

# Grandparents, relatives and others: Kinship Care

## What you should know

A resource for you and the child in your care



The child in your care may have arrived unexpectedly, and you may be wondering about what programs can help your family. As a kinship caregiver, your rights and authority to make decisions are linked to the type of caregiving arrangement you have.

### I'm a relative or family friend caring for a child. Where do I start?

If you are a grandparent, other relative, or family friend raising children you are a **kinship caregiver**. You don't have to do this alone. Kinship Navigators are here to assist you in your new role. For those areas not served by Kinship Navigators your local Area Agency on Aging may be able to support you. The Navigators can provide services and referrals.

To find support:

- Kinship Navigators, which serve 30 counties and 7 tribes [dshs.wa.gov/altsa/home-and-community-services-kinship-care/kinship-care](https://dshs.wa.gov/altsa/home-and-community-services-kinship-care/kinship-care)
- To locate your Area Agency on Aging visit [dshs.wa.gov/altsa/home-and-community-services-kinship-care/kinship-care](https://dshs.wa.gov/altsa/home-and-community-services-kinship-care/kinship-care)
- Local tribal authorities



Scan the QR code by using the camera app on your smartphone to see a list of all Kinship Navigator offices, including KN Tribal Programs, or call 1-800-422-3263, or 360-725-3543, or email [kinshipcare@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:kinshipcare@dshs.wa.gov)

### I'm overwhelmed. I have so many questions. I don't know where to start.

Your **Kinship Navigator** can answer your questions. Besides connecting you with services that will meet your family's needs, the Kinship Navigator program may sponsor classes and support groups. For more information see the "Kinship Navigators Can Help" Information page.



### How can I get health care for the child in my care?

If you are a relative or family friend caring for a child, and you do not have legal custody or guardianship, there are still ways for you to make decisions about health care and education. As a caregiver, you may consent to health care for a minor child if you are an adult and you meet certain conditions. Find the authorization form at [dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/ALtsA/hcs/documents/22-1119.pdf](https://dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/ALtsA/hcs/documents/22-1119.pdf)

For a listing of health care and insurance resources, see the "**Health Care Resources**" information page.



## Where can I go for counseling for family members or myself?

The situations that lead children to enter kinship care are difficult. If you need help finding counseling resources for yourself or for the child in your care, Kinship Navigators can help. And where you can get information, guidance, and share with other kinship caregivers. See the listings on the **“Behavioral and Mental Health Resources”** information sheet.



## Is there any way for me to get financial support, clothing, furniture, or other supplies for the child in my care?

There are several resources to help you meet the needs of the child in your care, which may include financial support, food, clothing, and furniture. You can apply for Child-Only TANF grants for the child in your care, regardless of your income. Kinship Navigators’ support program may be able to help you with one-time purchases of needed items. For more information see the **“Meeting Basic Needs”** information sheet.



## How can I get the child in my care enrolled in school?

Kinship Navigators work with local schools to help children in kinship care remain engaged in school. In addition, there are many resources for finding preschool programs, day care, or special education services. See the **“Education Resources”** information sheet for a full listing of services.



## I am a tribal member in Washington state. How does that affect my family and my role as caregiver?

There is a long and proud tradition of kinship care in Native cultures. The federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) requires collaboration between state and tribal authorities when a child is removed from their home by DCYF. It is impossible in the scope of this brief resource list to review all of the culturally appropriate resources available in each community. Contact your tribe or the child’s tribe or visit <https://www.grandfamilies.org/Portals/0/Documents/AIAN-Toolkit-WEB.pdf> for more information. In addition, see the **“Education Resources”** and **“Health Care Resources”** information sheets for a listing of services.

To get in touch with a Navigator, call 1-800-422-3263 (press 8), or 360-584-2450, or email [kinshipcare@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:kinshipcare@dshs.wa.gov)