



Report to the Legislature

Washington State Kinship Oversight Committee

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Voices of Children Contest Raised by Grandparents and Other Relatives

The Kinship Oversight Committee collaborated with public and private partners in sponsoring the fourth annual, 2007 Washington State Kinship Care Children's Poetry and Essay contest. This writing contest for children, ages five through nineteen, honors the relatives the children were currently living with or had lived with for at least one year. The goal was to recognize the dedication of the more than 35,000 grandparents and other relatives who are raising children in Washington State.

This year there were eight grand winners who received a \$100 check from Twinstar Credit Union and were invited with their families to meet with the Governor for a recognition event in her office. Fifty plus entries submitted are published in the annual *Voices of Children—Raised by Grandparents and Other Relatives* publication which is distributed to the participating children and their families, advocates, DSHS staff, kinship conference attendees along with other interested parties. The publication is also linked to the DSHS Kinship Care web page. This year, a new emphasis on the art contest entries lead to the development of posters which can be seen in DSHS offices.

The Kinship Oversight Committee remains committed to this recognition event and are making plans for the 2008 Kinship Care Children's *Voices of Children* contest.

Two out of the several winners chosen for this years contest are featured on pages 5 and 6 of this document. The third poem is by an adult who wrote about her experience as a child with her own grandmother.

Poem I

Voices of Children Contest winner Shyan age 9

Living with my grandma and grandpa makes me feel safe and loved. When I lived with my mom and dad, I was scared a lot. I had a lot of bad dreams. I was very hungry a lot. Now I am not. When I first lived with my grandparents I would hide food under my bed. I would not go anywhere without my sister and my grandfather was very nice and told me as long as I was with them I will never go hungry and nobody will ever hurt me. I have been here for 5 years and no one has hurt me and I eat very good and I can go places without my sister and on my own. I thank my grandparents for taking (taking) care of me and letting me stay with them.
Thank you

Poem II

Voices of Children Contest winner Taylor age 11

My father is in prison. When I was two months old, he went to jail. Then, my grandparents walked into my life and took me in. Ever since then, my life has been spectacular. I live in the best home that any child could ever ask for. I have many friends and do many fun and exciting things with my grandpaents. I am disciplined fairly and love my lifestyle. If it weren't for my grandparents, I would be a very unhappy child. I probably wouldn't even be living with my mom, because at the time, my mom couldn't even afford to support her own life. I would be a foster child living with strangers. This is how my grandparents changed my life from living in a drawer, (literally) to becoming a grateful, happy child.

Poem III

Dear Sweet Grandmother may I call you Mom?

You loved me all of your life
You made the sacrifice a *real* mother would
A *real* mother is not one who is present when life begins
A *real* mother is one who is present when life is lived
You loved me all of your life

Some may think you get one chance
You're done when you child is grown
What if your child does not care for their own?

You have taken your turn
It's your time for fun
To spoil them and send them home

I was a child from one of your own
You were a grandmother given a second chance
We healed in each other the ache that loss had carved

Some did not understand
Some decided it was wrong
Some said leave her where she belongs

Could I call you mom? Did I belong?
The unspoken rules I followed without a sound
I called you mom when others were not around

As a child fear gripped my heart
Would you leave me as she had?
To God I pleaded; please do not take another

I am a mother now
I know you loved me as one would
Because of you I can love, as a mother should

You loved me all of your life
You made the sacrifice a *real* mother would
A *real* mother is not one who is present when life begins
A *real* mother is one who is present when life is lived
You loved me all of your life

Kristen, age 31

**Washington State Kinship Care Oversight Committee
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Executive Summary

In the November 2002 Kinship Care Report to the legislature, the Kinship Care Workgroup proposed sixteen high priority recommendations for improving kinship care in Washington State. In response to that report, in 2003 the legislature enacted SHB 1233, which required the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to create a Kinship Care Oversight Committee. In 2005, the legislature passed SHB 1280, which continued the Committee through 2010.

Kinship Care Oversight Committee

The Kinship Care Oversight Committee was established to provide guidance in identifying, supporting and strengthening kinship care families. Membership includes kinship caregivers, child advocates, legislative staff, representatives of state agencies, non-profit service providers, tribes, and the legal community.

