



Training for Kinship Caregivers

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States have a variety of approaches regarding training and assessment for kinship caregivers. We have assembled some here. This information was provided by state foster care and kinship care specialists. Note that this is not a comprehensive list of all policies. For more information about kinship care, see the resources listed on the NRCFCPPP website at http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/kinship-relative-care.html

Alabama

Alabama has two categories of kinship care providers.

- Related foster parents must meet all the same requirements in terms of background clearances and training as any other foster parent. They receive the same payment and financial support as any other foster parent. The children must remain in the legal custody of the agency in this category home.
- The other category must have a background check, but there are no other requirements in terms of training or education. The financial support for this category is extremely limited. They are encouraged to take legal custody of the child.

Arizona

For court approved, unlicensed kinship caregivers:

- There are no required training hours, but they may attend preservice training.
- Assessment of needs is part of the out of home care plan for the related placed child.

For kinship caregivers to be licensed foster parents:

- Required training is the same as for unrelated foster parents. Enforcement is through licensing rules
- Assessment is through a strengths/needs approach is part of case planning
- Training for all foster parents is through PS MAPP

Colorado (county administered)

Certified kinship foster caregivers receiving foster care reimbursement:

- Must receive the same training hours that all new foster parents must receive (27 precertification + CPR and 1st Aid, and before the 1 yr renewal is done, they must have an additional 20 hour of ongoing training).
- Training development plan and training log is reviewed by the county department to assure that the training hours are completed. In some situations the county department may withhold all or part of the reimbursement if they are not completed.
- There are specific topics that must be addressed in the first 12 hours of precertification training. Foster care precertification training is provided by the State and some of the larger counties provide their own. There are several counties that provide 24 hours of training upfront. Beyond that, the counties may require

- specific topics or the kinship foster family may want to choose certain trainings provided by the agency, State, or in the community.
- Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) is completed as it would be for any family through a series of interviews in order to determine appropriateness and needs.

Non-certified caregivers receiving either no payment or TANF and Medicaid:

- The county department can make a decision about whether training is required.
- Counties vary in their practice about the depth and comprehensiveness of their assessments. There is also a non-certified kinship SAFE assessment process that is optional.

Connecticut

State policy requires that relatives (kin) be sought out and given preference as a placement option when an out-of-home placement is needed for a child under the Department's care. Connecticut does not have a separate licensing program for relative foster parents. In general, relatives must meet the same licensing standards and requirements as non-related foster parents, except for the training requirement, which the department can waive on a case by case basis. The Department does have a training that is geared toward relative caretakers.

Idaho

- By rule, the state requires one hour of orientation and ten hours of training each year. By state standards, 27 hours of PRIDE training are required. All children in foster care must be placed in a licensed foster home.
- By use of a waiver, there is a six month grace period to complete the PRIDE training if necessary for kinship caregivers.
- State is using the PRIDE curriculum for all licensed foster homes, including relatives. They have purchased the Kinship PRIDE curriculum for piloting.
- Kinship providers are assessed like any other potential foster family. Family Group Decision Making is also employed.

Maine

- Does not require kin providers to become licensed although it is strongly encouraged.
- The room and board rate is lower if the provider is unlicensed.
- For those that do become licensed, they go through the same training and have the same training requirements as all foster parents.
- The state has a curriculum of pre-service foster parent training geared to kin, but it is not as available as the general training. Whether kin have the kin training or the regular foster parent training depends on where the kin is located and the cycle of the trainings.

Michigan

- Does not have required training hours for unlicensed relative providers.
- Caseworkers must list activities they will perform to assist the relative in providing care for the child, and document it in the Parent/Agency Treatment Plan.

- Many trainings are made available to relative providers. They receive a pamphlet at the time of placement that outlines available supports. A Caregiving Provider Manual is provided to relative caregivers that lists some training resources.

