



January 2020

Dear {!Contact.FirstName},

New Year, New Energy & Faces

2019 was an exciting and busy year for the MSU Kinship Care Resource Center, and we expect that 2020 will bring about even more as we partner with groups across the state to improve outcomes for kinship families.

As a way to improve information sharing, and hopefully increase collaboration, the Kinship Care Resource Center is re-launching its *Kinnections Newsletter*. The newsletter will be emailed to subscribers on a monthly basis. If you received this email from someone else, please send an email to kinship@msu.edu to sign-up!

In addition to the monthly e-newsletter, we may send occasional emails about trainings, events, conferences or other important information relevant to you based on whether you're a caregiver or service provider, or what part of the state you live in.

In other good news, in late summer with the support and funding from the [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services](#) (MDHHS), the Kinship Care Resource Center hired a new director and two kinship care navigators. Read more below about the grant under the "Expanded Services: Kinship Support Program."

Alicia, the new director, brings a wealth of background and experience in children and family policy and advocacy, while Tracey and Terry, both kinship navigators, bring valuable knowledge and understanding as kinship caregivers who are active in their communities. [Read more about our staff on our new website.](#)



While there has been a flurry of activities this fall, there is one more highlight to share. During Kinship Care Awareness Month in September, the Kinship Care Resource Center partnered with [Michigan's Children](#) and local groups serving kinship families to hold the first annual Relative Care Day at the Capitol. With the help of legislative sponsors, Representative Frank Liberati, D-Allen Park, and Representative Kathy Crawford, R- Novi, kinship caregivers and supporters shared their experiences and recommendations for policy change.



Expanded Services: Kinship Support Program

In the fall of 2019 with the support of MDHHS, the Kinship Care Resource Center expanded its' Information and Referral Services and added Kinship Navigator Services. The new Kinship Support Program services include:

- Coordination of Care: Helping service provider networks that engage with kinship families collaborate, connect, and coordinate with one another alongside and on behalf of kinship caregivers and the children in their care.
- Communication, Technology and Information Sharing: Using newsletters, a website, toll-free phone line, and social media to share resources and provide supports for kinship families.
- Kinship Navigators: Connecting trained Kinship Navigators, who are experienced kinship caregivers to

Kinship Caregiver Respite: Funding for Kids' Activities, Providing a Break for Caregivers

Full-time caregivers of relative children face many challenges. It is important for caregivers to focus on parenting, but also to remember to take care of their own needs.

The Kinship Care Respite Program is a resource for kinship caregivers age 55 and older who provide full-time care and reside in Clinton, Eaton, Ingham and Washtenaw counties. The program provides rest, relief, and a break from everyday caregiving by assisting the caregiver in helping to arrange and pay for an activity for their child to attend.

Activities may include:

- Child care
- Sports camp
- Summer class
- Extra-curricular activities
- After-school care/activities

other kinship caregivers through phone consultation and community outreach.

- **Group Services:** Providing a calendar of support groups offered throughout the State of Michigan, assessing where the need for new or more groups exists, and supporting group implementation.
- **Training:** For families and professionals who serve kinship families.

Families and service providers are welcome to contact the Kinship Care Resource Center's toll-free Information and Referral line at 1-800-535-1218. The Center is open Monday-Friday from 9am-4pm. If you do not reach anyone immediately, please leave a message and someone will return your call within one business day.

These program and service enhancements would not be possible without the support of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Child Welfare Division.

Please contact the Kinship Care Resource Center at 1-800-535-1218 or kinship@msu.edu to see if you are eligible.

Flyers and brochures are also available for service providers to distribute to families. Please contact us for more information.

In Clinton, Eaton and Ingham counties, the program is funded by the Federal Older Americans Act grant provided to the Tri-County Office on Aging.

The Area Agency on Aging Region 1-B provides funding support for Washtenaw County, a new service area beginning on January 1, 2020.

Caregiver Parenting Resource: Understanding Trauma

Children who are no longer able to live at home with their parents all experience some level of trauma, which is an emotional response to a significant event that threatens or causes harm. For example, abuse or neglect, witnessing violence or experiencing a natural disaster can result in trauma. It can show up in different ways for children from being withdrawn, experiencing headaches or displaying aggressive behaviors. This can impact a caregiver in many ways and can be challenging.

Here are a couple of resources to help you understand trauma, recognize the signs and give you some tips for working with your child:

A Message from Generations United:

Call for Public Input from the Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Council

The Advisory Council to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren has released a call for public input. The information received will be used to plan the Council's future activities and ultimately will be included in a report to Congress, which also will be shared publicly. This [call for input](#) is in line with requirements in the [Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act](#), which was signed into law in 2018 and created the council. Specifically, the request seeks input from grandparents or other relatives raising children or organizations that provide support for these families. Information requested in the following areas:

- [Helping Your Child Heal From Trauma](#)
- [Parenting a Child Who Has Experienced Trauma](#)

Calling All Kinship Support Groups!

To increase kinship support group meetings and contact information for caregivers, the new [Kinship Care Resource Center website](#) includes a [calendar and contact information](#) for support group meetings across the state.

If your meeting or contact information needs to be updated or if your group information is missing, please send an email to kinship@msu.edu.

- Best practices, resources, and other useful information for grandparents and other older relatives raising children
- Gaps in available resources
- Unique needs of children affected by opioid misuse
- Unique needs of members of Native American tribes.

Generations United encourages you to submit comments and spread the word about this important opportunity! Learn more about [how to submit public input](#). See also the alert about this opportunity from the Administration for Community Living at the end of this message. Learn more about the [Advisory Council to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren](#).

1-800-535-1218
 kinship@msu.edu
 www.kinship.msu.edu



Email kinship@msu.edu to subscribe to Kinnections



Funded by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services