

Report to the Legislature

Washington State Kinship Care Oversight Committee

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Interspersed throughout this report are the winning poems and essays from the “2012 Voices of Children” event, writings by children who are living the experience of being raised by kinship caregivers.

Washington State Kinship Care Oversight Committee
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Executive Summary

The Kinship Care Oversight Committee (Oversight Committee) was formed in 2003 to provide guidance in identifying, supporting and strengthening kinship care families. Kinship care includes relatives caring for children on a dependency order within the child welfare system as well as relatives caring for children not formally involved with the public child welfare system. Since that time, the Oversight Committee has worked hard to improve life for these families. Achievements include:

- Divisions within DSHS are collaborating more and are better able to respond to the needs of kinship caregivers.
- Building close relationships with Area Agencies on Aging that are very helpful in connecting kinship care giving families with available resources.
- Providing DSHS with a direct line to hear from the caregivers themselves.
- Attention is brought through the Kinship Care Oversight Committee on issues of statewide importance.
- A diverse group of stakeholders are planning together and making themselves heard on kinship care issues, both on the local level and in the Oversight Committee.
- Legislators have a better understanding of caregiver issues and have passed budget and policy items that have positively impacted caregivers.
- Relationship building with the foster parent community has occurred as a way of working together for the common goal of better supporting caregivers of children in out of home care.

Kinship caregivers, most often grandparents, often struggle with the challenges of parenting a second family. The Kinship Care Oversight Committee also works to identify and resolve issues in the work of kinship care and works closely with the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to identify and develop parenting, financial, and legal resources. The work of the Oversight Committee supports networking, local training, and information sharing among the 13 AAAs and families they serve. With the support of the Oversight Committee and the local AAAs, the local county/various local regional (e.g., Yakima, King, Lewis-Mason-Thurston) kinship collaborations are very active and successful in their work with families. The Children's Administration, Economic Services Administration and Aging and Disability Services Administration are the three public agencies that participate in the Oversight Committee.

The Kinship Navigators directed by eight Area Agencies on Aging are on the frontlines working one-on-one with kinship care families. The Navigators are the critical link to needed resources for families in need. The Oversight Committee hopes that sufficient funding will eventually be available to staff all 13 AAAs with Navigators.

Kinship Care Oversight Committee 2013 Recommendations

The Kinship Care Oversight Committee comprised of kinship caregivers, child advocates, legislative staff, state agency representatives, non-profit services providers, tribes and legal community representatives made the following recommendations for 2013:

- Maintain the Kinship Caregiver Oversight Committee through legislative action.
- Restore all or some of the funding eliminated through TANF means testing.
- Maintain current funding for Kinship Navigators, expanding it if dollars allow. Build on relationships established through application for the federal grant to expand the Kinship Navigator program.
- Maintain the Aging and Disability Services Administration's (ADSA) Kinship Caregiver Support Program, Children's Administration's (CA) Relative Support Funds, and other services for kinship caregivers. Work on making the Relative Support Funds as accessible as possible to relatives caring for state-dependent children.
- Work with CA to increase the number of relatives who are licensed as foster parents to care for children on dependency orders involved with the public child welfare system.
- Seek creative ways to provide kinship caregivers with much needed breaks (respite care). Work in collaboration with the Respite and Crisis Care Coalition of Washington State on the state's three-year federally funded Lifespan Respite Grant.
- Continue to build collaborations with the foster parent community, including keeping the Navigators connected with the liaisons and work with the foster parent community when possible, such as helping plan and put on the annual Caregivers Conference.
- Continue collaboration building between the Community Service Offices (CSO), Navigators and Children's Administration to connect clients effectively with services.
- Continue discussions about a feedback group for kinship providers as foster parents have with the Foster Parent Consultation Team.

Background

In the November 2002 Kinship Care Report to the legislature, the Kinship Care Workgroup proposed 16 high priority recommendations for improving kinship care in Washington State. In response to that report, the 2003 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. The 2009 Legislature continued the committee to June 30, 2011 and the 2011 Legislature extended the committee to June 30, 2013.

What Do We Know About Our Kinship Caregivers?

Many of our kinship caregivers are grandparents raising grandchildren. Here is what we know nationally about grandparents.

A report published by the Pew Research Center in September 2010 provided national information about grandparents raising grandchildren. A notable fact is that the number of grandparents raising grandchildren has risen dramatically since 2007, the first year of the Great Recession. One in ten children live with a grandparent, and of those, 41 percent are being raised primarily by that grandparent with no parent in the home.

