

# Self-Study Course

## Kinship Care

Updated April 2023

### 2.0 Training Credits

#### **CREDITS:**

Crumbly, Joseph and Little, Robert L. *Relatives Raising Children: An Overview of Kinship Care*. CWLA Incorporated, 1997.

GrandsPlace (August 2002). *Alaska Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children* Casey Family Programs National Center for Resource Family Support. Retrieved from

Alaska Statutes, Section 230: AS 47.14.100 (e) *Powers and Duties of Department Over Care of Child* [Electronic Version]. <https://www.akleg.gov/basis/statutes.asp#47.14.100>

*Frequently Asked Questions* Child Welfare League of America.

Connolly, Marie (May 2003). *Kinship Care: A Selected Literature Review* [Electronic Version]. Department of Child, Youth and Family. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259384781\\_A\\_kinship\\_care\\_literature\\_review](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259384781_A_kinship_care_literature_review)

**16-02 Emergency Relief Support Program** Office of Children’s Services Child Protective Services Manual (February 22, 2023)

[http://dpaweb.hss.state.ak.us/training/OCS/cps/index.htm#t=Program\\_Instructions%2F16-02\\_Emergency\\_Relief\\_Support\\_Program.htm&rhsearch=Emergency%20relief%20support&ux=search](http://dpaweb.hss.state.ak.us/training/OCS/cps/index.htm#t=Program_Instructions%2F16-02_Emergency_Relief_Support_Program.htm&rhsearch=Emergency%20relief%20support&ux=search)

**GRANDFACTS: Alaska State Fact Sheet for Grandfamilies** [Electronic Version]. *Generations United, in partnership with The Brookdale Foundation Group, AARP, ABA Center on Children and the Law, Casey Family Programs, ChildFocus, Children’s Defense Fund and the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption* (Updated March 2021). Retrieved from <http://www.grandfamilies.org/State-Fact-Sheets>

If you wish to receive training credit for reading this self-study, please fill out the “CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING” Questionnaire” at the back of this course. Return the questionnaire to the Alaska Center for Resource Families for 2.0 Training Credits. The course is yours to keep for further reference.

This self-study course was originally developed by Racquel Martinez and updated April 2023 by Jodi von Brandt for the Alaska Center for Resource Families.

#### **RETURN YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE TO:**

Alaska Center for Resource Families  
3429 Airport Way, Suite 202A  
Fairbanks, AK 99709

1-800-478-7307

[www.acrf.org](http://www.acrf.org)



# KINSHIP CARE

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## Introduction:

This self-study course is designed to help relative caretakers such as aunts, uncles, and grandparents or “kinship” care providers understand the special aspects of this kind of out-of-home care. This course is designed to provide information to kinship care providers and is not intended to provide legal advice. This course will explain some of the unique issues that affect kinship caregivers, explore the different kinds of kinship care, and offer suggestions to help you navigate kinship care.

In this course, you will learn:

- What is kinship care?
- Why children are placed with relatives or kinship care providers.
- The difference between formal and informal kinship care.
- The benefits and challenges associated with kinship care.
- What your role is as a kinship care provider.

## What Is Kinship Care?

The practice of family taking care of family: uncles, aunts, or grandparents caring for other family members are known as *Kinship Care*. It is a long-held tradition in many cultures. Many relatives or close family friends extend their hearts and homes to care for children they love. The Child Welfare League of America defines kinship care as *the full-time care, nurturing and protection of children by relatives, members of their tribes or clans, godparents, stepparents, or any adult who has a kinship bond with a child*. This definition is designed to be inclusive and respectful of cultural values and ties of affection. It allows a child to grow to adulthood in a family environment. Kinship captures all of you who may be caring for a loved one.



There are two kinds of kinship care arrangements. Kinship care can either be **formal** or **informal**. **Formal kinship care** occurs when a child is placed by an agency such as the Office of Children’s Services with a relative. This means that there is a social service agency involved with your family.

The Office of Children’s Services (OCS) is the agency mandated by statute to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children. When OCS feels that a child’s safety is at risk, it may seek to take legal custody of a child. Because OCS is granted custody, it may also have the ability to make placement decisions for the child, and place the child with a kinship care provider.

**Formal kinship care occurs when a child is placed by an agency such as the Office of Children’s Services with a relative or an adult who has an established bond or connection with the child.**

Children who are in the custody of the State of Alaska, for child protective reasons, can be placed with a relative who is or is not licensed for foster care. Because a child is in the State’s custody, this is called **formal kinship care**. The placement is usually supervised by a social worker.

**EXAMPLE:** *John and Susie Jones received a call from an OCS social worker asking if they would be willing to care for their eight-year-old grandson who was just taken into emergency custody due to physical abuse by his mother.*

Rather than placing him in a foster home, OCS placed the child with his grandparents. This is called formal kinship care. Following is another example of formal kinship care.

*Six-year-old Jason is taken into emergency foster care due to severe neglect by his parents. There are no relatives available to care for Jason, so the OCS social worker calls Jessica, a teacher’s aide, who has known Jason for several years and has babysat him in the past. Although Jason knows Jessica, she is not a relative, so she needs to be licensed as a foster parent. However; this is still considered kinship care because Jason and Jessica have a connection or bond before placement.*

Another kind of kinship care is **Informal Kinship Care** which describes a situation where a parent or caretaker voluntarily places a child with another family or caregiver, or a situation where a kinship caregiver steps in to protect a child before an outside person or agency becomes involved. So, if a relative or friend agrees to care for a child, this kind of relationship is *informal kinship care*.

In Alaska, informal kinship care occurs frequently. Many of you may care for your grandchildren, as an example, for a week or month or year. This is a natural kind of a caring relationship and is always preferable to intervention by agencies or OCS. However, there are problems with informal kinship care. The problems that occur most often are because the kinship care provider does not have a legal relationship with the child. This means that the kinship care provider can not approve of medical care, educational care or any other aspect involving a child, including permission to

travel out of state. If the birth parent has a cooperative and frequent relationship with the kinship caretaker and is in agreement with medical, educational or other legal details, then there may not be a problem in making decisions or approving for treatment. However, if you are not able to locate

**Informal kinship care is when a parent or caretaker voluntarily places a child with a family or caregiver, or when a kinship caregiver steps in to protect a child before an outside person or agency becomes involved.**

the parent or the parent does not agree with what you want as a caretaker, then you may have problems. Because the parent still has legal authority, what the parent wants for their child generally happens. Or, in another scenario, nothing can be accomplished because of an inability to locate a parent.

Another aspect of informal care is that the parent has the right to remove the child from your home at any time. With informal kinship care, you will not have any legal right to the child, so you will not be able to prevent a parent from removing the child from your home. This means that even if a parent has a problem with mental illness or substance abuse, that parent still has the right to remove the child from your care.

*Sally was recently incarcerated for a drug violation. A condition of her release requires her to enter into an inpatient drug and alcohol treatment program. Sally, being a single parent, asks her mother to care for her 12-year-old daughter while she is in treatment.*

If Sally decides to leave her program and to go and take the daughter from the grandmother's care, she may do so. She may be in violation of her probation, but she still has legal authority to make decisions for her child.