Missouri

- Requires the relative or kinship caregiver to attend 8 hours of pre-service training and 15 hours of in-service training annually (30 hours per licensing period).
- The family cannot be licensed until they complete the pre-service training and thus can not receive maintenance payments past the initial 90 days of placement (this time allows them to complete the required paperwork and training).
- The family must also have a Professional Family Development Plan (PFDP) which outlines what the family's goals and needs are and develops a training plan to help them meet their goals and address their needs. This plan is completed within 30 days of initial licensure, reviewed annually and redone at relicensure.
- If a family is not meeting their in-service training hours, the Division will suspend their professional parenting payment of \$100 per child per month. They would continue to get the maintenance payment.
- The state has a set of pre-approved in-service trainings that are available as resources allow. They also allow for outside training which is approved by the Regional offices depending upon the needs of their area. They require HIPAA, CPR, and First Aid training.
- The needs of relative and kinship caregivers are assessed in the same manner as nonrelated foster caregivers. Each family has an assessment completed prior to licensure and updated every two years. Part of this assessment includes an analysis of the family's strengths and needs within the required competencies.
- The state uses many resources to train kinship, relative and foster caregivers, including the Departments of Mental Health and Health as well as contracted agencies and other outside sources.
- Uses the STARS for the Caregiver Who Knows the Child pre-service training and STARS in-service training modules with kinship and relative caregivers. STARS was developed using the CWLA foster parent training.
- Each kinship and relative caregiver has a worker assigned to them that is responsible for issuing and maintaining the license for the home. This worker must meet with the family quarterly. These workers help address the family's concerns and needs as well as assuring that the home continues to meet licensing standards. There should be an ongoing dialog with the family on what their goals and needs are (this is documented not only in the narrative but also on the PFDP).

New Hampshire

- State law does not require a relative to be licensed, although they are encouraged to do so. Training is tied to licensing.
- Recently opened foster and adoptive on-going training to relative caregivers. They can access any of the training offered by the Education and Training Partnership of Granite State College (<http://www.granite.edu/etp/>)
- First contact is with assessment or family service worker who would do the relative caregiver assessment. During that, relatives would be told they could be a licensed

foster parent or if they choose, to apply for financial aid on behalf of the child (TANF). When and if they apply to TANF the fiscal specialist gives them information about training opportunities.

New Jersey

- As a result of the state's Child Welfare Reform Plan, relatives must meet all licensing standards set forth in policy, beginning 7/1/05. This includes 27 hours of PRIDE pre-service training, which is not specific to relative caregivers. The state is in the process of purchasing a license to the CWLA curriculum 'A Tradition of Caring, Information, Resources and Support for Kinship Families,' which will be modified and shortened for New Jersey's relative resource providers.
- Resource parents are required to attend 10 hours of in service training annually; this has changed to 15 hours annually beginning 7/1/06. Successful completion of in-service training is required by the Office of Licensing in order to maintain a resource family license.

New Mexico

- Requires that all foster parents attend the 27 hour PRIDE training and become licensed. Does not have a separate kinship care program, but does differentiate between relative foster care and family foster care for the purpose of reporting.

North Dakota

- The Kinship Care program is a TANF program. All of the TANF rules apply, such as the caregiver must be within the 5th degree of relationship. The County must have custody of the child or children and the case manager determines if this is an appropriate referral to the Kinship Care Program during the assessment process.
- A Kinship Study is completed by the case manager that includes a background check. If the kin family can provide a safe environment for the children then the TANF worker and the case manager work together to initiate TANF Kinship Care.
- The family receives a "child only" TANF payment for each of the children and supportive services such as child care, clothing allowances, transportation costs, etc.
- The supportive services are aligned with the Foster Care supportive services for foster parents.
- If a Kinship family decides that they want to be licensed to provide foster care for the relative children, they would be required to go through a foster care licensing study and complete the PRIDE Foster Parent training, which is provided through a contract with the University of North Dakota Children and Family Services Training Center.
- The County is the custodian and would provide case management for the family and children. The state has adopted the Wraparound process as the Child Welfare model of case management and that includes a child and family team process. The team would address service needs for the family and make referrals. Communication occurs through the case management process and specifically the child and family teams.