Kinship Navigator

In 2003, SHB 1233 mandated that DSHS collaborate with the Kinship Oversight Committee and public and private partners to develop a Kinship Navigator pilot project. The identified goals were for the Kinship Navigator to provide community-based support, facilitate access to services, and provide information and referral to kinship families before situations reach a crisis. Two pilot sites were established in collaboration with the Oversight Committee and one of its community partners, Casey Family Programs, which also provided the pilot project funding as well as evaluation. The pilot sites were located in the Seattle and Yakima Casey Family Programs Field Offices. The Kinship Navigator project sites were established in July 2004 and continued until December 2005 under Casey Family Programs funding.

Although the Casey Family Programs Kinship Navigator pilot positions ended in December 2005, the Kinship Navigator program in Yakima and Seattle continued through a 2005 budget proviso. Two other community agencies; Catholic Family, Child Services, and Senior Services of Seattle-King County were selected by the local Area Agencies on Aging to implement the program. The Kinship Navigator Program is currently administered through the DSHS Aging and Disability Services Administration. The 2007 legislature appropriated additional funding for four new Kinship Navigator Program sites, as well as increased funds to bring the Yakima and Seattle positions to full-time. A standard request for proposal process was administered through the 13 Area Agencies on Aging in June 2007 to select a service provider for each site.

Currently six Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) (three in Eastern WA and three in Western Washington) contract with local service providers to provide Kinship Navigator services in 24 counties throughout the state.

Public Education and Awareness

Members of the Kinship Oversight Committee continue to be instrumental in planning and organizing various recognition events, conferences, and other efforts highlighting the important role of kinship care providers. Some of the events include:

- Washington State Kinship Care Children’s Poetry, Drawing and Essay Contest - *Voices of Children-Raised by Grandparents and Other Relatives*;
- Regional Kinship Care conferences;
- The Foster Parent and Caregiver Annual Conference;
- Parenting the Second Time Around Train the Trainer workshops;
- Two proclamations by the Governor honoring relatives raising children; and
- Presentations at national and state conferences.

In 2007, the DSHS *Kinship Care in Washington State* web page, located at <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/kinshipcare/> was improved with additional resources, links, and an interactive map system (to be completed by 12/15/2007). This “one stop shop” site provides relatives involved with the formal child welfare system and those who are not, with information on financial aid, child care, health care, food assistance, foster care, support groups and kinship navigator services, along with online applications and related books and websites.

Collaboration to Support Kinship Care Families

New County Kinship Care Collaborations; *Cowlitz/Wahkiakum County Kinship Care Coalition* is a new coalition of local agencies that was formed in the last year and designed to: provide a forum for information sharing and networking, identify gaps in kinship care services, advocate for new services and resources, maintain a “support group connection” for families, and promote acceptance for Kinship Caregivers among the general public.

In addition to the Cowlitz/Wahkiakum County Kinship Care Coalition, three previously formed coalitions, the King County Kinship Collaboration, Yakima County Kindred Spirits Coalition, and the Clark County Kinship Care Coalition, continue to expand. The Kinship Oversight Committee is committed to working with these coalitions to share information, resources, and events. Over the coming year, the Kinship Oversight Committee will travel to different parts of the state to hold its quarterly meetings, hosted by various county kinship coalitions.

Recommendations for 2008

Kinship Care Oversight Committee's Legislative Subcommittee Proposed Legislative Priorities – 2008

Kinship caregivers on a fixed or limited income need many resources and services to raise children. The proposed legislative priorities listed below were identified by the Legislative Subcommittee of the Kinship Oversight Committee.

- *Respite Care Services* – Fund Mockingbird Family Model sites for kinship caregivers. The Mockingbird Family Model (MFM) has demonstrated how support services and resources can be effectively provided to a group of foster/kinship care providers to sustain their efforts and to overcome their isolation. The MFM support network contributes to improved outcomes for children by reducing disrupted placements and providing a micro-community of caring adults who form positive relationships with the children.
- *Fund Kinship Support Groups* – Currently there are approximately forty Kinship Care support groups in the state of Washington. Nevertheless, nearly one-half of the state's counties are without a single support group. Funding for support groups is needed to train facilitators and provide modest financial support for related group meeting costs: speakers, meeting space, and printed materials, etc.
- *Information and Assistance* – Fund evaluation of the Kinship Navigator Program and training for Kinship Navigators.
- *Support Services* – Fund an attorney (part time or full time) to be available to the Navigators, support group leaders, and others, to provide legal guidance for kinship caregivers. This attorney would also assist in the development of a statewide pool of pro bono attorneys to be available to caregivers in their local areas.
- *Financial Assistance* – Current rules state that if the birth parent moves into the home of the relative who is caring for the children of the birth parent the birth parent will then be eligible for the grant whether or not they can resume parenting duties. The relative caring for the children will be discontinued from the grant. ESA supports administrative rule change for situations where the parent moves back into the household but is unable to resume parenting duties.