Families headed by grandparents and other relatives who are sharing their homes with their grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and/or other related children are a major part of the kinship caregiving communities. Some families headed by grandparents are multigenerational households where a parent works long hours and wants the child close to family while he or she is at work. Grandparents stepped in to provide care when their parents could not care for the children.

Families headed by grandparents come together for different reasons – parental death, substance abuse, military deployment, incarceration, and mental illness. As a result, these families are in every area in the country, all income levels, all races, and all ethnicities. There are notable differences by race among grandparents who are primary caregivers for their grandchildren. Fifty-three percent are White which is the fastest growing caregiver population. Twenty-four percent are Black, 18 percent are Hispanic, and 3 percent are Asian.

In Washington state, according to data from the Children's Administration FamLink data base, about 3,100 state-dependent children are placed with relatives. Data from the 2010 U.S. Census shows the number of children living with relatives in Washington state is much higher. Data from the 2010 Census indicates:

- 123,390 children under age 18 live in homes where the householders are grandparents or other relatives (7.8%) of the children in the state.
- 37,371 children live in homes with grandparent householders where grandparents are responsible for them.
- 40,305 grandparents are the householders and are responsible for their grandchildren living with them.

- 66 percent of those grandparents are Caucasian; 5 percent are Black; 7 percent are Asian; 5 percent are American Indian and Alaska Native and 12 percent are Hispanic.
- 42 percent of these households do not have parents of the children living in the home.
- 65 percent are under age 60.
- 14 percent live in poverty.

Two new data sources (the 2011 Washington State Department of Health Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System and the 2012 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey) will produce kinship data to be released in 2013 that will provide a current picture of the kinship care community.

My aunt Teresa has made a positive impact on my life.

She is my guardian, my savior and in a way, my mother. I am her brother's daughter, my dad passed away in 1993, when I was 9 months old. I have been raised by my grandparents.

At age 11, I went to live with my real mom and stepdad,

This was a neglecting home environment.

My aunt saved me and placed me in her loving home at age 12. She has taught me how to love and be loved. Now at age 17, she encourages me to graduate. She helps me with school and is always close by when I need her. I love when I share my feelings, thoughts, disappointments and school work with her. She has inspired me to fulfill my college career in fashion design.

My aunt may have not been there for my first word, step, school day or first skinned knee, but she was there for eighth graduation, first day of high school, first boyfriend, the day I got my braces off, my first prom and is there for me now. God was always there for me, because he sent my aunt. If not I would be still silently crying for help if she did not open up her arms. I dedicate this story to my aunt Teresa. I love her with all my heart and will never let her go.

Kalina, Age 17

Kinship Care Oversight Committee Activities

The Kinship Care Oversight Committee and its subcommittees provide advocacy, education, and awareness to the community and legislators about the needs of kinship caregivers. The committee is focused on the areas identified in the 2002 Kinship Care Report: financial needs; service delivery and practice; legal issues; and social services.

Advocacy, Education and Awareness

Members of the Kinship Care Oversight Committee are instrumental in planning and organizing various recognition events, conferences, and other efforts highlighting the important role of kinship care providers. The Oversight Committee works to increase awareness of kinship care issues. Some of the events which honor and support our relative caregivers include:

- Washington State Kinship Care Children's Poetry, Drawing and Essay Contest, *Voices of Children-Raised by Grandparents and Other Relatives*. 2012 Marked the 9th year the Voice of Children has occurred. **(Read some of the entries included throughout this report.)**
- Regional kinship care conferences, trainings or support groups in all three DSHS regions.
- Local celebrations and recognition events honoring the contributions of kinship caregivers.
- Proclamation by the Governor honoring relatives raising children.
- Active participation in the 1st Annual Pacific Northwest Caregivers Conference at Great Wolf Lodge near Olympia in January. A Kinship Navigator was active in planning the 2012 event.

The Oversight Committee is also involved in the following activities:

- Implementation, oversight, and expansion of the Kinship Navigator program;
- Identification and development of financial resources for kinship care families;
- Exploration of legal issues and development of legal resources for relative caregivers;
- Provision of training opportunities for caregivers;
- Implementation of a subsidized relative guardianship program in the Washington state;
- Exploration and development of respite care service options and models;
- Feedback on Unified Home Study
- Expansion and diversification of its membership; and
- Local collaborations to support kinship care families.

Kinship Navigator Program

Promoting and supporting the Kinship Navigator Program across the state has been a very high priority for the Oversight Committee.

