

# Child-Only Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

Economic Services Administration · Community Services Division

## Program Description

In some situations, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families cash assistance is provided solely for children in a household (child-only TANF). This happens when children are living in one of two situations: with non-parental caregivers or with parents who are not eligible for TANF. No work-participation requirements or associated supports are a part of child-only TANF households.

## Non-parental child-only TANF

In these households, adults are caring for a minor child who is not their own; they do not have a financial responsibility to provide for that child. These households include:

- **Kinship families**, who are providing care for a minor relative<sup>1</sup> and either do not request or are not income-eligible to receive a TANF grant for themselves.
  - The grant is for the child(ren) only, and since the relative is not financially responsible for the child, we do not count the relatives' income.
  - The amount of time kinship families spend on child-only TANF does not count against the 60-month federal time limit.
  - These households make up about 51% of all child-only TANF cases.
- **Legal guardian(s) and in loco parentis caregivers**, who are not related to the child in their care and, as above, do not request or are not income-eligible for a TANF grant for themselves.
  - The grant is for the child(ren) only, and since the caregiver is not financially responsible for the child, we do not count the caregiver's income.
  - The department completes a background check for non-relative caregivers who do not have legal guardianship.
  - The amount of time kinship families spend on child-only TANF does not count against the 60-month federal time limit.
  - These households make up about 10% of all child-only TANF cases.

## Parental child-only TANF

In these households, the child lives in the home with their legal parent(s), but the parent(s) are not eligible for a TANF grant for themselves. These households include:

- **Parents receiving SSI**, who are not eligible for TANF and are not counted as a part of the TANF assistance unit. If the parent(s) are receiving SSI, the family receives a child-only grant.
  - Since the parent(s) are not counted as part of the assistance unit, their income is not budgeted against the TANF grant.

(Continued on next page.)

<sup>1</sup>See [WAC 388-454-0010](http://WAC 388-454-0010) for the applicable definition of relative.

### More information:

Alexis Marx, Chief, Office of Programs and Policy

Phone: 360.819.0675

Email: [Alexis.Marx@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:Alexis.Marx@dshs.wa.gov)



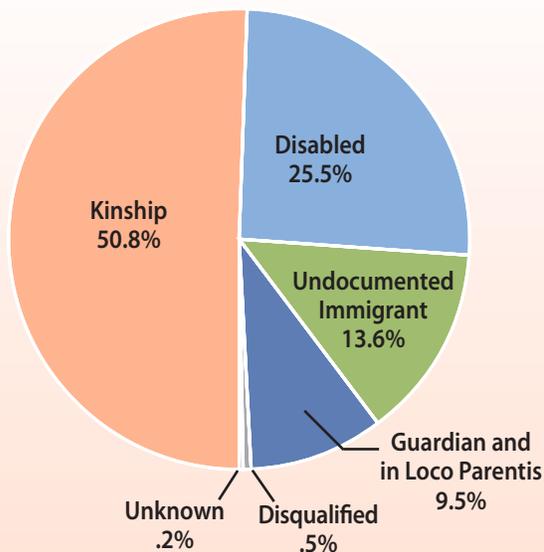
Transforming lives

9/2022

- The department counts the months towards the 60-month federal time limit; however, parents on SSI qualify for a time limit extension as a disabled adult.
- These households make up about 26% of all child-only TANF cases.
- **Undocumented immigrant parents**, who are not eligible for a TANF grant for themselves due to their citizenship status but they can receive a child-only TANF grant for their qualified children.
  - Since the parent(s) are financially responsible to provide for their child, a portion of any parental income is counted against the TANF grant.
  - Though not federally required, under current state law the department counts months against the 60-month time limit and the parent must meet a time limit extension category in order to continue receiving cash assistance beyond 60 months. If they do not qualify, the child-only TANF grant ends.
  - These households make up about 14% of all child-only TANF cases.

## Child-Only TANF Cases – June 2021 Snapshot

### Child-Only TANF Cases by Major Caretaker Groups



**Data Source:**

EMAPS, June 2021 Snapshot

**Notes:**

1. Child-only households comprised 39.0% of the total TANF/SFA caseload in SFY 2021. (Source: *ESA 2021 Briefing Book*, TANF/WorkFirst Chapter).
2. **Disqualified:** In rare cases (less than 1% of the caseload), parents may be disqualified for TANF for a period of time if they do not meet Social Security number requirements, have been convicted of unlawful practices in obtaining public assistance, or are fleeing from the law or breaking parole for a crime considered a felony.
3. **Unknown:** Caretaker is defined using the child's relationship to the head-of-household member. "Unknown" cases are those in which the head of the household's status is unknown.

Child-Only TANF Cases	Parent in Household	Subject to 60-month time limit	Adult's income used in grant calculation	If financially eligible, can opt into TANF grant
Kinship				X
Legal guardians and in loco parentis caregivers				X
SSI parent	X	X (Qualifies for extension due to disability)		
Undocumented parent	X	X	X	
Disqualified parent	X	X	X	