Next Steps Planned by Legislative Subcommittee:

1. Work in conjunction with the Mental Health Transformation Project and the implementation of the children's mental health bill (2SHB 1088) to address mental health needs of children who don't currently meet the access to care standards.
2. Work in conjunction with other stakeholders to promote a legislative anti-poverty agenda, possibly including a TANF grant increase.
3. Begin developing a strategy around subsidized guardianship in preparation for the 2009 legislative session.
4. Continue to monitor federal legislation that could impact kinship care families in Washington State.

Background Information

In 2003, the legislature passed SHB 1233 relating to improving services for kinship caregivers. The bill required the department to establish an Oversight Committee to “monitor, guide and report on kinship care recommendations and implementation activities (of the Kinship Navigator pilots) and report to the legislature and governor on the status of kinship care issues.”

In 2005, the legislature passed SHB 1280, which continued the existing oversight committee until 2010 and added language that the Committee is “charged with providing consultation on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the 2002 kinship care report”. Appendix A provides a status update on the 2002 recommendations.

The bill included the following requirements:

Section 1

- (1) “Within existing resources, the department shall establish an oversight committee to monitor, guide and report on kinship care recommendations and implementation activities and the Committee shall:
 - a) Draft a kinship care definition that is restricted to persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption; including marriages that have been dissolved, or for a minor defined as an “Indian child” under the federal Indian child welfare act (25 U.S.C. Sec 1901 et seq.), the definition of “extended family member” under the federal Indian child welfare act, and a set of principles....
 - b) Monitor and provide consultation on the implementation of recommendations contained in the 2002 kinship care report, including but not limited to the recommendations relating to legal and respite care services and resources;
 - c) Partner with nonprofit organizations and private sector businesses to guide a public education awareness campaign; and
 - d) Assist with developing future recommendation on kinship care issues.
- (2) The department shall consult with the oversight committee on its efforts to better collaborate and coordinate services to benefit kinship care families.
- (3) The Kinship Oversight Committee must consist of a minimum of thirty percent kinship caregivers, who shall present a diversity of kinship families. Statewide representation with geographic, ethnic, and gender diversity is required. Other members shall include representatives of the private nonprofit and business sectors, child advocates, representatives of Washington state Indian tribes as defined under the federal Indian welfare act (25 U.S.C. Sec. 1901 et seq.), and

representatives of the legal or judicial field. Birth parents, foster parents and others who have an interest in these issues may also be included.

- (4) To the extent funding is available the department may reimburse non-departmental members of the oversight committee for costs incurred in participating in the meetings of the oversight committee.
- (5) The Kinship Oversight Committee shall update the legislature and governor annually on committee activities.”

Kinship Care Families in Washington State

Kinship care families are an invaluable resource to the child welfare system and to the state as a whole. These families care for children when parents are unable to due to a variety of circumstances, including abuse and neglect, economic conditions, illness, substance abuse, incarceration, death or other family situations.

The U.S. Census estimates eighty-six thousand children in Washington State live in households that include relatives, with or without immediate family (parents or siblings) present. The June 2002 Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) report on “Kinship Care in Washington State”, estimates that of those 86,000 children, 35,761 live in households where grandparents and other relatives are the primary caregivers and neither parent is present.

Washington State parallels the national trend in the growth in percentage of children in the primary care of grandparents and other relatives. The majority of these arrangements do not involve the state’s child welfare system (there are eight informal kinship care arrangements for every formal arrangement). The formal kinship care families involved with the child welfare system have historically been the primary concern of state policy makers. Yet formal and informal caregivers face significant and similar challenges in successfully caring for their related children.

Many kinship care families in Washington State choose not to receive benefits or services from the state. Those who do are likely involved with the Children’s Administration (CA), Economic Services Administration (ESA) or with Aging and Disability Services Administration (ADSA).

