

# Family First Kinship Checklist: Implementing the Provisions that Support Kinship Families

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*Webinar*

March 1, 2021, 2:00 to 3:15 ET





# Housekeeping

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- ▶ PowerPoint slides and a recording of the webinar will be available on [www.grandfamilies.org](http://www.grandfamilies.org) by early next week
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# New Checklist



## Checklist

### Family First Prevention Services Act: Implementing the Provisions that Support Kinship Families

The Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First Act) makes historic reforms to the child welfare system to better support children, families, and kinship caregivers, and promote a kin-first culture. Many of the reforms have significant implications for connecting children to kinship caregivers and further promoting permanency through kin guardianships. In keeping with previous laws, including the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, the Family First Act emphasizes the vital importance of kinship caregivers to child well-being.

Roughly 2.7 million children in the United States are in kinship care—meaning they are being raised by grandparents, other relatives, or “fictive” kin or close family friends like godparents. Throughout this document, unless otherwise stated, use “kin” or “kinship caregivers” includes fictive kin.

Research, data, and practice clearly show that family connections are critical to healthy child development and a sense of belonging. Children in care who are placed with kin or maintain connections with kin face fewer placement disruptions and experience lower levels of trauma. By utilizing provisions of the Family First Act, child welfare agencies can consistently engage kin to prevent entry or reentry into foster care, promote kinship placements when a child must be removed from parents, help children in care maintain connection with kin, and meet the unique needs of kinship families.

This checklist is designed to help child welfare agency leadership and staff, Family First project managers, and kinship caregivers and their community service providers take advantage of those opportunities. The tool provides concrete steps throughout to authentically engage and consult kinship caregivers, youth, birth parents, and other community stakeholders on reform

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efforts. It begins with general kinship readiness tasks that are necessary to incorporate when implementing the following five key areas in the Family First Act that impact kinship caregivers:

- Kinship Navigator Programs
- National Model Family Foster Home Licensing Standards
- Title IV-E Prevention Programs
- Engaging Family for Children and Youth Placed in Qualified Residential Treatment Programs
- Improvements to the Interstate Placement for Foster Care, Guardianship, and Adoption

This checklist will address the federal requirements and which steps are necessary for their effective implementation in your jurisdiction.

#### Related Resources:

For more information on how to use the Family First Act to support kinship families, see two other briefs in this series:

- [New Opportunities for Kinship Families: Action Steps to Implement the Family First Prevention Services Act in Your Community](#)
- [Leveraging the Family First Prevention Services Act to Improve Use of Title IV-E GAP](#)

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



## Checklist: Implementing the Provisions that Support Kinship Families

- ▶ Checklist provides concrete steps to effectively implement the federal requirements of the Family First Act and focuses on the following five key areas that impact kinship caregivers:
  - Kinship Navigator Programs
  - National Model Family Foster Home Licensing Standards
  - Title IV-E Prevention Programs
  - Engaging Family for Children and Youth Placed in Qualified Residential Treatment Programs
  - Improvements to the Interstate Placement for Foster Care, Guardianship, and Adoption
- ▶ Emphasizes the need to authentically engage and consult kinship caregivers, youth, birth parents, and other community stakeholders when implementing systemic reform.





# First brief on Family First/ Opportunities for Kinship Families



## New Opportunities for Kinship Families: Action Steps to Implement the Family First Prevention Services Act in Your Community

The federal Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First Act), enacted in February 2018, includes many child welfare system reforms that support children, parents, and kinship caregivers. This tool highlights provisions that help kinship families, along with steps caregivers, advocates, and other leaders can take to help implement the Family First Act.

### How the Family First Act Benefits Kinship Families

- Provides prevention services to children, kinship caregivers, and parents to help keep children safely out of foster care.
- Reduces licensing barriers to increase the use of kinship foster homes.
- Encourages kinship navigator programs to assist kinship families.
- Promotes family engagement for children who live in group settings.

