YOU’RE INVITED!
OCTOBER 22, 2013
KINCARE SUMMIT

The NYS Kinship Navigator, recipient of one of seven national Children’s Bureau Kinship Navigator Demonstration Project awards, with the support of the NYS KinCare Coalition, AARP NY and the NYS Council on Children and Families, invites you to a KinCare Summit. The Summit seeks your input to identify gaps in services, legal resources, and improvements in system responses to the special challenges facing grandparents, relatives, and others who are raising children.

What
Fourth New York State Kin Care Summit

Where
NYS Convention Center, Rooms 1-5
Albany, New York

When
10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Who
Policy Makers, Agency Leadership, Kinship Service Providers, Advocates, Caregivers, and Youth

Why
Renew New York’s Commitment to Kinship Families by Seeking a System of Care that Integrates Services Across Public and Private Agencies

RSVP
Please attend and/or send a representative.

Contact:
Pam Rockcastle
prockcastle@oforchester.org
877-454-6463
www.nysnavigator.org

The New York State Kinship Navigator Summit Project is funded through the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children’s Bureau, Grant 99CF00440.

A Tradition in
Search of a Champion

- Why Kinship Families are a National Resource
- Why Kinship Families Need Help
- Why Kinship Families Succeed
- What New York Does to Help
Kinship Care refers to the full time care of children by grandparents, other relatives or close family friends (often referred to as fictive kin).

Kinship Care may be formal foster care and involve a training and licensure process for the caregivers, monthly foster care payments to help defray the costs of caring for the child, and support services.

Much more frequently, Kinship Care is informal, where relatives become caregivers without agency involvement, or with some agency contacts but no formal placements. Under such circumstances, kin are on their own with no supports or when an agency is involved, assistance is limited to an assessment process.

Kinship Care is as American as apple pie, starting with the Nation’s Founding Father, George Washington. He and Martha raised many orphan nieces and nephews and adopted two of Martha’s grandchildren, who were the first children to live in the presidential residences, first in New York City and then Philadelphia (1789-97).

Grant Disclaimer
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Barbara Rincon (Council on Adoptable Children, NYC)
Jim Trowbridge (Catholic Family Center, Rochester)
Denise Variano (Orange County Cornell Cooperative Extension)

Joseph is caring for Cameron, his six-year old grandson who has had an up-and-down relationship with his mother (Joseph’s daughter). His father has never been a part of his life.

Joseph had temporary custody of his grandson for one month when the child was placed back in the care of his mother. Not long after being returned to his mother, Cameron witnessed his mother attempting to commit suicide and he was returned to his grandfather.
Causes of Kinship Care
Kinship children live with relatives for the same reasons children are in foster care: abuse, neglect, abandonment, parental substance abuse, mental illness, incarceration, death, and debilitation.

Value of Kinship Care/Cost Benefit
• Cost of Kinship Navigator:
  – Local Kinship Services = $466 per year per child

• Cost of Foster Care:
  – $23,000 per year per child (regular foster care)
  – Up to $56,000 per year per child (special, exceptional, or institutional care)

Children living with relatives experience as good or better outcomes than those living with foster parents.

Families who are turning to us...

Maria is caring for her four grandchildren. Lexi, her daughter, is simply not responsible. She is unemployed, and recently left her last partner (the father of two of the children) because of domestic violence. CPS told Lexi they would remove her children if she did not give custody to her mother, Maria. She is a nurse and she is dedicated to caring for her grandchildren.

Families seeking guidance...

Janelle has custody of Jada, her 11-year old granddaughter. She is also caring for her own adult child who is disabled. Jada’s mother has a mental illness and her father is incarcerated.

Janelle wants to know if there are support groups available for her granddaughter. Jada feels very isolated from her peers and gets hurt at school when she is put in a position where she has to tell others she is being raised by grandparents.

The causes and benefits of Kinship Care...

