

Washington State Kinship Care



● House Bill 1121 (Permanent legal custody) allows relatives to go into court, get custody, and not terminate parental rights.

● Legislature appropriates \$1,000,000 in TANF funding (biennium) creating the **Relative Support Services Fund** for unlicensed kinship care families involved in the child welfare system and \$50,000 to study the issue of kinship care in Washington State and make recommendations.

● House Bill 1233 requires development of a stronger relative search process for families in the child welfare system, the creation of a **state-wide Kinship Oversight Committee** to oversee kinship care activities, and development of two **Kinship Navigator** pilot projects to help kinship families navigate the service system by offering information and referral, advocacy, and support.

Annual *Parenting The Second Time Around* (developed by Cornell Cooperative Extension) facilitator training begins.

● Substitute House Bill 1280 continues the **Kinship Oversight Committee**, a coalition of 40 public and private organizations, advocates, and caregivers to address issues facing kinship care families and oversee legislative initiatives.

Substitute House Bill 1281, **Washington's Kinship Medical Care**, allows kinship caregivers to give informed consent to medical care for children in their care without parental signature.

Legislature appropriates \$100,000 per year for two regional **kinship navigator** projects.

Regional Kinship Care Coalitions begin forming in several counties to better collaborate services between providers and caregivers.

1998 1999 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005

● Senate Bill 5210 directs Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to place children with relatives, unless issues of safety precludes placement.



● Legislative report and results of state-wide survey published by WA State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP).

House Bill 1397 authorizes **Kinship Care Work Group** to develop and prioritize recommendations from WSIPP study and develop a report on how to improve service system.

● Legislature appropriates annual budget of \$500,000 for creation of **Kinship Caregivers Support Program (KCSP)** for relatives not involved with the child welfare system to provide financial assistance for items like clothing, food, school activities, and transportation.

The two pilot **Kinship Navigator Projects**, sponsored by Casey Family Programs for 18 months, undergo an extensive project evaluation. A replication and evaluation manual is developed by Tri-West Group.

Voices of Children-Annual Kinship Care Children's Contest is designed for children ages 5-19 to express in drawing or words how living with a relative(s) has made a positive difference in their life.

The **Kinship Care Solutions Project** begins as a model kinship legal program through the Seattle/King County Bar Association screening cases for referrals to volunteer attorneys to represent the kinship caregivers in non-parental custody cases.



● House Bill 3139 **Kinship Caregivers' Consent for Mental Health Care of Minors** clarifies kinship caregivers are able to consent to mental health care of children in their care in the same way they are able to consent to health care.

Legislature doubles funding for the **Kinship Caregivers Support Program** to \$1,000,000 per year.

Washington State Kinship Care website goes on-line and provides easy access to resource and service information and on-line applications.

Statewide kinship care video conference, *Helping Children-Supporting Kinship Families Through Collaboration*, is held and televised to 12 sites. Sponsored by DSHS, Casey Family Programs and Washington State University - Extension Services, the conference provides important cross-training for staff working with children and relatives throughout the public and private service system.

2006

2007



● Legislature increases funding for the **Kinship Navigator Program** by \$400,000 per year adding 4 new regions plus supplemental funds to the original two sites.

Available Print and Media Resources

Relatives as Parents: A Resource Guide for Relatives Raising Children fourth edition (DSHS 22-996). This guide provides numerous community, state, and federal resources to help relatives raising children.

A Guide to Child Support Services for Relative Caregivers (DSHS 22-1143) describes what services the DSHS Division of Child Support (DCS) can provide.

Relatives Guide to Child Welfare Services (DSHS 22-492x) is specifically for relative caregivers involved with the child welfare system. Available in English, Cambodian, Chinese, Hmong, Laotian, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

Did You Know About The Following Services and Supports For Grandparents And Relatives Raising Children In WA State? (DSHS 22-1120). This 4-page pamphlet lists a variety of programs that offer benefits and services to relative caregivers and contact information.

Consent to Health Care for the Child in Your Care: A Caregivers' Guide (DSHS 22-1119). This brochure explains a relative's rights and responsibilities under the law.

Video: Legal Options for Grandparents and Relatives Raising Children in Washington State, showcases Rebecca Morrow, former Kinship Legal Fellow with Columbia Legal Services in Seattle explaining the various legal options including third party custody, guardianship, and adoption.

Video: Mediation for Kinship Caregivers: An Alternative to the Courtroom, developed by the State Relatives as Parents Program Coalition in partnership with the Dispute Resolution Centers of Washington State educates viewers how mediation works to resolve family conflicts.



Visit Washington State's Kinship Website

www1.dshs.wa.gov/kinshipcare/