

SUPPORT KINSHIP CAREGIVERS

How Child Welfare Agencies Can Prioritize Kin Families During COVID-19

Kinship care bolsters child well-being, strengthens families and promotes reunification. It is one of a child welfare system's best strategies to keep kids safe and nurtured during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

In these unprecedented times, child welfare agencies are preparing for steep budget cuts, expecting rising numbers of hotline calls and [reimagining their work](#) with kids, families and communities. Kinship care is a better use of system resources because of the natural belonging and healing that occurs — and it prevents kids of color from being placed in developmentally inappropriate group facilities, where they are often overrepresented.

Kinship care can encourage child well-being, keep kids in families and prevent disproportionate congregate placements for kids of color.

SUPPORTING KIN FAMILIES

Top needs include:

- Access to technology to connect with family, doctors and school.
- Access to benefits like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
- Additional stipends for food, utilities and supplies, especially if a caregiver becomes unemployed.
- Help creating backup plans to care for kids should a caregiver fall ill.

EMBARKING ON NEW PARTNERSHIPS

- Check to see whether your local Department of Aging can provide resources for programs that support grandparents and other elders who are kin caregivers.
- Partner with young people and their families to co-design services and build a robust network of caring adults for each young person.
- Ensure that any new partnerships your agency installs reduce disparities and promote race equity.
- Provide kin families with multiple layers of support so they can focus on helping young people thrive.
- For more ways to support kin families, see: [Supporting Grandfamilies through the COVID-19 Crisis](#).

FINDING DOLLARS

Look here for existing and impending funds:

- Social Security Act's Title IV-B funding for kinship navigator grants for FYs 2018 and 2019
- Family First Transition Act
- Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which authorizes:
 - Title IV-B funding
 - COVID-19 Relief Fund
- New (temporary) [Federal Medical Assistance Percentage dollars](#)