Children
• 153,000 children in Kinship Care
• 6,000 in Kinship Foster Care (foster care by a relative while legal custody of that child is with the state or the agency acting for the state)
• 24% receive financial assistance (foster care or public assistance)

One in five African American children will live with relatives. One in 11 of all children will live with relatives.

NYS Grandparent Caregivers
• 21.7% had income below the poverty level
• 54,305 were sixty years of age or older

Race of the 141,157 grandparents who are primary caregivers:

- White: 48.9%
- African American: 29.3%
- Hispanic: 21.8%

Ages of children in grandparent care:

- Under six years of age: 27%
- Six to eleven years: 45%
- Twelve to seventeen years old: 28%

In New York state, the number of children in Kinship Care is split almost evenly between NYC and the rest of the state.

Karen was given joint custody and legal guardianship over her daughter, Mia’s, child. Mia is 38 years old, lives in the home, but is a drug addict and alcoholic and unable to work. The father, who has never met the child, lives in Arizona and pays $25 monthly child support.

Nicoile and Samuel have been taking care of their grandchild, Jackson, for three years. Jackson’s father is in and out of his life, but really does not want anything to do with him. Jackson’s mother disappeared and has not been heard from.
In 2012 Sandra was 48 and had raised two children of her own when, in spite of her better judgment, she allowed her step son Paul and his eight year old daughter Alyssa to move in with her. They had planned to stay with her for a few weeks while Paul searched for a job and an apartment. But a few weeks turned into four months, during which time Paul would leave home for days at a time leaving Sandra in charge of Alyssa. Sandra enrolled her in school and after-school activities. She made sure she did her homework and she assumed a caretaker’s role.

Alyssa is diabetic. Her medication, which had been poorly monitored up to now, required constant attention as her insulin levels were completely out of control. Sandra enrolled Alyssa in Child Health Plus, got her to the doctor, and attended to her medication and diet – even making sure her school monitored her glucose levels during the day.

Alyssa’s health had improved, and she was doing better in school. As time passed, Alyssa and Sandra were growing attached to one another. Then Paul decided to take Alyssa to live with her mother in the Dominican Republic – and Alyssa was gone from Sandra’s life.

Sandra had no intention of interfering with Paul’s decisions. In the Dominican Republic, Alyssa’s mother, who had walked out on her once before, refused to take the child. A month later, Sandra got a call from an airline stewardess asking her to pick the young girl up at the airport. She called Paul and he plainly told her he was done being a parent and he wanted Alyssa to go into foster care unless Sandra would agree to care for her.
History of Office of Children and Family Services Kinship Program

OCFS Kinship Programs - Past and Present

- Ended Prior 2013
- Ended 2013
- Continued 2014

2013-14 Kinship Programs - 16 counties

- Catholic Charities of Albany (Columbia, Greene, Schoharie)
- Cornell Cooperative Extension (Dutchess)
- Family Service Society of Yonkers (Yonkers)
- Hispanic Counseling Center (Nassau)
- Jewish Board of Family & Children Services (Brooklyn)
- Lutheran Social Services of Metro (Queens)
- The Children’s Village (Bronx)
- The Neighborhood Center (Oneida, Herkimer)
- Council on Adoptable Children (NYC, includes Staten Island)
- The Family Center (NYC, includes Staten Island)
- Catholic Charities of Albany (Schenectady, Albany, Rensselaer)
- NYS Kinship Navigator (entire state)

The NYS Kinship Navigator Federal Children's Bureau Project:

The NYS Kinship Navigator was awarded a three year grant from the Children's Bureau to establish a Kinship Navigator Demonstration Project (2013-15). One of only seven awards, the project targets Broome, Tioga, Orange, Ulster, and Dutchess counties. The project includes:
- Strong collaboration with both DSS Temporary Assistance and Child Welfare
- Pro bono legal assistance network
- Development of grandparent leaders, called the "Kinship Corps"
- Enhanced outreach to caregivers
- Education of kinship caregivers and kinship youth
- Local and state coalitions & summits
- Online database
- Evaluation of outcomes

