

WHAT IS KINSHIP CARE?

“Information from the Ohio Resource Guide for Relatives Caring for Children”

Kinship Caregivers—Grandparents, Aunts/Uncles, Cousins, Adult Siblings, and Close Family Friends—are often raising children when parents are unable or unavailable to care for them.

Kinship Care refers to a temporary or permanent arrangement in which a relative or any non-relative adult who has a long standing relationship or bond with the child and/or family, has taken over the full-time, substitute care of a child whose parents are unable or unwilling to do so for reasons such as death or chronic illness (e.g. HIV/AIDS), substance abuse, incarcerations, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, teenage pregnancy, unemployment, poverty, and other problems. Kinship care includes those relationships established through an informal arrangement, a legal custody order, a relative foster care placement or a kinship placement. Regardless of the type of kinship care arrangement, the kinship caregivers' voluntary commitment to devote their lives to the children in their care is a courageous, life-changing decision.

ARE YOU RAISING YOUR RELATIVES?

If the answer is yes, you are not alone. According to the Ohio Department of Aging, grandparents are filling the role of primary parents to their grandchildren in 10 per cent of all Ohio households with children. According to 2000 Census Data 185,443 Ohio children live with their grandparents. In 86,000 Ohio households with children, the grandparent is the primary caregiver.

ISSUES YOU MAY FACE

Your expenses will increase. Your budget may not stretch to include the increased cost of feeding, clothing and caring for the children. You can apply for public assistance through the local county ODJFS. Child support service can be accessed through the local county child support enforcement agency.

Medical care for the children will be a concern. Application for medical coverage can be made through the local county ODJFS but there are certain requirements that must be followed.

School placement can be a problem because public school districts require legal paperwork to allow enrollment. They also have the right to limit enrollment to

residents in their districts. If the children's status in your home is unclear, they may be denied school entry.

Behavior and discipline may present challenges because the children may act out feelings of anger, fear and sadness. You may need to find counseling and professional guidance for them.

HOW TO I OBTAIN CUSTODY?

If a child(ren) come into your home and you want to change custody you may contact an attorney to file a motion for custody, you may file at your own expense for the \$100 court fee **Pro Se** (meaning you will be your own attorney), or you may have placement through ACCSB if the children are already in their custody. ACCSB will work with kinship caregiver on changing custody of the children to the kinship caregivers if the children are not to be reunited with the parents. As a notary, I can help witness the signing of Pro Se paperwork. I am not an attorney so I can not give any legal advice but only advise you of the procedure of the paperwork. I will also attend court hearings with you and be a shoulder to lean on to navigate your way through the court system.

I am very appreciative and realize that kinship families need help and at the Kinship coordinator, I am here to offer my services. Please contact me with any questions or concerns.

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