Kinship Care Oversight Committee Activities

The Committee and its sub-committees which include public education and awareness, and legislative continue to address the four areas identified in the 2002 Kinship Care report: financial needs, service delivery and practice, legal issues, and social services. The Oversight committee continues to be involved in the following activities:

- Implementation and expansion of the Kinship Navigator program;
- Identifying financial resources for kinship care families;
- Planning, organizing and promoting public education and awareness regarding kinship care issues;
- Exploring legal issues and options for relative caregivers;
- Exploring respite care service options and models; and
- Expanding and diversifying its membership.

Expansion of the Kinship Navigator Program

The 2007 legislature appropriated additional funding of \$400,000 for the creation of four new Kinship Navigator Program sites, as well as increased funds to allow for full-time positions in both the Yakima and Seattle-King County regions. The Kinship Navigator Program is administered through the Aging and Disability Services Administration which contracts with local Area Agencies on Aging. In June 2007, a request for proposal was distributed to the 13 Area Agencies on Aging. Four of the seven submitted proposals were selected for funding. There are six Kinship Navigator program sites, three of which serve Eastern Washington and three of which serve Western Washington.

The new program sites are:

Lewis, Mason and Thurston Counties Family Education and Support Services (Lewis-Mason and Thurston Area Agency on Aging). A full-time Kinship Navigator, along with a part-time Spanish speaking Kinship Navigator, are now providing services. In addition, a newsletter, website, support groups, and financial assistance available through the Kinship Caregivers Support Program continue to be provided by this community agency.

Pierce County Child and Family Guidance Center (Pierce County Aging and Long Term Care AAA). A Kinship Navigator is providing services while rotating between 11 Family Support Centers. A monthly newsletter, counseling, camp opportunities for youngsters, support groups, and the Kinship Caregivers Support Program, continue to be provided.

Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Lincoln and Okanogan (Aging and Adult Care of Central WA). A full-time Kinship Navigator, is dividing her time between the different offices in this rural region of 17,000 square miles. In addition, staff at the local Senior Information and Assistance offices will receive training to better respond to the questions and concerns received by relatives raising children.

Elder Services - Spokane Mental Health in Spokane and Whitman Counties and Rural Resources in Ferry, Pend Oreille and Stevens County: (Aging and Long

Term Care of Eastern WA). There is one full-time and one part-time staff dedicated to this region. The gatekeeper model which alerts meter readers, postal workers, and others to pass along information to persons in need will be involved with this program, along with special tribal outreach efforts.

DSHS Kinship Care Website

The DSHS Kinship Care Website, <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/kinshipcare/>, was established in spring 2006 through the efforts of ADSA, ESA, and CA, with feedback from the Kinship Care Oversight Committee. The website provides important information for caregivers. Both caregivers and professionals can access information on financial assistance, health care, drug/alcohol and mental health services, child care, foster care, support programs, and information on caring for children with disabilities. Information is continuously updated and a new feature to become available by the end of 2007 is an interactive map where users can more easily identify resources such as support groups, kinship navigators, and the Kinship Caregivers Support Program (emergent funding), along with locations of Community Services Offices. Features also include being able to link to online applications for services.

Substitute House Bill 1377 Expands Definitions of “Relative” “Suitable Person”

In 2007, new legislation expanded the definition of “relative of specified degree” to include relatives of half-siblings and second cousins. The bill also allows for placement of a child with suitable person(s) who are known to the child and/or the family, in a dependency hearing. This allows siblings to be placed with one child’s grandparent or other relative without requiring foster home licensure.

Children who must be removed from the homes of their parents due to abuse or neglect often benefit greatly from maintaining ongoing relationships with their extended families of origin. When it is safe and in the best interest of the child, the Children’s Administration seeks out extended family members as potential placement options for children who cannot go home temporarily, or who require new homes permanently. The administration has significantly increased the percent of children placed with extended family members from 29.5 percent at the end of Fiscal Year 1998 to 38.4 percent at the end of Fiscal Year 2006.

The Twenty-Fifth Annual 2007 Foster Parent and Relative Caregiver Conference

More than 700 people assembled at Ocean Shores September 23-25 for the twenty-fifth annual Foster Parents and Caregivers Conference, “For All These Are Our Children.” Workshops specifically for kinship caregivers were held throughout the 2 ½-day event. The 2007 conference received positive feedback including requests for more kinship-specific workshops at the 2008 conference.

Kinship Oversight Committee Members participated in the Conference by serving on the planning committee, presenting and attending workshops, and in other capacities. Over 100 relative caregivers attended this year's conference and many received scholarships.