*16-year-old Mary and her mother had an argument that resulted in Mary and her mom exchanging punches. The next day, Mary reports the incident to her school counselor. The school counselor calls OCS to make a report of harm. The school counselor, an OCS social worker, Mary, and her mom come up with a safety plan that includes Mary staying with her best friend Susan until Mary and her mom can start family counseling. Because the mother has agreed to let Mary stay with a friend and she is no longer at risk of harm, OCS does not become involved with the family.*

But, if Mary's mom breaks her agreement to allow her daughter to stay with a friend, then OCS may choose to become legally involved and Mary's kinship care could become formalized.



## Formal Kinship Care through the State of Alaska Office of Children’s Services

The remainder of this self-study will address **formal kinship care**. There are two ways to provide formal kinship care. Children who are in the custody of the state of Alaska and placed out-of the home, must be either in a licensed foster home or with a relative (either licensed or unlicensed). This means that a relative kinship caregiver, who has a child placed with them by the State OCS, can either be a licensed foster parent or an unlicensed relative caregiver.

Caregivers, who are not related to the child either by blood or marriage, but have a prior relationship with the child must obtain a foster care license. Kinship care providers who are licensed receive reimbursement for the care of the child (foster care reimbursement through the Office of Children’s Services). Unlicensed relatives who need financial help to provide care for a child can apply for and receive financial assistance from the State of Alaska called ATAP (Alaska Temporary Assistance Program.).

*John and Susie Jones are the maternal grandparents of eight-year-old Buddy. Buddy is taken into OCS custody due to physical abuse. John and Susie do not need financial assistance in order to care for Buddy and have agreed to become unlicensed relative caregivers.*

Kinship placements have increased nationwide over the past 10 years. Some of the reasons for this include increases in alcohol and other drug abuse, parental incarceration, and child abuse (Crumbley, et al). As of March 2023 there were 2765 children in out of home placement under the supervision of the Alaska OCS. Of these children 1084 were placed with relatives. According to the GrandFacts a State Fact Sheet for Grandfamilies, in 2021 Alaska had approximately 19,379 children living in homes where a relative is head of households. There were another 9,000 children being raised by kin with no parent present. There were 763 children in foster care being raised by kin. For every 1 child raised by kin in foster care, there are 11 being raised by kin outside of the system. The most common type of kinship care placements are grandparents caring for grandchildren.

**ALASKA STATUTE: 47.14.100(e)** requires OCS to consider relative placement whenever a child is removed and in need of an out-of-home placement. Additionally, the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 mandates OCS to follow specific placement preferences for Alaskan Native/Indian children. Although there are no specific laws requiring OCS to look outside of family placement, whenever a child is removed, efforts are made to place the child with a relative or a person the child is familiar with. These kinship placements help to reduce the amount of trauma children

experience when they are removed from their primary caregiver. Additionally, it helps to maintain the continuity of care; and in most cases the child is able to stay in the same community.

## What are the benefits associated with kinship care?

Children who are placed in kinship care are able to maintain family connections with their birth parents and siblings; experience fewer moves within the foster care system; and experience fewer



traumas. When children are placed in an unrelated foster home, they may not only feel abandoned by their parents, but they may feel abandoned by other family members as well. These feelings of abandonment can lead to depression, anger towards the parents and other family members, and acting out behaviors. However, when children are in kinship placements, they are better able to maintain and continue family connections. This allows them to feel a sense of belonging, worth, history, and value to others (Crumbley, et al).

*Michael, age 3, and his sister Brittany, age 10, are taken into emergency custody due to their mother and stepfather's severe substance abuse problems. Michael and Brittany are half-siblings and have different fathers. Michael's paternal aunt, Jennifer, is able to care for both children. Because she is not related to Brittany, she will have to become a state licensed foster parent. This placement will allow Michael and Brittany to maintain their sibling relationship and decreases the amount of trauma they would have experienced had they been placed in separate foster homes.*

Research has shown that children placed in kinship care experience fewer moves within the foster care system. One reason for this includes a kinship caregiver's willingness to accept a child's negative behaviors. Another reason is that most children placed in kinship care have an established relationship with the kinship caregiver, which allows the child to learn new behaviors more quickly. As a result, the child's negative behaviors subside more quickly and are less severe than when placed in a regular foster home.

*Michael was removed from his parents' care due to their severe substance abuse problems and was placed with his Aunt Jennifer. After being with his aunt for two months, Michael started to have temper tantrums and began refusing to go to bed at night. Because she has known Michael his entire life and knows the history of his parents' substance abuse, Jennifer is able to understand that this behavior is related to the neglect Michael experienced as well as the loss of his parents. Because Michael is her nephew, she is committed to caring for him and working through his behavioral problems.*

Because children are able to maintain family ties and experience fewer moves within the foster care system, they experience fewer traumas. Subsequently, they suffer from fewer emotional problems such as separation anxiety, adjustment reactions, attachment disorders, and conduct disorders (Crumbley, et al.).

*Attachment was a special issue for Buddy who has been placed with his maternal grandparents for several months. Buddy's mother attends the same church as the grandparents and is able to sit with the family during the church service. Additionally, because the grandparent's have been able to set clear boundaries with their daughter, she is allowed to visit with Buddy at their home several times a week. Although Buddy still experienced grief from being removed from his mother's care, this frequent contact minimized his grieving process as well as his separation anxiety. Subsequently, Buddy was able to adjust to living with his grandparents more quickly than if he had been placed with a non-kinship caregiver. This kind of attachment is very important for children.*

# RESOURCES IN ALASKA

**VOA Alaska's Kinship Care Program:** this one of a kind, statewide program provides resources and support for Alaskans caring for their family member's children.

## Services Offered:

- **Youth Early Intervention & Support:** Youth in kinship care and their families will learn how to resolve problems, modify behavior and make positive changes in their lives.
- **Home-Based Family Services:** Youth in kinship care and caregivers will learn life and social skills, conflict resolution, self-regulation, and problem-solving.
- **Family Therapy:** focusing on helping families function in more positive and constructive ways, family therapy explores communication while providing support and education to develop common goals, learn conflict resolution, and heal together.
- **Individual Therapy:** Youth receives support for a range of needs, including depression, anxiety, drug and alcohol use, suicidal ideation, anger management, and severe mental health or substance use disorder. Caregivers receive support surrounding loss, roles and boundaries, bonding, anger management, resentment, balance, and child rearing practices.

**To enroll:** After submitting an intake form and family needs assessment, you will be connected with a Care Coordinator to create a collaborative support plan to meet your family's needs.

<https://voaak.org/services/family/kinship/> For more information email [kinshipak@voaak.org](mailto:kinshipak@voaak.org) or call Director of Family Services: 907-265-1905 or Family Care Coordinators: 907-419-4537, 907-419-4536, 907-419-4672

**Alaska Center for Resource Families:** a grantee of the Office of Children's Services that provides resources and training for all resource parents. (foster, adoptive, kinship (both licensed and non-licensed) and guardianship) Support/training by phone for rural families. Find them on the web at <http://www.acrf.org>.

**Public Assistance Benefits:** Children are often eligible for state and federal benefits even if their caregivers do not have legal guardianship or custody. You can call the Virtual Contact Center for all public assistance programs: 800-478-7778.