Ohio (county administered)

- There is no training required at the state level, but some counties have specific trainings for kinship caregivers. It is not mandatory.
- In some counties which provide training of their kinship caregivers, caregivers may be eligible for some minimal financial incentives available provided they attend the training.
- One county did develop a 10 hour, 5 module training for kinship caregivers. It is similar to pre-service training for foster parents but with a kinship focus.

Oklahoma:

- Requires all resource families including kinship (paid or non-paid) to attend 27 hours of Oklahoma PRIDE training (tailored to meet the needs of Oklahoma through a joint effort between OKDHS and the National Resource Center for Youth Services). Training is contracted out to NRCYS.
- Kinship providers who want payment do not receive it until they have attended the required training.
- For non-paid kinship providers, the state completes a written plan of compliance if they have not done the training.
- Needs of the kinship providers is included in the training, as well as adoption and traditional resource families.
- Each family is assigned a foster care specialist to communicate with the kinship providers about the training and to enroll them in the training. NRCYS trains the resource families and communicates to the foster care specialist about any issues with the resource families. NRCYS also communicates with OKDHS about overall issues surrounding trainings with the foster care section at the state office level.

South Dakota

- Currently does not provide training to kinship providers.
- They are offered the opportunity to take part in foster care PRIDE training.

Texas

- Kinship caregivers can be relatives or fictive kin (someone who has a longstanding relationship with the child) approved by DFPS to provide for the safety, wellbeing and permanency of a child in DFPS conservatorship (custody) while residing in their home.
- Kinship caregivers can receive a \$1000 one time, per sibling group integration payment to help with start up cost in integrating the child into the home. These costs can cover beds, clothing, cribs, and other items the child may need.
- In addition to the integration payment, families can receive an annual payment of \$500 per child reimbursement to cover expenses incurred as a result of providing for the child's daily needs.
- The kinship placement approval includes the following:
 - Must meet 300% of poverty household income guidelines
 - Must have an approved home assessment with criminal background check
 - Cannot be a licensed foster home or group home
 - Cannot have received reimbursement from CPS before

- The Kinship Caregiver Support Training Curriculum model was written in 2005 and revised in 2006 from the PRIDE curriculum for potential Foster and Adoptive parents. The Kinship Care curriculum was designed to educate Kinship caregivers on issues and topics related to the process of providing for the safety and well being of children in the conservatorship of DFPS.
- Kinship Development Workers (KDW) in each region provide an opportunity to Kinship Caregivers to attend Kinship Support Group Training in the counties where the KDW's are housed. Since some Kinship caregivers are located in counties where there are no KDW's, training is provided; however, not required.
- Kinship caregivers who attend the Kinship Support Group Training must also comply with other agency requirements to be considered by DFPS for placement of a child in DFPS conservatorship. These requirements include but are not limited to having a completed home assessment. Assessing the caregiver's needs, appropriateness of placement and providing ongoing supports is a continuous process for the KDW and the Conservatorship Worker. During the home assessment process, during caregiver support training, and during home, office and phone visits with the caregiver, the caregiver's needs are being assessed.

Washington

- Has a class of relatives that does not need to be licensed but may choose to be licensed.
- If the relative "of specified degree" chooses to be licensed all licensing standards apply.
- For those who choose not be licensed, there are no required training hours. All training is open to unlicensed relatives
- Unlicensed and licensed caregivers must complete training on physically assault and sexually aggressive children if a child with that history is to be placed in their home.
- Does not currently do an assessment, but have proposed a relative home study process.
- A collaborative kinship oversight committee is legislated to provide guidance to all kinship caregivers (relatives of specified degree), including formal and informal caregivers. This group has developed some training and educational outreach, but is not a regularized training program.
- Communication with caregivers is generally via mail, but unlicensed caregivers are encouraged to join an existing listserv and to sign up with the state foster parent association and private agencies providing retention supports.

Wyoming

- Training is required if relative caregivers want to become certified foster homes, which allows them to be reimbursed. This is PRIDE training, plus approved ongoing training.
- Kinship providers have an organization they can join to help them with their trainings and to be involved with other kinship providers.