Many public and private member organizations provided financial support: The American Red Cross, Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Thurston County, Casey Family Programs, Children's Administration, College Success Foundation, Community Youth Services, Department of Early Learning, Division of Employment and Assistance Programs/ESA, Family Education and Support Services, Families Like Ours, Mockingbird Society, Northwest Media, Passion to Action, Quinault Family Services, Tacoma Youth for Christ, Washington Association of Family Based Treatment Services (WAFTS), and others.

Federal Legislation Impacting Relative Caregivers

The Kinship Caregiver Support Act – This pending legislation would make grants for kinship navigator programs to state agencies, metropolitan agencies, or tribal organizations with experience in addressing the needs of kinship caregivers and children.

The Act would amend part E (Federal Payments for Foster Care and Adoption Assistance) of Title IV of the Social Security Act to authorize all states to provide kinship guardianship assistance payments to grandparents and other relatives who have assumed legal guardianship of children for whom they have cared as foster parents and have committed to care for on a permanent basis.

The Act would require states to: (1) notify all adult grandparents and other adult relatives (with exceptions due to family or domestic violence) when a child is removed from custody of a parent or parents; and (2) explain the options the relative has to participate in the child's care and placement.

The Act would allow state agencies to establish separate standards for foster family homes in which a foster parent is a relative of the foster child.

The Lifespan Respite Care Act of 2006 (HR 3248) – This Act which is awaiting an appropriation would authorize competitive grants to Aging and Disability Resource Centers in collaboration with a public or private non-profit state respite coalition or organization to make quality respite available and accessible to family caregivers regardless of age or disability. The law would allow grantees to identify, coordinate, and build on federal, state and local respite resources and funding streams, and would help support, extend, and streamline planned and emergency respite, provider recruitment and training, and caregiver training. Adults who are raising children with special needs are a target population for this legislation.

Exploring Legal Issues and Options for Relative Caregivers

The Committee will continue its advocacy for expanding the legal services projects, currently available in King County and beginning in other counties, into other areas of the state. Increasing legal services information available on the internet and printed and videotape resources remain a priority. The Committee will continue to explore funding options for legal services.

In Thurston County, an innovative strategy for providing more legal information is through the development of a self-help legal education kiosk to be located at the Thurston County Courthouse, along with monthly workshops to assist relatives with filling out legal paperwork.

The Clark County Volunteer Lawyers Program is beginning a two part program for kinship caregivers. The first is a monthly seminar held at the YWCA to teach relatives how to obtain legal custody, secure medical care/medical insurance, and provide other needed information. Secondly, low-income kinship caregivers will be able to attend self-help classes where a local attorney will provide help with securing formal or informal custody.

Conclusion

One of the most recent stunning changes in the child welfare system has been the major growth in the number of children in state custody who are living with their relatives. This shift has been national in scope. Some factors contributing to this increase are:

- Increased reporting of abuse and neglect;
- A change in drug usage related to the spread of crack cocaine addiction and other drugs;
- Increased levels of poverty;
- More children affected by HIV/AIDS;
- More parents struggling with physical and mental health problems;
- Family violence and parental incarceration; and
- Decline in the availability of traditional foster homes.

The Child welfare system explains the rapid growth in foster care by the above attributing factors. Kinship care has become the solution for many children who become known to the child welfare system.

Growth

- It's estimated that approximately 200,000 children, about one-third of all children in foster care, are living with relatives (US Dept. of Health and Human Services: Report to the Congress on Kinship Foster Care. June 2000).
- According to 2000 U.S. Census more than 2 million grandparents are raising 4.5 million children and other relatives are raising an additional 1.5 million children.
- In the state of Washington there are approximately 86,691 children living in households headed by a grandparent or other relative and the numbers continue to rise.

What is important to note are the demographics of the relatives caring for children:

- 71% are under the age of 60 and 13% live in poverty.
- In Washington, there are a minimum of 35,341 grandparents who are the primary caregivers to their grandchildren (without either parent present).

The increase in grandparents and other relatives raising their families' children only continues to grow both within and outside the child welfare system. More services such as respite care, support groups, Kinship Navigators, and legal representation are needed to support the unmet needs of kinship care families in Washington State (*Child Welfare League of America: Kinship Care: Fact Sheet October 2005*).