Grandparents and relatives who are raising children are often unaware of available supports. Kinship Navigators connect families with a multitude of community resources, such as health, financial, and legal services; support groups, and emergency funds. For example, Kinship Navigators help kinship caregivers locate appropriate housing to fit their expanded family size, explain how to apply for various benefits, advocate on their behalf, and help acquire beds, clothes, and food for their children.

Kinship Navigators provide a crucial link between relatives and these services. These links create more stable environments to help keep children out of the child welfare system and better support the relatives.

The Kinship Navigator Program is administered through the DSHS Aging and Disability Services Administration (ADSA) which contracts with local Area Agencies on Aging (AAA). The AAAs provide the services directly or contract out the service(s) to a local community service organization. ADSA facilitates a monthly conference call with the Kinship Navigators to provide access to information, subject experts and create networking opportunities.

The long term goal of the Kinship Navigator Program is to have Navigators available to serve caregivers in all 13 AAA service areas in the state. Counties which do not yet have Kinship Navigators include Clallam, Jefferson, Grays Harbor, Pacific, Kitsap, Snohomish, Island, San Juan and Skagit Counties. In addition, the Yakama Nation and the Colville Indian Reservation (the Tribes are Area Agencies on Aging) also are in need of Navigators.

In 2011, a new collaboration began to bring together the work of the Kinship Navigators with that of the Foster Parent Liaisons, hired through contracts between Children's Administration and private agencies. Like the Navigators, the Liaisons are located throughout the state. Both groups have similar responsibilities of sharing information, referrals and helping caregivers navigate the social service system. Liaisons work in the formal system while Navigators provide support primarily for those in the informal system, which includes caregivers who do not have an open case with the Children's Administration. Some of the Liaisons and Navigators reported they are already working together; some were glad to have contact information about others who are doing similar work. In 2012, Navigators and liaisons reported continued contact with each other in working on issues and identifying resources.

As the result of discussions between kinship and foster parent leaders, the Foster Parent Association of Washington State (FPAWS) voted to put a Kinship Navigator on its board of directors.

The Navigator was active in planning the 1st Annual Northwest Caregiver's Conference January 16-18, 2012. One of the primary events at the conference was the honoring of state staff and other community leaders who have supported foster care and foster parents. The 2012 conference featured two awards specifically given to leaders in the

kinship community. One of those awards was named after Edith Owen, a long-time kinship advocate and was presented to Hilari Hauptman, program manager for the Aging and Disability Services Administration of DSHS. The second Luminary Award was given to Shelly Willis, executive director of Family Education and Support Services. Both awards created in 2012 will be presented annually. The Kinship Navigator remains actively involved in planning of the January 2013 conference

Also through the leadership of the Kinship Navigators, specific training at the conference was directed toward issues that affect kinship providers. In years past, most training has been directed at foster parents; however, the ongoing goal of FPAWS and leaders in foster and kinship care is for the two communities of caregivers to work together more closely for the common good of the children in their care.

In 2012, discussions were also held to tie together the work of the CSOs with that of the Navigators. This is another activity designed to increase collaboration and use the increasingly limited resources to greater effectiveness. Representatives of the Children's Administration were included in those discussions to further build the collaboration.

See Attachment 2 for a complete listing of the Kinship Navigators and their sponsoring agencies.

Exploring Legal Issues and Options for Kinship Caregivers

The Oversight Committee continues its advocacy for expanding legal services, currently offered in several counties to be more available across the state. Increasing legal services information available on the Internet along with printed and DVD resources remain a priority. The Oversight Committee will continue to explore funding options for legal services.

The longest running kinship legal project in the state is the Kinship Care Solutions Project sponsored by the King County Bar Association. It continues to provide direct representation to low-income relatives and other caregivers in non-parental custody (also known as third party custody) cases through referrals to a pro bono panel of trained attorneys. The Project provides comprehensive training and ongoing mentoring to the volunteer attorneys. In Thurston County, legal information can be found through a self-help legal education kiosk (the first of its kind) located at the Thurston County Courthouse, along with monthly workshops to assist relatives with completing legal paperwork. Other court systems have expressed an interest in the kiosk model.

In Whatcom County, a free monthly Kinship Non-parental Custody Clinic began in July 2010. This service is a collaborative effort between LAW Advocates of Whatcom County and Northwest Regional Council.

The Economic Services Administration is preparing a "legal options" handout for caregivers to be distributed at CSOs. Children's Administration has a similar documented staff that Oversight Committee members use in their work with caregivers.

