January 14, 2014

Dear Commissioner:

Enclosed is a supply of the newly revised publication, “Know Your Options: Relatives Caring for Children.” These revisions are a direct response to challenges indicated by local district staff in supporting relative caregivers. This publication provides a summary of options available to caregivers and as such can supplement the handbook “Having a Voice and a Choice: A Handbook for Relatives Raising Children.” (The use of this booklet does not change the requirements for use of “Having a Voice and a Choice” as described in 09-OCFS-ADM-04.) Additional copies of the booklet are available at: http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/documents/docs%20Pubs.asp

In our ongoing efforts to address issues raised in supporting Kinship families, on February 26, 2014 from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) in conjunction with Office of Temporary Disability Assistance and selected local department of social services (LDSS) staff will be presenting training via teleconference. The purpose of the teleconference is to explain the options, requirements, and policies related to kinship care and to offer recommended practices being implemented by some local districts. The teleconference is designed for all LDSS caseworkers, supervisors, and Temporary Assistance staff; voluntary agencies and community-based organizations.

To obtain more information and resources about Kinship Care, please visit our website at http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/kinship/default.asp. We also encourage you to contact the NYS Kinship Navigator (www.nysnavigator.org or 1-877-454-6463), a statewide information and referral service funded through OCFS that provides myriad resources available for providers and caregivers in New York State.

We hope these resources are helpful and welcome your feedback. Please feel free to contact Patricia Bryant at Patricia.Bryant@ocfs.ny.gov or (518) 473-5079 for additional assistance.

Sincerely,

Laura M. Velez
Deputy Commissioner

cc: Regional Office Directors