Attachment 1

2002 Kinship Care Report Recommendations and 2007 Status Report

High Priority/Short-Term Recommendations	Status
Provide full TANF payment for second child in kinship family	TANF budget constraints preclude pursuit of this goal.
Strengthen Relative Search Process	Requested relative search positions were not included in the budget. CA policy has been revised. Ongoing exploration of search engines/options continues. Policy is being incorporated into the kinship/relative care framework. DSHS was directed to develop protocols around relative search which have been developed. HB 1377, passed in 2007, expanded the definition of “relative”, allowing placement with unlicensed second cousins and relatives of half-siblings and with unrelated and unlicensed adults with whom the child has a significant relationship.
Create kinship navigator positions	Four new project sites were funded by the 2007 Legislature to increase the total number of sites to six (three on the eastside and three on the west side of the state). A total of 24 counties have some access to Kinship Navigator services.
Implement aggressive public education and awareness campaign on kinship care issues	The annual “Voices of Children Raised by Grandparents and Other Relatives” contest and the development of the DSHS Kinship Care website, along with distribution of printed resources and regional conferences are part of this strategy.
Improve the delivery of TANF benefits to relative caregivers	A DSHS kinship website was created in Spring 2006 and continued to be upgraded in 2007. A statewide video training for state agency and private sector staff working with kinship caregivers took place in June 2006, and DVDs continue to be available at no charge.
Create a educational/medical consent waiver	State medical and mental health consent bills were passed in 2005 and 2006, respectively. The Kinship Oversight Committee is reviewing the need for creating an educational consent wavier.
Establish a legal services pilot project	The King County Bar Association’s Kinship Care Solutions project, which was created by non-state funding, continues to be an effective model for other communities to replicate. Other new models are beginning in other counties. A need for an attorney who can provide information and help develop ongoing services is requested for 2008.
Create a statewide respite care inventory	The Respite and Crisis Care Coalition of Washington (RCCCWA) has created a King County respite inventory

	and resource guide. It has also completed a statewide survey of respite needs and held regional meetings of interested stakeholders. A statewide respite care inventory has not been developed due to lack of funds. Members of the Kinship Oversight Committee are active participants with the RCCCWA.
Establish support services fund for relative caregivers	Support services funds are established in CA for those caregivers involved with CA. ADSA has support services funds for those caregivers not involved with CA. Each fund now stands at one million dollars annually.
Support Lifespan Respite Act and position state to receive funding	The federal Lifespan Respite Care Act (P.L. 109-442) has not yet been funded by Congress. If funded, funds would become available to states on a competitive basis to develop or enhance lifespan respite programs at the state and local levels RCCCWA is encouraging development of local lifespan respite coalitions to strengthen the state's competitive position should funding become available.
High Priority/Long-Term Recommendations	Status
Provide full TANF payment for all multiple-child kinship families	TANF budget constraints preclude pursuit of this goal.
Promote systems collaboration	The June 2006 statewide kinship care training promoted examples of collaborative efforts around the state. More effort will be focused in this area in 2008.
Provide GAL/CASA services	No formal action steps have been developed to address this issue.
Provide respite care services for relative caregivers	RCCCWA continues to work on this issue. The Oversight Committee is recommending state funding of the "Mockingbird Family Model" for respite care on a pilot basis. Limited federal funding for direct services may become available if the Lifespan Respite Care Act is funded.
Medium Priority/Short-term Recommendations	Status
Increase oversight and accountability for non-parent caregivers on TANF	No formal action steps have been developed to address this issue.
Incorporate kinship families in Special Children Health Care Needs pilot	No formal action steps have been developed to address this issue.
Fund legal information packet and website	ADSA provided funding for the 4 th edition of the NW Women's Law Center Legal Guide for Relatives Raising

	Children along with the duplication of a video for relatives on legal options in WA State. The NWJP has an extensive legal website at www.washingtonlawhelp.org that includes kinship related legal information and documents.
Medium Priority/Short-term Recommendations	Status
Educate judges and attorneys about kinship care issues	No formal action steps have been developed to address this issue.
Support statewide Unified Family Court	No formal action steps have been developed to address this issue.
Federal Recommendation	Status
Amend National Family Caregiver Support Program/Older Americans Act	In 2006, as part of the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, the age at which relatives raising children are able to receive OAA services was lowered from 60 to 55 years. A limit of ten percent of the NFSCP can provide services to relatives raising children.