### How to Help Your Jurisdiction Receive the Full Benefits of the Family First Act

*Help your state, territory or one of the 14 tribes that operate a Title IV-E child welfare agency receive the full benefits of the Family First Act by taking the following action steps:*



#### Ensure your jurisdiction is taking advantage of the Family First Act.

- Learn your jurisdiction's policies and approaches to placing children with relatives. Do relative caregivers receive supports and services? Can they become licensed foster parents or are they caring for children outside the formal child welfare system?
- Read all materials your jurisdiction has produced about this law and share national materials with community leaders (see [www.grandfamilies.org/Resources/Federal-Laws](http://www.grandfamilies.org/Resources/Federal-Laws) for national materials).
- Find out if your jurisdiction has a Family First Act implementation working group, get involved, and advocate to include individuals representing the kinship point of view.
- Use this tool to share the benefits of this law.



#### Offer services to prevent foster care entry.

The Family First Act provides funds to jurisdictions that choose to offer proven ("evidence-based") prevention services to eligible children at "imminent risk" of entering foster care, their birth parents, and relative caregivers, so children can stay safely with family and not enter foster care. Services may include mental health and substance use treatment and prevention, and in-home parent skill-based services.



# Second brief on Family First/GAP



## Leveraging the Family First Prevention Services Act to Improve Use of Title IV-E GAP

The Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First Act), enacted in February 2018, makes historic reforms to the child welfare system to better support children, families, and relative caregivers. Many of the reforms have significant implications for connecting children to relative caregivers and further promoting permanency through relative guardianships. States and tribes operating a federal Title IV-E Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP) can use these new reforms to further strengthen their programs. For states and tribes that have not yet taken the GAP option, new opportunities in the Family First Act may encourage them to apply. Currently 35 states, the District of Columbia, and 11 tribes operate Title IV-E GAP (see map, p. 2).



### Resources

#### For more information on:

##### *Family First Act and kinship care:*

- [New Opportunities for Kinship Families: Action Steps to Implement the Family First Prevention Services Act in Your Community](http://www.grandfamilies.org/Portals/0/Documents/FFPSA/new-opportunities-kinship-families.pdf)  
([www.grandfamilies.org/Portals/0/Documents/FFPSA/new-opportunities-kinship-families.pdf](http://www.grandfamilies.org/Portals/0/Documents/FFPSA/new-opportunities-kinship-families.pdf))

This brief highlights provisions in the Family First Act related to kinship families and federal Title IV-E GAP (GAP). It suggests how states and eligible tribes can build on these provisions to promote use of assisted guardianship for children in kinship foster care.

### Family First helps remove barriers to licensure:

#### *Provision:*

The Family First Act encourages states and eligible tribes to improve their standards and procedures for licensing foster parents, with the goal of removing unnecessary barriers to licensure for relatives who want to become licensed foster parents. The Family First Act requires the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop model family foster home licensing standards, which HHS released in February 2019, and requires states and eligible tribes to compare these model standards against their own to identify potential barriers in licensing relatives. If state or tribal licensing standards are not consistent with the model standards, the Act requires states and tribes to report the reasons for a specific deviation from the model standards and why a standard is not appropriate for their jurisdiction.