## Financial Assistance

- Cash Assistance may be available to children and their relative caregivers through the **Alaska Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP)**
  - Web: <https://health.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/features/org/applications.aspx>

**Food & Nutrition Services:** Kinship care families may be eligible for

- **SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)**
  - Web: <https://health.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/SNAP/default.aspx>
- **WIC (Women, Infants and Children Program).** WIC recognizes the important role that grandparents, foster parents and other guardians play in caring for kids. Caregivers of kids under 5 that meet the income criteria are encouraged to enroll and bring kids to appointments, attend nutrition classes, pick up and use WIC checks in grocery stores.
  - Web: <https://health.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/nutri/wic/default.aspx>
- **Farmer's Market Nutrition Program:** This programs provides fresh, unprepared, Alaska grown fruits, vegetables, and herbs to low-income seniors (age 60+) and WIC participants.
  - Web: <https://health.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/nutri/fmnp/default.aspx>

## Health Care:

- Relative caregivers may apply for free or low-cost health insurance through **Denali KidCare**
  - Contact: 888-804-6330 or 907-269-6529 (Anchorage)
  - Web: <https://health.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/dkc/default.aspx>

## What are the challenges associated with kinship care?

Some of the most common challenges associated with kinship care are re-defining roles and boundaries, divided loyalty between the child and caregivers, and the availability of financial assistance.

### Redefining roles and boundaries between the child and kinship caregiver.

When a child is placed in care, the kinship caregiver becomes the primary caretaker of the child, which includes establishing and enforcing rules, maintaining structure and consistency, and providing for the child's basic needs. This may be different from what the child is used to. For example, the kinship caregiver may be a relative that the child visited occasionally. The relative may have never been in the position of primary caretaker for the child. This redefining of roles may be especially difficult for the child, who may think of the kinship caregiver as a friend and not as a person in authority. It may also be difficult for the caregiver, who may want to stay in the role of friend. Or the caregiver, not wanting to upset the parents, may try to remain in a neutral role. Both situations could lead to difficulties with enforcing rules and disciplining the child.



In most cases, children will develop an attachment to the kinship caregiver while maintaining an attachment to the biological parent. A child may feel his loyalties are divided between the kinship caregiver and the parent. These feelings are compounded if the parent feels threatened by the kinship caregiver's relationship with the child and feels as though she has to compete for the child's love and attention.

*Jason is a six-year-old child that has been placed with Jessica, his teacher's aide, for five months. Jason has responded well to the structure and consistency that Jessica provides in her home. Jason visits with his mom once a week at the OCS office. Jason really likes Jessica and frequently talks about her during the visits. During one of the visits, Jason's mom tells him that Jessica is not his mom and that she never will be so he doesn't have to do what she tells him. She also tells Jason that it's not okay for him to like Jessica so much because it makes her (mom) feel bad. When Jessica comes to pick up Jason from the visit, he is very withdrawn and pulls away his arm when she goes to hold his hand. Later in the evening when Jessica has to remind Jason to brush his teeth before bedtime, Jason responds by saying "You're not my mom! I don't have to listen to you!"*

## Financial Challenges

Non-related kinship caregivers must become licensed foster parents in order to care for a child placed in their home. Subsequently, they will receive foster care payments to assist with meeting the child's basic needs. Although several forms of financial assistance are available, many relative kinship caregivers often feel guilty or embarrassed for accepting payment for caring for a family member. Or they may feel that their motives for caring for the child may be questioned if they ask for financial assistance. Others may not want to go through the process of becoming licensed foster parents or may not want to deal with the "system." However, the reality is that at some point most relative kinship caregivers will need some form of financial assistance, whether it is in the form of foster care payments, public assistance, child care assistance, Medicaid, social security, or supplemental security income (SSI).

*John and Susie Jones have been caring for their eight-year-old grandson Buddy for several months. When Buddy was first placed with them, John was working full-time and Susie was receiving Social Security. John recently became severely ill and can longer work. Now the family is forced to live on Susie's Social Security and the disability benefits that John will be receiving as soon as his paperwork is processed. John and Susie have always been proud of their ability to care for themselves and their family. However, because of the severe cut in their income, they may be forced to move into a one bedroom apartment. They have talked about calling OCS to see what kind of assistance they would qualify for, but they are worried that Buddy will be removed from their home if they ask for money to help care for him.*

*Jennifer, a kinship care provider, has been caring for Michael, her nephew, and Brittany, his half-sibling, for six months. Jennifer receives foster care payments for Brittany and decided that she could care for Michael without financial assistance. Jennifer takes Michael to counseling appointments once a week and was recommended to enroll him in some type of extracurricular activity to help build his social skills. Additionally, having never been a full-time caregiver before, Jennifer is amazed at how quickly Jason is growing out of his clothes and shoes. In this case, Jennifer can receive foster care payments for either children, or just help with counseling.*

## Emergency Relief Support Program

The purpose of the emergency relief support program is to provide time-limited financial support to relatives (excluding biological parents) identified by blood, adoption, marriage or Tribal custom. The payments are designed to support families in a crisis situation until they can complete the foster care licensing process or find another option to support the children in care. This program will cover any new children who are placed in an unlicensed relative's home. This includes any placement change to an unlicensed relative provider, and does not need to be a new removal. As

part of this program, unlicensed relatives may pursue licensure; however, those related within the 5th degree may choose to pursue benefits through Department of Public Assistance Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Alaska Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP), instead of licensure for ongoing financial support for caring for a child in OCS custody.

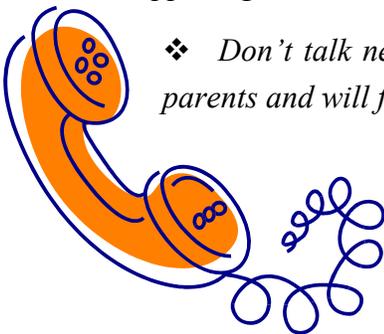
Families requesting monetary assistance will receive a monthly support payment to financially assist the family in purchasing food, clothing and other items while they are pursuing licensing or public/Tribal assistance programs for up to two months. It is important that families begin the licensing process before those two months are up so that they can become eligible for the foster care payment. If a family chooses to remain unlicensed, the family should be applying for public assistance to make sure that there is steady financial support. The ERS payment will end after two months.

Your caseworker or the staff at the Alaska Center for Resource Families can help you understand the resources available to help you and how to access them.

## Suggestions for Kinship Care Providers

Kinship care can be very difficult and at times feel unrewarding. Here are some suggestions and points to remember about being a kinship care provider:

- ❖ *Don't take the child's behavior personally. Remember he or she is reacting to the situation. Give him or her some time to adjust!*
- ❖ *Establish clear rules and boundaries. Remember, just because the child knows you, it doesn't mean that he or she knows your household rules.*
- ❖ *Children need to know what's going on in their lives. Take time to explain what is happening.*
- ❖ *Don't talk negatively about the parent in front of the child. Children love their parents and will feel loyalty towards them.*
- ❖ *Seek out resources to help address the child's special needs or to help the child adjust in your home.*
- ❖ *Phone the Alaska Center for Resource Families for additional support.*



## Redefining roles and boundaries between the biological parent(s) and the kinship caregiver

Biological parents also have to re-learn how to interact with the kinship caregiver. The kinship caregiver is now in the position of primary caregiver. Some parents may feel as though they are being replaced and may feel threatened by the caregiver. This could result in the parent being overly critical of the kinship caregiver's parenting abilities as well as his or her role in the child's life. If the caregiver takes this criticism personally, it could lead to a breakdown in the relationship with the parents.