Collaborations to Support Kinship Care Families

Collaborations have formed throughout the state in the past decade to support foster parents in a variety of ways. These collaborations include:

- The King County Kinship Collaboration
- The Yakima Region Kindred Spirits Collaboration
- The Clark County Kinship Collaboration
- The Lewis-Mason-Thurston County Kinship Advisory Committee
- The Whatcom County Kinship Partnership Group
- The Whatcom County Family and Community Network
- The Pierce County Kinship Collaboration

The Kinship Care Oversight Committee actively works with these coalitions to share information, resources, and events. All work to establish and maintain support groups for kinship caregivers, hold establish and honoring events and time-specific events such as Caregiver Day and back-to-school events, host training and build community outreach efforts. The following are other examples of specific activities:

- King County maintains a web site www.kckinship.org
- In July 2012, Lieutenant Governor Brad Owen presided over a ceremony in conjunction with the Thurston-Lewis-Mason County Kinship Advisory Committee to honor the winners of the Voices of Children contest.
- The Kinship Navigator with the Thurston-Lewis-Mason County Kinship Advisory Committee collaborated with the local United Way and several banking institutions to develop and launch a “Bank ON” fiscal literacy program that helps caregivers to open and sustain bank accounts.
- The Pierce County Kinship Collaboration took the lead with Roslyn Albers at Hope Sparks in seeking a federal grant to expand the Navigator program.
- The Whatcom County Kinship Partnership activities included administration of the Kinship Respite Care Program offering supervised activities for children giving relative caregivers much needed respite. Another highlight was support of the Kinship Custody Clinic which offers free monthly legal clinics for those relative caregivers seeking non-parental custody of their relative children.
- The Yakima Regional KINDred Spirits, sponsored kinship social and appreciation events, trainings and support groups. They write a newsletter, one member runs a clothing bank and held an annual retreat to plan the work ahead.

Within The Department of Social and Health Services

DSHS Kinship Care Website Link

The Department of Social and Health Services provides a link and manages the Kinship Care Website, www.dshs.wa.gov/kinshipcare. This website was established in Spring 2006, through the efforts of the Aging and Disability Services Administration (ADSA), the Economic Services Administration (ESA), and the Children’s Administration (CA), with

feedback from the Kinship Care Oversight Committee. The website has become increasingly important in providing information for caregivers and professionals who 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. The number of people accessing the website has grown every year since its development and now other statewide websites; e.g., Within Reach, Washington State Child Care Resource and Referral Network have links to it.

DSHS Collaborations Supporting Kinship Care

Re-established in 2010 to help coordinate services to kinship families, the DSHS Kinship Care Workgroup (KCW) developed a work plan. Representatives of the Workgroup met with the Assistant Secretaries of Economic Services, Children’s, and Aging and Disability Services in 2011 and presented their initial ideas. The updated Kinship Care Work Group plan is included in this document as Attachment 3.

The Workgroup includes representatives from Economic Services; Children’s Administration; Aging and Disability Services; Health Care Authority; Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery; Division of Child Support; Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration; Office of Planning, Performance, and Accountability; Department of Health; Department of Early Learning (DEL); and the Special Education Ombudsman/Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Training

The Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence is Washington’s comprehensive statewide training partnership. Established in 2012, the Alliance is dedicated to developing professional expertise for social workers and to enhancing the skills of foster parents and caregivers working with vulnerable children and families.

Within the Alliance, the Resource Family Training Institute (RFTI) provides training for foster, adopt and unlicensed relative caregivers statewide. Kinship caregivers are able to access all training provided through RFTI. This includes all classroom training, self-directed online workshops, and online video trainings. Some trainings have been developed which are specific to kinship caregivers.



Isabella age 8 "I Feel Safe Here."