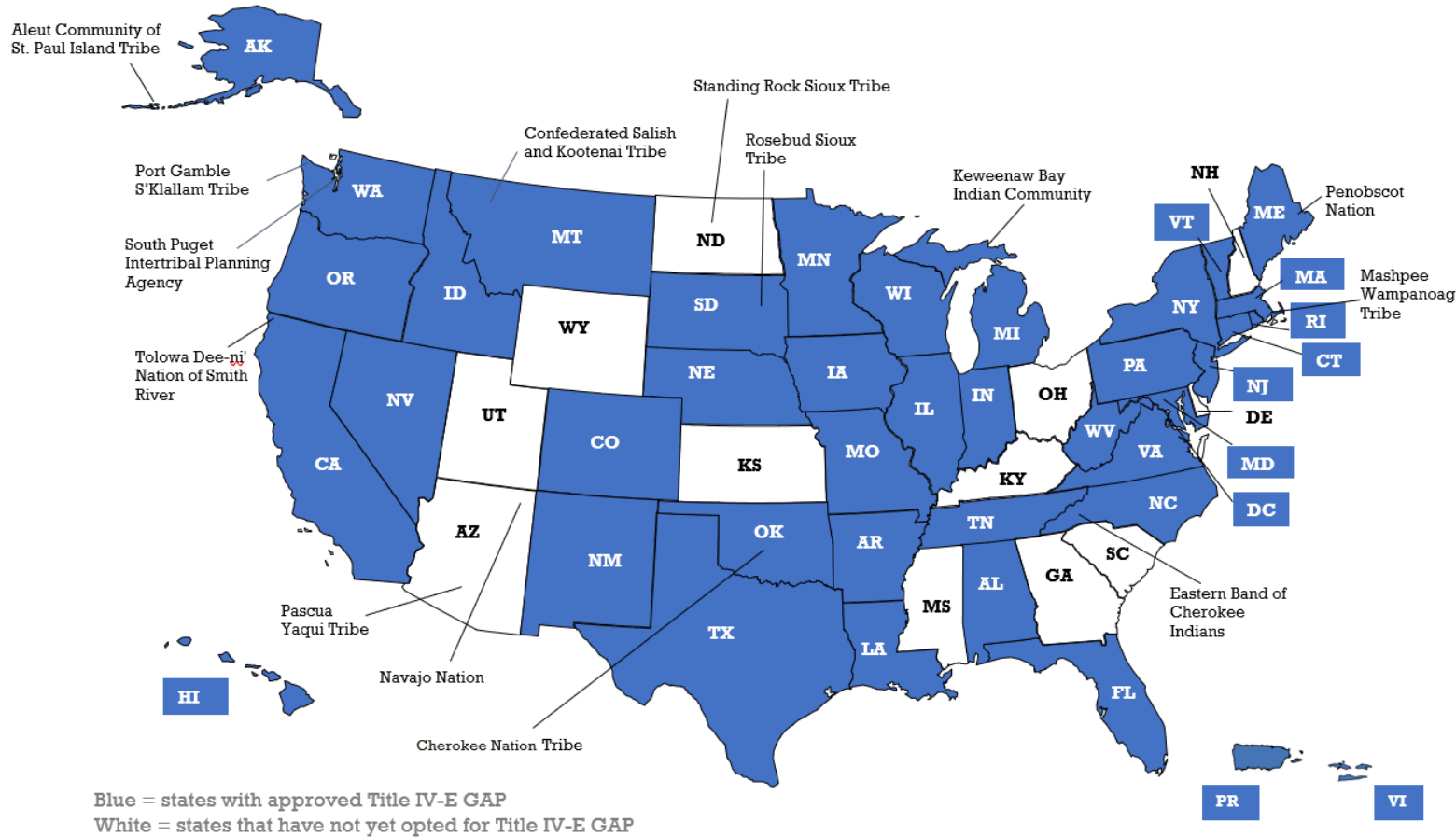
#### *Impact on GAP:*

To qualify for a federal Title IV-E GAP subsidy from the state, the relative must be the licensed foster parent of the child for six consecutive months before receiving GAP. However, many relative caregivers have struggled to meet state licensing requirements for foster family homes. While states and eligible tribes can waive nonsafety licensing standards for relatives, this does not always happen, and relatives struggle to become licensed foster parents.



## Approved Title IV-E Guardianship Assistance Programs

### 40 states, D.C. and 14 tribes as of 3/1/21



# Approved Title IV-E Guardianship Assistance Programs





## Children in Kinship Care Nationally



## Percentage of Children in Foster Care Being Raised by Relatives



Data is not publicly available on the percentage of these children who are with licensed relatives. Most aren't with licensed relatives.

In 2017, 108,426 children did not receive a foster care maintenance payment.  
[www.fostercarecapacity.com/stories/who-cares-2019-executive-summary](http://www.fostercarecapacity.com/stories/who-cares-2019-executive-summary)



# ✓ Parental Factors Creating Kinship Families

Substance use

Death

Child abuse  
and/or neglect

Teenage  
pregnancy

Deportation or  
detainment

Military  
deployment

Unemployment

Incarceration

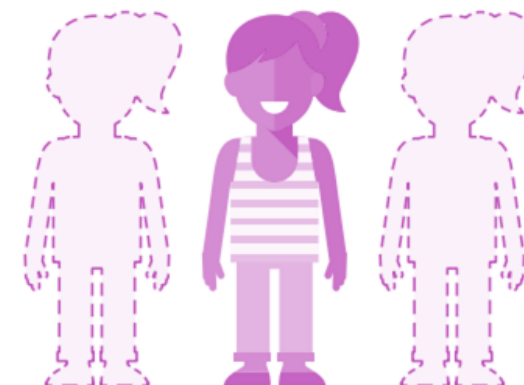
Physical and  
cognitive  
disabilities

Mental health  
challenges

COVID-19

Poverty

More than **1/3**  
of all children  
placed in foster care  
because of parental  
substance use are  
placed with  
relatives.\*