Additionally, the kinship caregiver is now in a position where he or she has to follow the guidelines set by the state social worker. This may include not allowing the parent to be in the home and not allowing unsupervised contact between the child and the parent. This may be extremely difficult, especially if the kinship caregiver is a grandparent. He or she may say "how can you tell me that I cannot have my own son or daughter in my house?" This re-defining of roles can be very confusing for both the parent and the kinship caregiver. The parents may retaliate against the caregiver believing that he or she is trying to control their life. The kinship caregiver may feel caught in the middle and question why they are caring for a relative's child in the first place.

In some cases, there may be a lack of boundaries between the caregiver and the biological parents. Some kinship caregivers may have a difficult time saying no and may never learn to set clear boundaries. Guidelines that have been established to maintain the child's safety may be ignored because the caregiver may feel that he or she "knows the parent better than the social worker". Or the caregiver may feel that the social worker is being unfair to the parent and may not enforce some of the guidelines. In some cases, the caregiver may not be able to say no to the parent out of fear of retaliation from other family members.

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### Suggestions to help kinship care providers cope with birth parents:

- ❖ *Always remember that you are a valuable resource to the child.*
  - ❖ *Don't take the parents' criticism personally. Remember they are reacting to the situation and may need some time to adjust.*
  - ❖ *Establish clear boundaries with the parents immediately. If necessary, ask the child's social worker to set up a special meeting with the parents. This will ensure that everyone is hearing the same information.*
  - ❖ *Make sure the parent knows you intend to follow the social workers guidelines for visits and phone calls.*
  - ❖ *Ask the social worker to reinforce boundaries with parents for you, if necessary.*
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*Visit the following websites for more information about resources for  
Grandparents Raising Grandchildren*

Alaska Center for Resource Families Resources for Relative Foster Care, <https://.acrf.org/foster/relative-foster-care-and-kinship/>

**ALASKA: GRANDFACTS: State Fact Sheets for Grandfamilies**

<https://www.grandfamilies.org/Portals/0/State%20Fact%20Sheets/Alaska%20GrandFacts%20State%20Fact%20Sheet%202021%20Update.pdf>

**Earned Income Credit:** Visit the IRS web site. You can also call 1-800-829-1040. <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p962.pdf>

## **Office of Children's Services: CPS Manual**

### **16-02 Emergency Relief Support Program**

**Program Instruction: 16-02**

**Issue Date: November 12, 2019**

**Effective Date: December 1, 2019**

**From: Natalie Norberg, Director**

**Subject: Policy Change: Emergency Relief Support Program**

The purpose of the emergency relief support program is to provide time-limited financial support to relatives (excluding biological parents) identified by blood, adoption, marriage or Tribal custom. The payments are designed to support families in a crisis situation until they can complete the foster care licensing process or find another option to support the children in care. This program will cover any new children who are placed in an unlicensed relative's home. This includes any placement change to an unlicensed relative provider, and does not need to be a new removal. As part of this program, unlicensed relatives may pursue licensure; however, those related within the 5th degree may choose to pursue benefits through Department of Public Assistance Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Alaska Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP), instead of licensure for ongoing financial support for caring for a child in OCS custody.

Under this program, emergency licenses will no longer be issued to unlicensed relative providers. Families requesting monetary assistance will receive a monthly support payment in the amount of \$500.00 per child, per placement provider while they are pursuing licensing or public/Tribal assistance programs for up to two months. The emergency relief support payment is to financially assist the family in purchasing food, clothing and other items in order to help maintain the placement until the family can begin receiving foster care payments or TANF/ATAP benefits. Requests for funds will not be issued while the child is placed in the relative's home for food, diapers, or baby wipes while receiving ERS payments. If an emergency occurs at the time of placement and a child needs food, diapers, or baby wipes, a purchase authorization may be made with supervisory approval; however, any amount paid on an emergency basis will be deducted from the next emergency support payment that is issued.

#### **Policy:**

1. Unlicensed relative placements have a choice to receive funding to assist with the care of the child(ren) in their home. Unlicensed relative placements may choose to apply with the Division of Public Assistance for TANF/ATAP, or may apply to become a licensed foster home.
2. Individuals interested in TANF or ATAP will be referred to the Division of Public Assistance. While pursuing TANF/ATAP, the family will be eligible for up to two months of emergency relief support payments up to \$1000 total to assist them with the child's care.
3. Individuals interested in becoming fully licensed will be referred to the Licensing Specialist who will assist them in the process of becoming a licensed foster home. While pursuing licensure, the family will be eligible for up to two months of emergency relief support payments to assist them with the child's care.
4. The first \$500.00 payment will be effective the first day the child is placed in the home and will be issued within three days of placement. Payments for subsequent month will be issued at \$500.00 at one-month

interval, or until the family is licensed or TANF/ATAP benefits are issued and as long as children remain in the family's care.

5. The two \$500.00 monthly payments will be per child, per placement provider. If a child moves to a new unlicensed relative home in the same month a previous payment was made to another provider, the new provider will still be eligible for the full two months of ERS payments.
6. Requests for funds for food, diapers, and baby wipes will not be issued while the child is placed in the unlicensed relative's home. If an emergency occurs at the time of placement and a child needs other essential items, a purchase authorization may be made with supervisory approval and will not exceed \$250.00; the amount will be deducted from the next emergency support payment that is issued.

**Procedure:**

1. Before a child can be placed in a home the PS Specialist must inform the PS IV of the decision and complete the following as instructed in CPS manual section [2.6.1 Placements](#).
  1. Completion of an APSIN, Child Protection, JOMIS, Sex Offender Registry and Court View checks on all individuals 16 and older in the home in accordance with CPS manual section [3.5.1 Background Checks for Placement Resources](#) policy. Results will be documented in an ORCA Activity Note.
  2. The [Unlicensed Relative or Prospective Foster Home Safety Evaluation](#) (06-9013) must be completed on any family before placement can be made. An ORCA Activity Note will be created documenting the safety evaluation and relative study is completed the form will be scanned into ORCA and a hard copy placed in the unlicensed relative file.
  3. When necessary, the PS Specialist will obtain PS Specialist IV approval for placement of the child. This includes when there are any background check, home safety, or fingerprint issues.
2. Within two days of a child being placed in an unlicensed relative home, the following will be completed:
  1. The Protective Services (PS) Specialist will inform ORCA to have the provider created.
  2. The PS Specialist will enter the placement into ORCA.
  3. The PS Specialist or supervisor will notify the Regional Licensing Supervisor that an unlicensed relative placement has been made.
3. Community Care Licensing Specialist II (CCLS II): will contact the resource family and discuss the Emergency Relief Support Program with the family, including:
  1. Provide resource information verbally;
  2. Confirm the address and relationship of the provider;
  3. The CCLS II will email the Emergency Relief Specialist and PS Specialist information about the new ERS provider.
  4. If the child is Alaskan Native, the Tribe will be notified to assist with supports for the family; and
  5. Request that the family identifies the type of funding they would prefer and either:

1. Refer the resource family to the Division of Public Assistance if they are a relative, and the family chooses to pursue TANF or ATAP;
  2. If the provider indicates an interest in becoming licensed, the CCLS II will assign a CCLS I to the provider; and
  3. Inform the Emergency Relief Specialist to end payments if the family does not require further monetary support.
4. Emergency Relief Specialist:
1. Will enter a one-time payment in ORCA and route for approval through the Provider Payment Unit Manager or designee;
  2. Mail formal notice of payment to the provider;
  3. Will set up file for each provider and calendar subsequent payments that will be due;
  4. When the next payment is due, the Emergency Relief Specialist will:
    1. Confirm in ORCA that the child is still in the current placement and foster care payments have not started;
    2. Confirm in EIS that the family is not receiving ATAP or TANF; and
    3. Set up a one-time payment in ORCA and route for approval through the Provider Payment Unit Manager or designee.
  5. Will notify the PS Specialist and PS Specialist IV before the final payment is to be issued.
5. Social Services Program Coordinator for Foster Care Licensing: will review background check information and collaborate with licensing to ensure this is completed timely.
6. Protective Services Specialist: the PS Specialist is responsible for case management and support to resource families. The PS Specialist will:
1. Provide the red placement packet to resource families at the time of placement;
  2. Coordinate with ORCA to create the provider in ORCA and enter the placement within 48 hours of placement; and
  3. Follow CPS manual policy 3.5 Non-Emergency Placements to ensure background checks and relative home study has been completed.
7. Community Care Licensing Specialist I/II: Licensing will make contact with the provider.
1. The Community Care Licensing Specialist will mail a licensing packet to the provider. An ORCA Provider Activity Note will be entered to document the date the application was provided.
  2. The Community Care Licensing Specialist will offer support, answer questions, make referrals to the Alaska Center for Resource Families, and assist the family with the licensing application process.
  3. Licensing contacts will be documented in ORCA as a Provider Activity Note.

4. If the provider is interested in applying for foster care licensure and an application is received, an ORCA Provider Activity Note will be entered to document the date the application was received
  5. If the child is Alaska Native, the Community Care Licensing Specialist will work with the Tribe to provide support to the family in the licensing process and copy the ICWA Specialist to the email notification when the placement occurs.
  6. The Community Care Licensing Specialist will assist the family in coordinating fingerprints for anyone 16 years of age or older residing in the provider's home. Fingerprints will be completed within 30 days of placement.
  7. Licensing will create and maintain an unlicensed relative provider file for the background check information.
8. ORCA Help Desk: will create the provider in ORCA after notification from the PS Specialist that the child has been placed. See (B)(1) in the procedure section of this program instruction.

# GRANDFACTS

## STATE FACT SHEETS FOR GRANDFAMILIES



The GrandFacts state fact sheets for grandfamilies include state-specific data and programs as well as information about public benefits, educational assistance, legal relationship options and state laws. Visit [www.grandfamilies.org](http://www.grandfamilies.org) to find this and all GrandFacts state fact sheets.

# Alaska

## Grandfamilies Data

19,379

Children living in homes where a relative is head of household

9,000

Children being raised by kin with no parent present

763

Children in foster care being raised by kin

7,854

Grandparents responsible for their grandchildren in Alaska

For every **1** child raised by kin in foster care, there are **11** being raised by kin outside of the system

The data presented in these graphics is from the [United States Census Bureau](#), the [Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center](#) and the [Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System \(AFCARS\)](#).

- To learn more about children in Alaska living in homes where a relative is head of household, click [here](#). For national data, click [here](#).
- To learn more about children in Alaska being raised by kin with no parent present, click [here](#). For national data, click [here](#).
- To learn more about children in Alaska in foster care being raised by kin, click [here](#). For national data, click [here](#).
- To learn more about grandparents in Alaska responsible for their grandchildren, click [here](#). For national data, click [here](#).

For more information on kinship care and caregivers, and for detailed instructions on accessing and interpreting this data, please visit: [www.gu.org/resources/accessing-and-interpreting-grandfamilies-data/](http://www.gu.org/resources/accessing-and-interpreting-grandfamilies-data/)

## Programs That May Help

Local programs that provide support, resources and assistance to grandfamilies can often be found by contacting your local school, area agency on aging, community center, faith-based organization or children's services office.

### Key Programs in Alaska

#### [Alaska Center for Resource Families/Alaska Adoption Support Center - Alaska Office of Children's Services](#)

**Website:** [www.acrf.org](http://www.acrf.org)

**Phone:** 907-479-7307 or 1-800-478-7307 (toll-free)

**Email:** [acrf@nwresource.org](mailto:acrf@nwresource.org)

**Service Area:** Statewide - offices in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Mat-Su/Palmer, Juneau

**Description:** Relative Core Training, resources, training, recruitment, support group and family activities.

#### [Alaska Legal Services Corporation \(ALSC\)](#)

**Website:** [www.alsc-law.org](http://www.alsc-law.org)

**Phone:** 907-272-9431 (Anchorage) or 1-888-478-2572 (toll free)

**Service Area:** Anchorage, Barrow, Bethel, Dillingham, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan, Kotzebue, Nome, Palmer and Sitka. People living outside of these hubs can call the nearest office to apply for services.

**Description:** Advice, brief service, and/or representation in adoption, guardianship, and custody cases. May also be able to assist with other issues faced by kin caregivers, such as public benefits, housing, and healthcare. The level of assistance provided is dependent on ALSC's resources.

#### [Aleut Community of Saint Paul Island](#)

**Website:** [www.aleut.com/](http://www.aleut.com/)

**Phone:** 907-546-3200

**Email:** [icwa@aleut.com](mailto:icwa@aleut.com)

**Service Area:** Saint Paul Island, and statewide for enrolled tribal members

**Service Pop:** Enrolled Aleut Community of St. Paul Tribal members or members eligible for enrollment

**Description:** Supportive services that include assistance with community care licensure, procurement of health and safety necessities, resource family training referrals, support groups, information and assistance, case management, short-term counseling and tribal representation in adoption, guardianship and custody cases. Assistance with applying for public assistance, housing and healthcare benefits. Provides child care assistance, welfare assistance through BIA, food bank and afterschool and summer enrichment camps.

### Parents of Addicted Loved Ones (PAL)

**Website:** <https://palgroup.org/>; find a local meeting at <https://meetings.palgroup.org/meetings>

**Phone:** 480-300-4712 (8:00 a.m. to 8 p.m. MST)

**Email:** [info@palgroup.org](mailto:info@palgroup.org)

**Service Area:** Juneau

**Description:** PAL is a national faith-based nonprofit that helps families learn healthy ways to deal with an adult child struggling with addiction. Meetings are facilitated by parents who complete the training program and receive ongoing education. Weekly meetings include an evidence-based educational component using a curriculum written by a licensed Substance Abuse Counselor, and peer-to-peer support. Meetings are offered free of charge to both the facilitator and the attendees.

### Volunteers of America Alaska- Kinship Family Program

**Website:** <https://voaak.org/what-we-do/kinship-family-program/>

**Phone:** 907-265-1905 (Anchorage)

**Email:** [kinshipak@voaak.org](mailto:kinshipak@voaak.org)

**Service Area:** Statewide

**Description:** Case management, financial assistance, food pantry, support groups, assistance navigating community resources, monthly newsletter with program updates and resources, and free community events.

