



What is kinship care?

Kinship care is the full-time protecting and nurturing of children by relatives or others to whom children and parents assign a family relationship, when parents are unable to care for them. Kinship caregivers are often grandparents, aunts and uncles, or other relatives, but they can also be close family friends or other adults who have a close relationship with the child.

What situations lead to kinship care arrangements?

Situations that necessitate kinship care include:

- **Deployment of parents in the military**
- **Parental mental/physical illness or substance abuse**
- **Death of a parent**
- **Incarceration**
- **Family violence**
- **A relative's concern for the child's health, safety, and well-being**

What should I do if someone comes to me about kinship care?

First, listen and acknowledge their concerns. Many kinship caregivers step in to care for children during one of the crisis situations listed above, and they often feel overwhelmed. Ask them about their most pressing needs, then refer them to the Kinship Care Resource Center for more information about available benefits and support.

What does the Kinship Care Resource Center (KCRC) do?

We offer free help and support to kinship caregivers. Depending on a family's needs, this may include referrals, resources, or additional support from trained staff who understand kinship caregiving. Call 800-525-1218.

Is there a support group for kinship caregivers?

Yes! We have a searchable calendar (kinshipmsu.mysite.com/s/support-calendar) where caregivers can find support groups and events. Caregivers can also call us at 800-535-1218 and we'll share options with them directly.

Do kinship caregivers need to be licensed?

No. Licensing is not required for all kinship placements. It depends on what's in the child's best interest. Caregivers should talk with their caseworker to help guide this decision.

What financial resources are available to help?

Each kinship caregiver situation is unique, so there is no one answer to this question.

- **For kinship caregivers providing relative foster care:** We can guide caregivers through common resources available and what to discuss with assigned foster care workers.
- **For kinship caregivers whose children are not placed in foster care:** We commonly guide these families to the Ineligible Grantee Awards (Child-Only Grants), which are based on the child's eligibility, regardless of household income.

We also refer many kinship caregivers to the webtool MIBridges (newmibridges.michigan.gov) where they can apply for benefits that may be available to them.

How and where can kinship caregivers get a guardianship?

This depends on the kind of guardianships available to them, which is based on the way the child came to be under their care. To learn more, they can visit the Kinship Caregiver Legal Guide developed by the KCRC.

How do caregivers enroll the children in their care in school?

Each school district has different criteria for school enrollment depending on the way a child entered into the kinship caregiver's responsibility. If the child is in foster care placed with a relative, the foster care worker will be the best resource for support during the enrollment process. Outside of foster care, we encourage talking with the McKinney Vento representative for the school district to provide guidance.

How do caregivers apply for Medicaid or get help with Medicaid concerns?

There are several options available to kinship caregivers who want to determine their eligibility for Medicaid coverage:

- Call 1-800-318-2596
- Visit the local MDHHS office at www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/inside-mdhhs/county-offices
- Apply online at MIBridges (newmibridges.michigan.gov - a webtool that allows them to apply for benefits)

Is respite care available?

For many kinship caregivers, it's challenging to find child care so they can have some time to themselves. We work with kinship caregivers to find the programs, recreational activities and child care options for which they are eligible. For example, in some counties, kinship caregivers 55+ are eligible for respite funding. And children in relative foster care may have access to respite services.

**Still have questions on how you and the KCRC can help kinship families?
Feel free to call us at 800-525-1218.**