# Kinship Strengths: Children Thrive







## General Kinship Readiness



# Kinship Readiness

- ▶ Jurisdictions should assess their kinship readiness by reviewing current kinship law, policy, philosophy, and practice to ensure successful creation of a “kin first” culture by focusing on:
  - ▶ Identify, Notify, Engage, and Place with Kin
  - ▶ Support Kinship Families
  - ▶ Train Staff and Develop Accompanying Agency Kinship Policies





## Identify, Notify, Engage, and Place with Kin

- ▶ Define relative broadly to include fictive kin for enriched engagement of all
- ▶ Create diligent search procedures and policies that begin at the time of referral
  - Include maternal and paternal relatives and fictive kin
  - Go beyond simply notifying kin to include a full engagement strategy
- ▶ Adopt a kin first placement culture, such as a kinship firewall
  - See Tennessee, Connecticut, and New York for sample state firewall policies
  - Available at: <https://www.grandfamilies.org/wikiHow-for-Kinship-Foster-Care>
- ▶ Develop materials to inform kinship families of their full range of legal relationship options for serving as a resource for supporting the child



## Ensure Kinship Foster Families Have the Same Financial Supports as Non-Kin Foster Families

- ▶ Ensure all children in the legal custody of the child welfare system are supported with monthly assistance to help meet their needs, regardless of whether they are raised by non-kin or kin
- ▶ Improve access to TANF child-only for those who are not child welfare involved
- ▶ Provide post-permanency supports to kinship families



Outside the Foster Care System or Unlicensed Kinship Foster Care	Licensed Kinship Foster Care	Kinship Guardianship and Adoption Assistance
<i>Temporary Assistance for Needy Families child-only grants</i>	<i>Foster Care Maintenance Payments</i>	<i>Guardianship or Adoption Assistance</i>
<b>One child</b>  National average <b>\$249/month</b> Typically must apply separately for Medicaid	<b>One child</b>  National average of minimum foster care maintenance payments is <b>\$511/month</b> Automatic Medicaid	<b>One child</b>  Up to the foster care rate. Based on the minimum payment, <b>\$511/month</b> Automatic Medicaid
<b>Two children</b>  National average <b>\$344/month</b> Typically must apply separately for Medicaid	<b>Two children</b>  National average of minimum foster care maintenance payments is <b>\$1022/month</b> Automatic Medicaid	<b>Two children</b>  Up to the foster care rate. Based on the minimum payment, <b>\$1022/month</b> Automatic Medicaid
<b>Three children</b>  National average <b>\$423/month</b> Typically must apply separately for Medicaid	<b>Three children</b>  National average of minimum foster care maintenance payments is <b>\$1533/month</b> Automatic Medicaid	<b>Three children</b>  Up to the foster care rate. Based on the minimum payment, <b>\$1533/month</b> Automatic Medicaid

\*National averages are from 2011 GAO report at <https://www.gao.gov/assets/590/585649.pdf>



## Collect Data on Family Support and Establish Targets

- ▶ Percentage of children diverted from child welfare to kin
- ▶ Percentage placed with kin
  - Placed with kin who are licensed
  - Placed with kin who are not licensed
- ▶ Percentage who exit to
  - GAP
  - Adoption
  - Reunification
- ▶ Include targets that explicitly consider race equity
- ▶ Hold child welfare staff accountable for meeting targets



## Produce Specialized Trainings for Stakeholders

### Trainings should cover:

- ▶ Value of kinship care generally
- ▶ How to:
  - effectively engage kin
  - actively and frequently discuss placement and permanency options
  - understand and navigate the unique family dynamics of kinship care
  - Determine the appropriateness of each kinship placement





# Use written tools comparing adoption and guardianship options

## **CHART** Adoption and Guardianship for Children in Kinship Foster Care: National Comparison Chart

This chart 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. It provides a broad, national overview of these legal pathways. Adoption and guardianship laws are developed and implemented at the state, tribal and local levels, so the details of these legal relationships differ in important ways. You should review those differences when deciding which option to pursue. You can get initial information about your specific state's laws at [www.grandfamilies.org/Search-Laws](http://www.grandfamilies.org/Search-Laws).