## Public Benefits

Federal and state public benefits programs can help with income, food, healthcare, home energy, telephone and other needs for those who are eligible. Eligibility requirements vary with each public benefit and sometimes are different from state to state. Some benefits are for the family and others are for children or older adults individually. Children are often eligible for public benefits even if their caregivers do not have guardianship or legal custody. Relative caregivers may become eligible for benefits programs when their household size increases.

**Help with Public Benefits**

**AARP Foundation’s Benefits QuickLINK**

Benefits QuickLINK, powered by BenefitsCheckUp of the National Council on Aging, offers a free and private way to complete a questionnaire to find out if relatives and/or the children they are raising qualify for certain programs that pay for food, increase income and cover home and healthcare costs. The specific programs covered by the questionnaire in the website are listed below. Once the questionnaire is completed, the website generates a list of eligible programs and contact information.

[www.aarp.org/quicklink](http://www.aarp.org/quicklink)

<p><b>Benefits QuickLINK</b> <b>State and Federal Public Benefits</b></p>	<p><b>Benefits QuickLINK</b> <b>Public Benefits for Families Raising Children</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Medicare Savings Programs</li> <li>•Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage</li> <li>•Medicare Rx Extra Help</li> <li>•State Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs (SPAP)</li> <li>•Medicaid for Aged, Blind, and Disabled</li> <li>•Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)</li> <li>•Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)</li> <li>•Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)</li> <li>•State Property Tax Relief/Rebates</li> <li>•Supplemental Security Income (SSI)</li> <li>•Employment Programs</li> <li>•Telephone and Cellphone Assistance</li> <li>•Transportation Assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Medicaid for Children</li> <li>•State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)</li> <li>•TANF-Child Only Grants</li> <li>•Supplemental Security Income for Children</li> <li>•Child Care Assistance</li> </ul>

**Benefits.gov**

An official website of the federal government, this resource has state specific information on benefits, in addition to a screening tool to find out which programs you may be eligible to receive.

[www.benefits.gov](http://www.benefits.gov)

**Eldercare Locator**

The National Eldercare Locator service helps you find your local area agency on aging and other state and local resources that can help with public benefits, local programs and other services for older adults.

1-800-677-1116 (toll-free)

[eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx](http://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx)

**Key Public Benefits: Income**

Each state administers federal funds that provide cash assistance to families in need. Some states also offer other forms of financial assistance.

**Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)**

Cash assistance may be available to eligible children and their relative caregivers. There are two types of TANF grants: child-only and family grants. Under virtually all states' policies, caregiver income is not considered in

determining eligibility for TANF child-only grants. TANF child-only grants are based solely on the income of the child, and are designed to help meet the needs of just the child. Child-only grants are not subject to time limits and work requirements like TANF family grants.

#### **Alaska Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP)**

Alaska Department of Health and Social Services

907-465-3347

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/atap/default.aspx>

#### **Generations United's Grand Resources:**

A Fact Sheet for Grandparent and Relative Caregivers to Help Access Support through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program

[www.gu.org/resources/](http://www.gu.org/resources/)

### **Social Security**

A multigenerational program, Social Security provides income benefits to adults, older adults and children. In addition to [Retirement](#) and [Disability](#) benefits, [Survivor's Benefits](#) are based on a child's parent's earnings and may help if a child's parents die. Your grandchild may also qualify for benefits based on your work record. The [Supplemental Security Income](#) (SSI) program pays benefits to disabled [adults](#) and [children](#) who have limited income and resources. SSI benefits are also payable to people 65 and older without disabilities who meet the financial limits.

**Online Directory** - To find your local Social Security Administration office.

1-800-772-1213 (toll-free)

<https://secure.ssa.gov/>

### **Key Public Benefits: Nutrition**

Relative caregivers and their families may be eligible for assistance with groceries, meals, infant formula and nutrition education. These are some of the key nutrition benefits programs and resources.

#### **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

SNAP is the new name for the federal Food Stamp Program. It helps low-income individuals and families buy the food they need for good health. Although SNAP is the national name, your state may use a different name.

##### **Alaska Food Stamps Program**

Alaska Department of Health and Human Services

907-465-3347

[dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/SNAP/default.aspx](http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/SNAP/default.aspx)

#### **Food and Nutrition Services of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**

**Child Nutrition Program** - The schools, early childhood education programs, child care centers, afterschool programs or other programs that children attend may offer free or reduced meals through the federal Child Nutrition Program, which provides breakfast, lunch, snacks, summer meals and milk. Contact the school,

center or program to ask if they participate in any of the child nutrition programs and how to apply. Relative caregivers should inform the program that they are raising the child and whether or not they are doing so through a court order.

**Online State Directory** - To find your state office that manages the Child Nutrition Program.  
[www.fns.usda.gov/contacts](http://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts)

**Women, Infant and Children (WIC)** - States administer federal funds for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.

**Online State Directory** - To find your state office that manages the WIC program.  
[www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-contacts](http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-contacts)

### Foodbanks

Organizations that provide free food and sometimes other items, such as diapers, to families in need.

**Online State Directory** - To find local food banks.  
[www.feedingamerica.org/foodbank-results.aspx](http://www.feedingamerica.org/foodbank-results.aspx)

### Key Public Benefits: Health Care

Relative caregivers and the children they are raising may be eligible for health insurance through Medicare and/or Medicaid and help with prescription drugs. **Benefits QuickLINK** can help you find these benefits.

[www.aarp.org/quicklink](http://www.aarp.org/quicklink)

### Health Insurance for Children

Relative caregivers may apply for free or low-cost health and dental insurance for the children they are raising through the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which provides health coverage to eligible children through both Medicaid and separate CHIP programs. CHIP and Medicaid are the national names, and your state may use different names.

#### Denali KidCare

Alaska Department of Health and Human Services  
1-888-318-8890 (toll-free) or 907-269-6529 (Anchorage)  
<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/dkc/default.aspx>

### Consent to Obtain Health Care

Even with insurance, consenting to health care for a child can be a challenge for relative caregivers who do not have legal custody. Some states have laws that allow these caregivers to "consent" to such treatment.

**Grandfamilies.org Online Database** - To see if your state has such a law.  
[www.grandfamilies.org/Search-Laws](http://www.grandfamilies.org/Search-Laws)

## Key Public Benefits: Tax Credits

The following information is about tax credits from the federal government available throughout the United States. Similar tax credits may exist in your state for state taxes. For example, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), 29 states and the District of Columbia offer a state tax credit based on the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and four states offer a Child Tax Credit. See CBPP's "[Get it Back Campaign](#)" for more information on state tax credits.

**Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)** is an income tax credit for workers who do not have high incomes. It is a refundable tax credit, which means you could get a refund check from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) even if you don't earn enough to pay taxes.

**Child Tax Credit** is a tax credit for up to \$2,000 per dependent child. But, it is not refundable.

**Additional Child Tax Credit** may help if you don't owe enough taxes to benefit from the child tax credit. Unlike the child tax credit, this tax credit is refundable.

**Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit** may help you if you've hired someone to help care for the child so you could work or look for work. If so, you may be able to claim up to \$3,000 in expenses per child.

