



Kinnections

Newsletter for kinship caregivers and service providers



1-800-535-1218



School of Social Work
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Mission: Our mission is to support and empower all of Michigan’s kinship families through responsive information and referral services, education and training, and outreach and engagement with caregivers, service providers and communities to ensure that children in kinship families are safe, healthy, nurtured and loved.

December 2020

Kinship Care Resource Center (KCRC) News



We would also like to welcome **Beth Lindley**, the new Director of the KCRC, who comes with experience serving families across the lifespan and who has a particular passion for the needs of aging adults. Beth grew up

in Michigan, where her grandparents were vitally important mentors and supports in her life. She understands firsthand the positive impact of extended family and kinship relationships on one’s life. A graduate of MSU, Beth is excited for the opportunity to serve the Kinship Care Resource Center in expanding our outreach and services and strengthening our connections with Michigan Kinship Caregivers.

Congratulations to **Alicia Guevara Warren**, our former Director who will now serve as Director of Statewide Policy Initiatives for the Early Childhood Investment Corporation. Alicia has been instrumental in developing structure for the Kinship Support Program. Congratulations, Alicia! We look forward to your leadership and guidance for the advancement of policies that support Michigan families.

Financial Assistance, Caregiver Well-being, Child Supports, and More

Families who live in specific counties may qualify for the [Kinship Care Respite Program](#).¹

Financial Assistance for Online Activities

Caregivers who reside within Washtenaw County also have access to funding to support online education. This funding can be used for online educational programming fees, workbooks, Chromebooks, laptops, or tablets.

What Is Respite?

The goal of the respite program is to ease some of the challenges of caregiving by providing funding to pay for children's activities or programs, that allow caregiver(s) a brief respite, or break. Examples of respite activities may include daycare/childcare, sports camps, virtual music lessons, and afterschool care.

Michigan State University Kinship Care Resource Center, in partnership with the Tri-County Office on Aging and the Area Agency on Aging Region 1-B, has respite funding available for kinship caregivers. To qualify for funding, the caregiver must meet the following qualifications: (1) reside full-time in Eaton, Ingham, Clinton, or Washtenaw county, (2) provide full-time care to a kinship child under the age of 18, and (3) be over the age of 55.

Caregiver Self-care



Your health is important too so you can support the health of your family. Here are some ideas to help inspire self-care activities, some that take as little as five minutes.

How to Access Respite Funds

We recognize that it may be difficult to find respite opportunities under the current circumstances. KCRC staff are prepared to assist interested kinship caregivers in finding qualifying respite programs as well as completing the application paperwork. Please contact the Kinship Care Resource Center by email at kinship@msu.edu or by phone at 800-535-1218 if you are interested in learning more about the respite

program. If you are a professional that serves a population that may benefit from receiving respite funds, please email kinship@msu.edu to receive promotional materials related to the respite program.

Respite funds are supported through the federal Older Americans Act through the Tri-County Office on Aging. The Area Agency on Aging Region 1-B provides funding support for residents of Washtenaw County.

Holidays and COVID-19

Family traditions and gatherings for families in Michigan are different this year because of COVID-19. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services has put together some helpful [tips to guide planning and reduce risks for the fall and winter holidays](#).²

The [Advisory Council to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren](#),³ established by *The Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act* in 2018, released their [yearly report](#),⁴ including a [COVID-19/Emergency Preparedness Resource Guide for Kinship Families and Grandfamilies](#).⁵ “The mission of the Advisory Council to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (SGRG) is to identify, promote, coordinate, and disseminate information, resources, and best practices to help grandparents and older relative caregivers of children meet the health,

educational, nutritional, and other needs of the children in their care, while maintaining their own physical, mental, and emotional well-being. As part of this mission, all recommendations will consider the needs of members of Native American tribes and families affected by the opioid crisis.”

Michigan Kinship Care Coalition

Those with an interest in kinship care services and policy efforts may wish to join the Michigan Kinship Care Coalition (MKCC), a grassroots organization consisting of kinship caregivers and professionals that support kinship care. The MKCC has created several subcommittees to advocate for local, state, and federal level policies as well as mobilize services that support the needs of kinship caregivers. Please email kinship@msu.edu if you are interested in joining the MKCC.

URLs for links embedded in this newsletter:

¹Kinship Care Respite Program: <https://kinship.msu.edu/Respite-Care>

²Tips for the holidays: https://www.michigan.gov/documents/coronavirus/Celebrating_the_Holidays_705664_7.pdf

³Advisory Council to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: <https://acl.gov/programs/support-caregivers/supporting-grandparents-raising-grandchildren-0>

⁴Year One Progress Report: https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/RAISE_SGRG/SGRGProgressReport2020_Final.pdf

⁵COVID-19/Emergency Preparedness Resource Guide: https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2020-08/8-25-2020_Emergency%20Preparedness%20for%20Kinship%20Families%20and%20Grandfamilies_shorterTOC_508accessible_FINAL.pdf



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