While this chart is directed at kinship foster parents, it is also intended as a tool to help child welfare and other case workers assist kinship foster parents. Birth parents and older children may also find it helpful to review as part of their decision-making.

Generations United welcomes jurisdictions to either share the chart as is or tailor it to your own specific laws and policies. A related brief on *Adoption and Guardianship for Children in Kinship Foster Care* is available at [www.grandfamilies.org](http://www.grandfamilies.org).

	ADOPTION	GUARDIANSHIP
<b>Rights and Responsibilities</b>		
<i>What are my legal rights and responsibilities for the child?</i>	You will become the parent in the eyes of the law forever. You have all rights and responsibilities for the child.	You will have most of the rights and responsibilities that come with caring for a child until the child reaches adulthood or the guardianship is ended.
<i>What are the birth parents' rights and responsibilities for the child?</i>	The birth parents' rights are terminated.	Birth parents keep the rights to visit the child and to consent to adoption and/or name change. Birth parents keep the obligation to financially support the child and pay child support.
<i>Do I have authority to access services for the child?</i>	As an adoptive parent, access to services for the child is the same as for any birth parent.	Guardians access to services for the child is typically the same as for any birth parent.

- ▶ **National chart** – Adoption and Guardianship for Children in Kinship Foster Care
- ▶ **State specific charts** – for NY, VA and WA
- ▶ **Brief** – Adoption and Guardianship for Children in Kinship Foster Care
- ▶ Thanks to Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption for supporting the creation of these resources.

All available at:

[www.grandfamilies.org/Resources/Care-Custody](http://www.grandfamilies.org/Resources/Care-Custody)

## ✓ Access free training resources



- ▶ Dr. Joseph Crumbley, in partnership with PA KinConnector, has released a new video training series for kinship caregivers and professionals at <http://drcrumbley.net/training2/>
  - The no-cost video training modules include How Family Dynamics and Relationships Change and Engaging Birth Parents in Kinship Care
  - Caregivers: [www.kinconnector.org/kinship-families](http://www.kinconnector.org/kinship-families)
  - Professionals: [www.kinconnector.org/childcare-professionals](http://www.kinconnector.org/childcare-professionals)





## Title IV-E Prevention Program





## Title IV-E Prevention Program for Kin

- ▶ Provides federal funding to offer evidence-based services to prevent children from entering foster care
  - Services can include mental health and substance use treatment and prevention and in-home parent skill-based services.
  - Kinship caregivers are eligible for services
  - Children whose adoption or guardianship is at risk of disruption are eligible.
- ▶ Meant to be a radical rethinking of how we provide services.
  - Continuous improvement



## Create a kin-focused service array

- ▶ Survey and analyze prevention services and programs currently used by the agency.
- ▶ Determine if and how programs and services can be adapted to include kin, while maintaining fidelity to the model.
- ▶ Engage kin to provide consultation about existing programs and services and about gaps in the service array.
- ▶ Identify services that are needed for kin outside of the scope of the Title IV-E Prevention Program.



## **Ensure kin are able to access these services**

- ▶ Train staff in the unique needs of kinship caregivers and how to meet those needs through prevention services.
- ▶ Identify staffing changes needed to meet the needs of kin caring for children.
- ▶ Implement practices needed to engage birth parents and kin to strengthen the prevention plan.
- ▶ Create written materials that explain the program for kin, help them understand their rights and responsibilities, as well as options if the prevention plan fails.





## Iterate and improve

- ▶ Not a one-time process
- ▶ Continuously collect and analyze data to better understand how the program is functioning and how well it is serving kin
- ▶ Develop benchmarks to ensure that the agency is hitting its goals for serving kin
- ▶ Data on utilization of services should be disaggregated to analyze availability and effectiveness of culturally appropriate services for kin and whether kin and families of color are referred to these services
- ▶ Both qualitative and quantitative data