**Adoption Tax Credit** can help if you have adopted your grandchild or other relative. It can give you a credit for the money you spent to adopt. If you adopted a child from the foster care system with special needs, you may be eligible for the maximum amount of credit for the year you adopted regardless of whether you had any qualifying expenses. If you did not adopt from the foster care system, you must have qualifying expenses like legal fees. This tax credit allows adoptive parents to claim up to \$14,300 per child in 2020, with the amount increasing incrementally each year.

Please note that tax credits themselves are not counted as income. They will not be counted when you apply for financial help.

**Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP)** – To find out about tax credits in your state.  
[www.cbpp.org](http://www.cbpp.org)

**The U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS)** – To find out more information about each of these tax credits  
[www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)

## Education

The **U.S. Department of Education** offers a [parent site](#) that has a wide range of helpful information for parents *and* caregivers regarding children's education from early childhood through college, special needs, disabilities, language challenges and gifted students.

1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327) (toll-free)  
[www.ed.gov/parents](http://www.ed.gov/parents)

**Alaska Department of Education and Early Development**

907-465-2800

<https://education.alaska.gov>**Educational Enrollment**

Relative caregivers can contact their local school district's administrative office or their local school to find out how to register the child and what paperwork is needed. Caregivers may need birth records, health records or previous school records. Some states have laws that allow relative caregivers without legal custody or guardianship to enroll the children they are raising in school. These laws are often called education "consent" laws, but they may be called something else in your state.

**Grandfamilies.org Online Database** - To find out if your state has an education consent law.

[www.grandfamilies.org/Search-Laws](http://www.grandfamilies.org/Search-Laws)

**Early Intervention, Special Education and Related Services**

**The Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** - From birth to age 21, children who have learning disabilities, physical disabilities or other special needs may be able to get early intervention, preschool and special education services in school through the federal IDEA. Services may include speech, physical and occupational therapies.

The IDEA requires that states identify, locate and evaluate all children ages 3 to 21 with disabilities who may need special education and related services. Once the evaluation team, which includes a child's caregivers, has decided if a child is eligible for early intervention, preschool or special education services, an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP; birth to three years of age) or an Individual Education Plan (IEP; three to 21 years of age) is developed and services should begin shortly.

**Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, Special Education**

907-465-2972

<https://education.alaska.gov/sped>

**Parent Centers** across the country provide information to help parents *and* caregivers with children who have special education needs and disabilities.

**Online State Directory** - To find Parent Centers in your state.

[www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/](http://www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/)

**Generations United's Grand Resources:**

**A Grandparent's and Other Relative's Guide to Raising Children with Disabilities**

[www.gu.org/resources/](http://www.gu.org/resources/)

## Early Childhood Education

**Head Start** and **Early Head Start** are early education programs for eligible children.

**Online Directory** - To find Head Start or Early Head Start centers in your state.

1-866-763-6481 (toll-free)

[eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/center-locator](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/center-locator)

**Child Care Aware** provides information, resources and connection to local Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&R) that help you find local child care.

**Online Directory** - To find your local Child Care Resource & Referral Agency.

1- 800-424-2246 (toll-free)

[www.childcareaware.org/families/](http://www.childcareaware.org/families/)

## Legal

The following legal relationships may be options for both those children exiting the foster care system and those outside the system. For those families who do not want to establish a legal relationship, consent and power of attorney laws are available in several states.

All of the following options are presented in general terms. This area of the law is created at the state level, so how these options are defined and which ones are available can vary significantly by state.

### Adoption

With adoption, the relative caregiver becomes the parent in the eyes of the law. This fact makes access to services on behalf of the child the same as for any parent. Adoption ends all of the birth parents' rights and responsibilities, which means that birth parents cannot go to court later and reclaim those rights and responsibilities.

**Adoption assistance** payments may be available to relative caregivers who choose to adopt children in their care from the child welfare system.

**North American Council on Adoptable Children** - To get information about your state's subsidy, in addition to other adoption information.

[www.nacac.org](http://www.nacac.org)

**Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption** - To find adoption resources that may be helpful to you.

[www.davethomasfoundation.org](http://www.davethomasfoundation.org)

### Guardianship

The biggest difference between adoption and guardianship is that guardianship does not take away all the birth parents' rights and responsibilities. Parents typically keep certain rights and the obligation to financially support the child. Unlike adoption, the parents can go back to court and ask for the guardianship to be ended.

For caregivers, a guardianship allows them to access services on behalf of the child that otherwise might prove impossible while not changing family relationships, like making grandma legally mom.

**Guardianship assistance** payments may be available to relative caregivers who choose to get guardianship of the children in their care who are exiting the child welfare system.

**Subsidized Guardianship**- Alaska has an approved Title IV-E Guardian Assistance Program

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/ocs/Pages/adoptions/aboutsubsidies.aspx>

### Comparing Adoption and Guardianship

This chart, created by Generations United with support from the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, is designed to help kinship foster parents compare adoption and guardianship as two options that you and the children in your care can pursue to exit foster care and create permanent families.

<https://www.gu.org/resources/adoption-and-guardianship-for-children-in-kinship-foster-care/>

### Legal Custody

Legal custody is similar to guardianship, but it is usually granted by a different court that has different procedures.

### Other Options

In some states, relative caregivers who do not want or have a legal relationship to the children in their care have laws that make it possible to access health care treatment and educational services on behalf of the children without going to court.

For more information on all these options, and to see what exists in your state, see [www.grandfamilies.org](http://www.grandfamilies.org).

## State Laws

**Grandfamilies.org** is a collaboration between [Generations United](#), [the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law](#) and [Casey Family Programs](#). It contains an easy-to-use, searchable [database](#) of state laws and legislation directly impacting kinship families. You will also find explanations of legal topic areas, practical implementation ideas, personal stories and many other resources.

Topics Covered:

- Adoption
- Care and Custody
- Education
- Federal Laws
- Foster Care Licensing
- Financial Assistance
- Healthcare
- Housing

- Kinship Navigator Programs
- National Family Caregiver Support Program
- Notification of Relatives
- Subsidized Guardianship

The online database of laws and legislation is at [www.grandfamilies.org/Search-Laws](http://www.grandfamilies.org/Search-Laws).

## Updates

If you have an update or a resource to be included in this or any of the other GrandFacts State Fact Sheets, please email [grandfamilies@gu.org](mailto:grandfamilies@gu.org).

## Acknowledgements

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The Brookdale Foundation Group***

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**Disclaimers:** None of the sponsoring organizations or foundations of this fact sheet assessed or evaluated listed programs for their responsiveness or effectiveness. Consequently, none of the sponsoring organizations or foundations assume any liability for any program's usefulness or accuracy of their listed information. The programs are included solely based on their own claim that they provide services or supports to grandfamilies. Omission of any relevant program is not intentional. We welcome feedback and updates via email to [grandfamilies@gu.org](mailto:grandfamilies@gu.org).

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***Updated March 2021***



**ALASKA CENTER FOR RESOURCE FAMILIES  
SELF-STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FOSTER PARENTS**

**ITP Topic: Kinship Care & Relative Caregivers**

**COURSE: KINSHIP CARE**

*Updated April 2023*

**2.0 TRAINING CREDITS**

Please read the above-entitled self-study. Then complete the questionnaire found on the following pages. Try answering the questions first from your understanding of the material before referring back to the course. These questions pertain specifically to the course which you have read.