Kinship Advocacy - NYS Enactments and Actions 2000 - 2013

- Standby Guardianship Amendment (adds legal custodians and certain caretakers)
- OCFS Kinship Local Services Programs (kinship services across NYS)
- Grandparent Rights Act (two year care grants standing in custody disputes; notice to all grandparents of removals)
- NYS Kinship Navigator Statewide Information and Referral Network
- General Obligations Law Parental Power of Attorney (one and six month designations)
- Family Court Act 1028-a (relatives can petition to become foster parents of children in foster care)
- Family Court Act - Article Ten Amendments (improvements to notice and custody jurisdiction)
- Domestic Relations Law 74 and Family Court Act 647 (legal custody and guardianship mandate school enrollment)
- Permanent Guardianship (alternative to adoption when parents are deceased or rights terminated)
- OCFS ADM’s, OTDA ADM’s (advisories and regulations related to child welfare and temporary assistance for kinship caregivers)
- Social Services Law 392 (local departments must inform kin about temporary assistance)
- KinGAP (assistance program to kin who are foster parents)

Audrey has custody of her sister’s children. Her sister, Ashley, was driving a car that was involved in an accident in which their mother was killed. Since the accident, Ashley has spiraled downward into suicide attempts and addictions, blaming herself for her mother’s death. She voluntarily surrendered her children to CPS and the children were subsequently placed with their Aunt Audrey. They are now in foster care. Audrey feels that they seem remarkably well-adapted and adjusted.

Sofia recently obtained legal custody of her five year-old twin nieces, Sydney and Taylor. She is now raising them along with her seven year-old daughter, Ashley. Sofia is having a hard time economically and is overwhelmed because the twins have exceptional needs. They are non-verbal and Taylor does not eat solid foods. The NYC Family Permanency Center has assisted Sofia with referrals to the food pantry and for psychological and psychosocial evaluations, support and advocacy in the SSI application process, and advocacy with appropriate school enrollment.
Contact the NYS Kinship Navigator:
877-454-6463
The Kinship Specialists are available from 10am-4pm Monday-Friday

Kinship Specialists can help by:
- Identifying local resources and connecting caregivers with kinship programs in their area
- Providing information on state and federal laws regarding kinship care, caregiver rights, and court procedures
- Accessing resources and assistance
- Mailing, emailing or faxing kinship care fact sheets on financial assistance, legal information and other frequently asked questions
- Providing access to free legal consultations

Visit the website:
www.nysnavigator.org
The NYS Kinship Navigator website provides:
- Interactive New York State map - just click on a county and find local resources
- Links to state and national resources
- Information on kinship events across the state
- Downloadable legal fact sheets and guides for kinship caregivers
- “Contact Us” link to email the kinship specialist
- Social Media for kinship caregivers and professionals
- Articles by well known kinship experts
- Monthly “Kinship News” regarding new events and press releases affecting kinship care
- Training information and resources for professionals

Professional Assistance
The Kinship Specialists and attorneys provide individual assistance through our professional resources:
- Network of kinship professionals (including local kinship programs)
- Attorney consultants specializing in Family Court
- Experts on public assistance, social security and education law

Training and Advocacy
The NYS Kinship Navigator works with kinship service providers to get better outcomes for kinship families.

Services include:
- Trainings, seminars and workshops for caregivers and professionals
- Legal trainings (CLE’s) for attorneys
- Assistance in building local partnerships with public and private agencies
- Organization of local networks

NYS Kinship Navigator — Assistance, Legal Rights and Much More
Grandparents and other relatives caring for children:
- Are you looking for financial assistance?
- Are you looking for information on your legal rights?
- Are you seeking respite and support?

We Can Tell You About:
- Kinship law
- Special financial assistance for non-parents caring for children
- Specialized kinship and other local resources

Access to research on policies and best practices
Networking via participation in the Statewide Kincare Coalition

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