## Kinship Navigators



# Meet the Requirements under Federal Law

## **MUST:**

- ▶ Coordinate with other state or local agencies that promote service coordination or provide information and referral, such as 2-1-1 and 3-1-1
- ▶ Plan and operate with kinship caregivers, youth raised by kinship caregivers, government agencies, and community and faith-based organizations
- ▶ Establish information and referral systems that link kinship caregivers, support group facilitators and providers to each other, public benefits, training and legal assistance
- ▶ Provide outreach to kinship care families, including through a website
- ▶ Promote partnerships between public and private agencies
- ▶ Meet evidence-based requirements

## **MAY:**

- ▶ Establish and support a kinship care ombudsman
- ▶ Support any other activities designed to assist kinship caregivers obtain benefits and services
  - Use funds for legal services
  - Provide concrete supports






## Plan and Operate the Program in Consultation with Kinship Caregivers

- ▶ Federal government in August 2019 ([ACYF-CB-IM-19-03](#)) emphasizes importance of “integrating family and youth voices into all aspects of child welfare system design and operation”
- ▶ Reach out and invite them to the table authentically and from the inception – e.g., as part of Advisory Boards
- ▶ Conduct town halls and/or satisfaction surveys for the broader group of kinship caregiver customers



# Conduct outreach to Kinship Families

- ▶ Find caregivers through community partners
- ▶ Share information with pediatrician offices and schools
- ▶ Consider a permission to contact form



**Caregiver Permission to Contact Form**

Kinship caregivers are grandparents, other relatives, and family friends who are full time caregivers of children. The New York State Kinship Navigator is a state-wide program that provides information and assistance to kinship families, and connects them with specialized services designed to support them.

**By signing this form, you are giving your permission for our staff to contact you about our services and offer information about your permanency options and other services available to you.**

**With your permission, we will call you!**

If you have questions about Kinship Navigator services, please call 877-454-6463 or email [navigator@nysnavigator.org](mailto:navigator@nysnavigator.org). Please go to the other side of this page, where you can complete the permission to contact form.

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**PERMISSION FOR THE KINSHIP NAVIGATOR TO CONTACT YOU**

Please sign and provide your contact information below, and then return to your staff person

Permission for Kinship Navigator to call you: ☐ Yes ☐ No (If No, Stop here)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. **Name of Primary Caregiver:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please PRINT legibly)

2. **Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ Apt Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Home Phone:** Area code: \_\_\_\_\_ phone: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Cell Phone:** Area code: \_\_\_\_\_ phone: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

5. **Other Phone:** Area code: \_\_\_\_\_ phone: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

6. **Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

7. **What language do you prefer?** ☐ English ☐ Spanish ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

8. **Preferences for contact (check all that apply)**  
Time of day: ☐ Morning (9-12) ☐ Lunchtime (12-1) ☐ Afternoon (1-4) ☐ Evening (4-6)  
By ☐ Email ☐ Mail ☐ Home Phone ☐ Cell Phone

9. Would you agree for the referring worker to contact KN to inquire if contact was made? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
(If No, we will respect your privacy.)

**Instructions for Staff:** Please complete the information below, and fax this form to 585-456-1676 or email a scanned copy to [navigator@nysnavigator.org](mailto:navigator@nysnavigator.org).

Unit: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Person: \_\_\_\_\_

**Child Welfare Staff Only:** Types of Placement:  
☐ "Temporary" (No Article Ten); ☐ Article Ten "direct"; ☐ Article Ten into Article Six;  
☐ KinGAP; ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Does the client have a Safety Plan in place? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Brief Description of Caregiver Situation/Needs: \_\_\_\_\_

Date fax/email sent \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

(Please fax the form even if caregiver declined to be contacted; this is important for our records.)

**FAX NUMBER: 585-456-1676**



# Create Website Resources

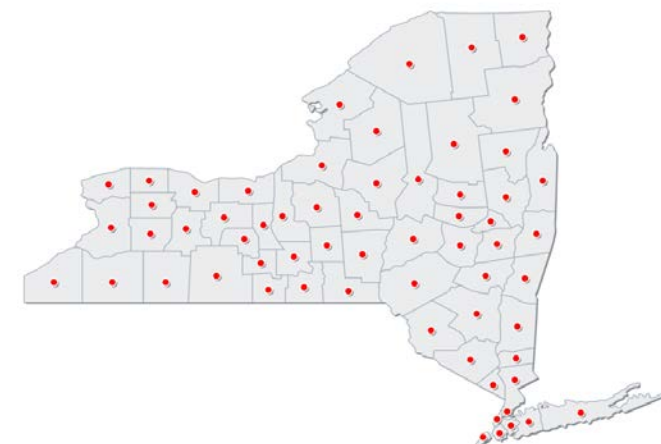


## Kinship Resource Locator Tool

Resources at your fingertips! The interactive online Kinship Resource Locator Tool, provided free of charge, will help you identify targeted resources for kinship caregivers in Nevada based on age, caregiving status, the age and needs of the children, and location. Available in English and Spanish.

