

Special Citation

Whereas, all young people are deserving of stable and secure living conditions when they are not able to safely reside with their parents or caregivers; and

Whereas, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services commends those who have selflessly stepped forward to assume care for the children and young adults in their lives, thereby maintaining familial and cultural connections, reducing trauma, and providing suitable placements for individuals who must be placed out-of-home; and

Whereas, partnerships among our legal, health, education, and criminal justice sectors are necessary to ensure reliable access to the services that create opportunities for children and young people in kinship care to thrive in all aspects of life; and

Whereas, OCFS prioritizes a kin-first culture and supports initiatives to locate, engage, and support relatives and fictive kin as they make crucial decisions regarding their ability to provide for those under their care; these initiatives include an identified Kinship Champion in every local department of social services and authorized voluntary agency, the Kinship Navigator, and the Kin-First Firewall; and

Whereas, in the State Fiscal Year 2025 – 2026, New York State designated over \$11 million to strengthen 21 regional Permanency Resource Centers and over \$1.7 million to strengthen 11 Kinship Caregiver Support Programs, both of which provide vital support services to kinship, post-adoptive, and post-guardianship families to avoid foster care and other out-of-home placements; and

Whereas, Kinship Care Month highlights the commitment and sacrifices of countless kin and fictive kin throughout our state; we take this time to extend appreciation for the many caregivers who provide young people with nurturing environments that encourage feelings of love, safety, and family;

Now, Therefore, I, Dr. DaMia Harris-Madden, OCFS Commissioner, do hereby recognize September 2026 as

KINSHIP CARE MONTH.



Dr. DaMia Harris-Madden, MBA, M.S.
Commissioner
NYS Office of Children and Family Services