After you have answered all the questions, please **send or FAX (907) 479-9666 your completed questionnaire to the Alaska Center for Resource Families, 3429 Airport Way, Suite 202A, Fairbanks, AK 99709.** We will score your answers and credit you with 2.0 training credits. A score of 70% correct or better will entitle you to receive this training hour credit. In the event your score is less than 70% correct, we will contact you to determine if you wish to review the material and retake the questionnaire.

If you have questions or concerns about this self-study course, please call us on our toll-free line at **1-800-478-7307.** Anchorage: 279-1799.

**The following section is an evaluation of the self-study materials. Please fill it out upon completion of the questionnaire, and return this page to us with the rest of the course materials. Thank you for your time and comments. It helps us provide appropriate training to meet the needs of foster parents.**

**\*\*\*\*\*EVALUATION OF SELF-STUDY MATERIALS\*\*\*\*\***

**Please complete the following questions.**

1. Did this self-study course meet with your expectations?  YES  NO
2. How would you rate the written presentation of information on the topic?  
 Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor
3. Did this course add to your knowledge and/or skills?  YES  NO
4. Comments/Concerns:



**KINSHIP CARE****2.0 Credits**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **PHONE NO.:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Only one person per questionnaire. Feel free to make additional copies if needed.*

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Street or Post Office*

*City/State*

*Zip*

**EMAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

- YES! I would like to receive ACRF email.** *(Includes Training Tracks Newsletter, training reminders and community events or training of interest for resource families)*

Are you a foster parent?  YES  NO If YES, what is your Foster Home License #: \_\_\_\_\_

If NO, please check one:  Pending Foster Parent  OCS  Birth Parent  Adoptive Parent

Residential Treatment Facility (License #: \_\_\_\_\_)  Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Other (*please specify*): \_\_\_\_\_

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

*Check or fill in the appropriate answer to the following questions. First try to answer from your understanding of the material before referring back to the course. These questions address information specifically stated in the reading.*

1. Formal Kinship care is when: (CHECK ONE)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. A child is in the State's custody and is living with a relative.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. A child is NOT in State's Custody and is living with a relative.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. A parent voluntarily places a child with a relative or friend.
  
2. What are the benefits associated with kinship care? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. Children maintain cultural connections.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. Children maintain family ties.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. Children maintain community connections.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ d. All of the above.
  
3. What is one of the challenges associated with kinship care? (CHECK ONE)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. Kinship care providers may struggle maintaining boundaries with birth parents.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. Kinship care providers become easily discouraged by child behaviors.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. Kinship care providers are often afraid to ask for help.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ d. Kinship care providers are more tolerant of child's behaviors.

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**  
**PAGE 2 – KINSHIP CARE**

4. A child placed in kinship care usually has more difficulty adjusting to out-of-home placement than a child which is placed in a regular foster home.

- a. TRUE
- b. FALSE

5. List four (4) suggestions found in the self-study that kinship care providers can use when times are difficult and they are feeling unrewarded:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

6. Check all of the other ways kinship care providers can find help or information. CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

- a. Call the Alaska Center for Resource Families to talk with a Family Support Specialist.
- b. Go to the Child Welfare League of America website.
- c. Attend Foster and Adoptive Parent Support Groups in your area.
- d. None of the Above.
- e. All of the Above.

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**FOR SCORING AND 2.0 TRAINING CREDITS, PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE TO:**

**Alaska Center for Resource Families**  
**3429 Airport Way, STE 202A**  
**Fairbanks, Alaska 99709**

**OR FAX TO: 1-907-290-8765**

**ALASKA CENTER FOR RESOURCE FAMILIES  
SELF-STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FOSTER PARENTS**

**ITP Topic: Kinship Care & Relative Caregivers**

**COURSE: KINSHIP CARE**

*Updated April 2023*

**2.0 TRAINING CREDITS**

Please read the above-entitled self-study. Then complete the questionnaire found on the following pages. Try answering the questions first from your understanding of the material before referring back to the course. These questions pertain specifically to the course which you have read.

After you have answered all the questions, please **send or FAX (907) 479-9666 your completed questionnaire to the Alaska Center for Resource Families, 3429 Airport Way, Suite 202A, Fairbanks, AK 99709.** We will score your answers and credit you with 2.0 training credits. A score of 70% correct or better will entitle you to receive this training hour credit. In the event your score is less than 70% correct, we will contact you to determine if you wish to review the material and retake the questionnaire.

If you have questions or concerns about this self-study course, please call us on our toll-free line at **1-800-478-7307.** Anchorage: 279-1799.

**The following section is an evaluation of the self-study materials. Please fill it out upon completion of the questionnaire, and return this page to us with the rest of the course materials. Thank you for your time and comments. It helps us provide appropriate training to meet the needs of foster parents.**

**\*\*\*\*\*EVALUATION OF SELF-STUDY MATERIALS\*\*\*\*\***

**Please complete the following questions.**

1. Did this self-study course meet with your expectations?  YES  NO
2. How would you rate the written presentation of information on the topic?  
 Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor
3. Did this course add to your knowledge and/or skills?  YES  NO
4. Comments/Concerns:



**KINSHIP CARE****2.0 Credits**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **PHONE NO.:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Only one person per questionnaire. Feel free to make additional copies if needed.*

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Street or Post Office*

*City/State*

*Zip*

**EMAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

- YES! I would like to receive ACRF email.** *(Includes Training Tracks Newsletter, training reminders and community events or training of interest for resource families)*

Are you a foster parent?  YES  NO If YES, what is your Foster Home License #: \_\_\_\_\_

If NO, please check one:  Pending Foster Parent  OCS  Birth Parent  Adoptive Parent

Residential Treatment Facility (License #: \_\_\_\_\_)  Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Other (*please specify*): \_\_\_\_\_

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

*Check or fill in the appropriate answer to the following questions. First try to answer from your understanding of the material before referring back to the course. These questions address information specifically stated in the reading.*

- Formal Kinship care is when: (CHECK ONE)
  - A child is in the State's custody and is living with a relative.
  - A child is NOT in State's Custody and is living with a relative.
  - A parent voluntarily places a child with a relative or friend.
- What are the benefits associated with kinship care? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)
  - Children maintain cultural connections.
  - Children maintain family ties.
  - Children maintain community connections.
  - All of the above.
- What is one of the challenges associated with kinship care? (CHECK ONE)
  - Kinship care providers may struggle maintaining boundaries with birth parents.
  - Kinship care providers become easily discouraged by child behaviors.
  - Kinship care providers are often afraid to ask for help.
  - Kinship care providers are more tolerant of child's behaviors.

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**  
**PAGE 2 – KINSHIP CARE**

4. A child placed in kinship care usually has more difficulty adjusting to out-of-home placement than a child which is placed in a regular foster home.

- a. TRUE
- b. FALSE

5. List four (4) suggestions found in the self-study that kinship care providers can use when times are difficult and they are feeling unrewarded:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

6. Check all of the other ways kinship care providers can find help or information. CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

- a. Call the Alaska Center for Resource Families to talk with a Family Support Specialist.
- b. Go to the Child Welfare League of America website.
- c. Attend Foster and Adoptive Parent Support Groups in your area.
- d. None of the Above.
- e. All of the Above.

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