[Start Using Tool](#)

## NY State Kinship Navigator County Resource Map







## Ensure the Program Meets at Least the Evidence-Based Requirements of “Promising”

- ▶ Either evaluate your own program and have it included in the Title IV-E Clearinghouse **OR** implement a model in the Clearinghouse with fidelity
- ▶ No kinship navigator programs are currently in the Clearinghouse as meeting its evidence-based standards,  
<https://preventionservices.abtsites.com/>
- ▶ If possible, partner with an evaluator to help put you on track for proper data collection



## Include Concrete Supports to Kinship Families in Your Program

- ▶ Use federal funds to provide support for the families
  - Bus tokens
  - Gas Vouchers
  - Grocery store cards
  - Technology
  
- ▶ Make legal services part of your offerings (see [Technical-Bulletin](#))



## National Model Family Foster Home Licensing Standards





## Review, Compare, and Assess Current Standards

- ▶ Review current licensing standards to identify unnecessary or outdated standards
- ▶ Compare and when feasible align standards with:
  - [National Model Foster Family Home Licensing Standards](#)
  - [NARA Model Family Foster Home Licensing Standards](#)
- ▶ Collect and review data on the outcomes of current licensing policies and practices
- ▶ Identify unnecessary barriers to licensure



## Revise Licensing Standards and Process

- ▶ Revise licensing standards and procedures to ensure increased safe and appropriate placement with kin
- ▶ Include a process for provisional or emergency licensing to allow for immediate placement with kin
- ▶ Develop materials for kin that fully explains the licensing process
- ▶ Establish specialized staff who can facilitate, expedite, and assist kin with the licensing process
- ▶ Create kinship-specific foster parent training to support and educate kin about their unique role



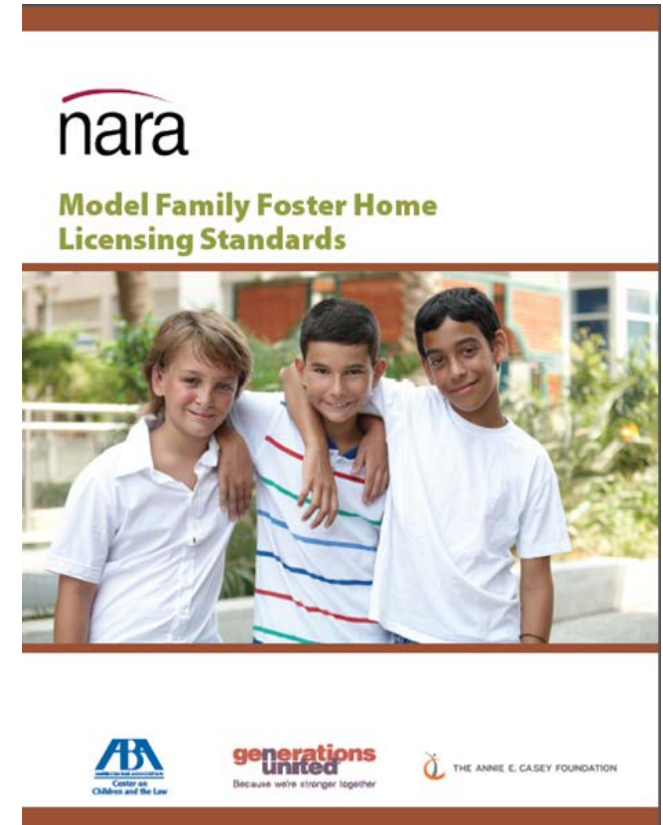
## Refine Use of Waivers and Variances

- ▶ Examine use waivers or variances for non safety related licensing standards for kin foster homes
  - See GAO report for state implementation information: [“Child Welfare and Aging Programs: HHS Could Enhance Support for Grandparents and Other Relative Caregivers”](#)
  - For strategies to increase relative licensure see: [ACYF-CB-IM-20-08](#)
- ▶ Study both outcomes and barriers to use of waivers
- ▶ Implement clear criteria, timeframes, and an easy process for requesting and granting timely waivers and variances
- ▶ Train and encourage child welfare staff on the use of waivers and variances



