?

Kinship caregivers who are still a kinship placement, must report their concerns to the case worker immediately. The case worker may be able to assist in finding ways to stabilize the placement or will find an alternate placement, if necessary.

Kinship caregivers who have legal custody of the child(ren) should call 241-KIDS (or the Children's Services agency in the county in which they reside) for assistance in finding an alternate placement if needed. **Do not return the child(ren) to the home from which they were removed without contacting Children's Services prior.**