# ☑ NARA Model Family Foster Home Licensing Standards

- ▶ NARA Model was the “main source” for the National Model, includes:
  - a purpose statement
  - ten guiding principles
  - the model standards
  - an interpretive guide
  - a crosswalk tool
- ▶ <https://www.grandfamilies.org/Portals/0/Model%20Licensing%20Standards%202018%20update.pdf>



# Engaging Family for Children and Youth Placed in Qualified Residential Treatment Programs





## Engage Family for Children and Youth Placed in Qualified Residential Treatment Programs

- ▶ QRTPs are new treatment intervention model for nonfamily settings
- ▶ Six months of family-based post discharge services
- ▶ Family and permanency team
  - Must include kin, along with the child's birth family and other emotionally significant individuals and relevant professions
  - Helps to develop short- and long-term mental and behavioral health goals
  - Provides input on determining the most appropriate and least-restrictive environment for the child





## Identify Kin to Engage

- ▶ Establish procedures for comprehensive family outreach to include family in treatment
- ▶ Create protocols for maintaining contact information
- ▶ Create materials that help agency staff identify who should be contacted and engaged
- ▶ Create developmentally-appropriate protocols soliciting feedback from youth about which kin should be engaged



## Create Materials to Facilitate Kin Engagement

- ▶ Materials detailing the role of kin in making decisions for youth in residential care
- ▶ Templates for materials to explain the decision a qualified assessor made for why the child should be in a QRTP
- ▶ Materials explaining rights and the services in these settings
- ▶ Templates for detailing the child's treatment plan
- ▶ All materials should be easily understandable and available in multiple languages.



## Engage Kin in Treatment

- ▶ Develop protocols for family integration into treatment
- ▶ Evaluate policy to more actively engage kin
- ▶ Engage kin to provide consultation
- ▶ Create family team meeting procedures
- ▶ Establish ways to ensure family viewpoints are meaningfully included in assessment
- ▶ Ensure family team meeting logistics facilitate kin engagement
- ▶ Create visitation processes to ensure meaningful contact with family while in QRTP settings





## Engage Kin in Permanency Plans

- ▶ Assist kinship caregivers who wish to become therapeutic foster parents
- ▶ Collaborate with families on discharge planning including family-based post-discharge services and aftercare
- ▶ Integrate families into post-discharge treatment
- ▶ Balance the transition needs identified by the family with those of the agency



## Document Efforts

- ▶ Family integration and sibling connections
- ▶ Efforts to identify and include a family and permanency team
- ▶ Written notice of family outreach and continued contact
- ▶ Why placement preference of family and permanency team differs from that of the qualified assessor
- ▶ Discharge planning and family-based aftercare supports for at least six months

# Improvements to the Interstate Placement for Foster Care, Guardianship, and Adoption







## Improvements to the Interstate Placement for Foster Care, Guardianship, and Adoption

- ▶ By October 1, 2027, all states must use an electronic case-processing system to facilitate the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC)
  - Reduce the time to place children and youth with safe and appropriate kin across state lines
- ▶ National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE)
  - Electronic exchange connecting child welfare agencies to facilitate ICPC cases
  - HHS intent is that states connect to NEICE instead of building new systems
  - 45 states have either implemented or are implementing NEICE



## Assess Interstate Placement Practices

- ▶ Document current practices
  - Include measures for secure transfer of information and how practices differ between kin and non-kin placements
- ▶ Analyze data on current practices and how it differs between kin and non-kin placements
- ▶ Evaluate approval rates and timelines for kin and non-kin to determine specific barriers preventing kin from timely approval



## For States that Do Not Already Use NEICE

- ▶ Necessary steps to implement NEICE
  - Ensuring appropriate stakeholder involvement
  - IT Capacity
  - Budgeting and fees
- ▶ Staff training on NEICE use and expedited background checks, home visits, and licensing
- ▶ Revise current family-finding procedures
- ▶ Develop monitoring plan





# Questions?

## Contact Information

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