ATTACHMENT 1

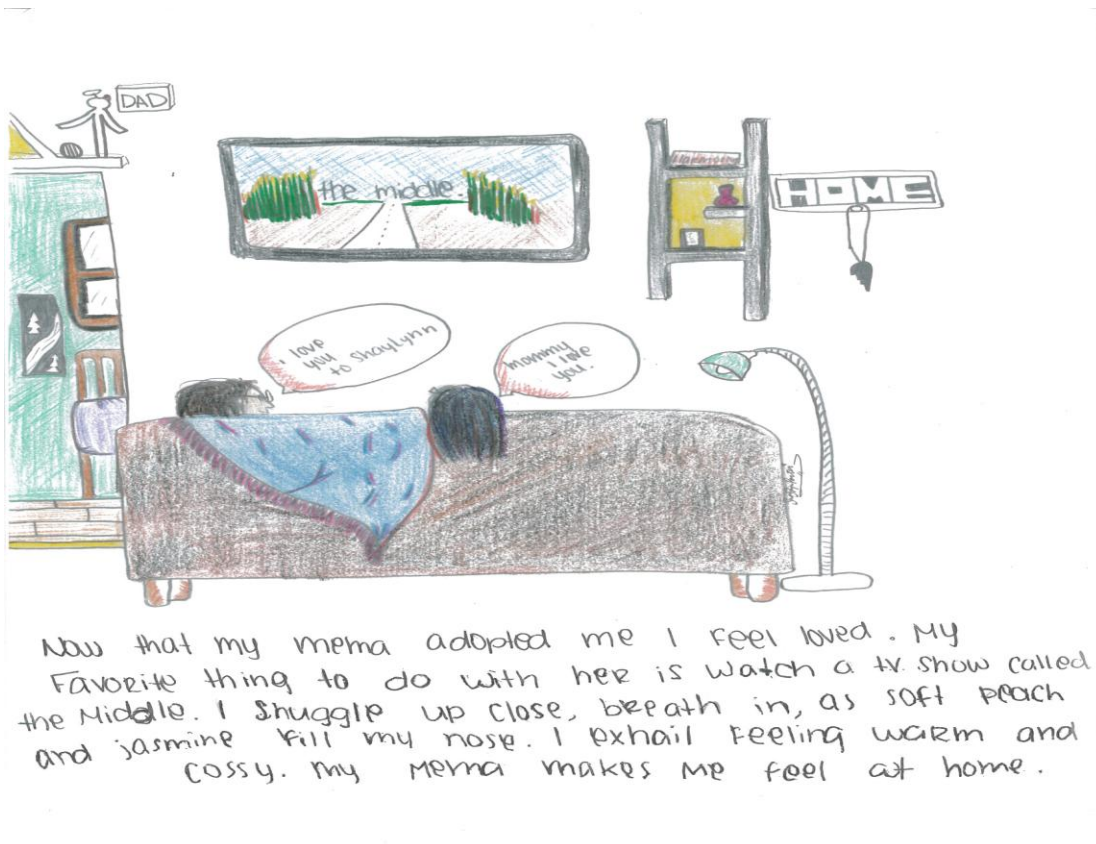
2012 Kinship Care Report Recommendations and Status Report

2002 Recommendations High Priority/Short-Term	2012 Status
Provide full TANF payment for second child in kinship family	Means testing required by the legislature has affected the economic situations of caregivers not involved with the formal system and has been a step away from this goal.
Strengthen relative search process	<p>Social workers have adjusted their practice to include new policies that are being implemented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social workers are asking parents about relative resources before the 72 hour shelter care hearing. • Letters are being sent to all identified adult relatives within 30 days of placement. • When making placement changes, social workers are considering relatives or suitable persons before using foster care. • Social workers are identifying as many relatives as possible before making a decision about ongoing placement. • CA regions have increased the number of relative search specialists, who have access to the information systems in partner agencies, such as ACES and SEMS. In addition, they have access to a purchased online program called Accurint that searches other databases for information. 25 CA employees now have access to Accurint. Ongoing training is provided for the search specialists. • Training is also being offered to CA social workers on searching for relatives
Create Kinship Navigator positions	<p>Eight FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) Kinship Navigators currently provide “one-stop shop” information and resources to relatives living in a 30 county area.</p> <p>In 2012, Kinship Navigator Roslyn Albers of Hope Sparks, a mental health center in Tacoma, led the kinship community in developing a grant seeking federal money to expand the Navigator program. Those who worked on the grant proposal agreed valuable contacts and relationships were established and should be continued although the application was not successful.</p>

2002 Recommendations High Priority/Short-Term	2012 Status
Implement aggressive public education and awareness campaign on kinship care issues	<p>The annual <i>Voices of Children</i> award ceremony hosted by the Governor or Lieutenant Governor continues to recognize art, poetry, and essays created by children being raised by grandparents and other relatives. The ceremony provides a great opportunity to bring attention to kinship care.</p> <p>Various local and regional trainings and conferences also take place around the State along with six regional kinship collaborations.</p> <p>Kinship care is taking a greater role in the statewide Caregivers Conference, raising awareness about it.</p> <p>Kinship stories and issues also are being more frequently presented in the CA Caregiver Connection, the monthly newsletter to the care giving community and interested stakeholders.</p> <p>Kinship care givers and children have become an integral element in the annual “We Are Family” Day at Safeco Field during May, during which Foster Care Month and Kinship Care Day are celebrated. A 16-yr-old living with her grandparents threw out the ceremonial first pitch at the We Are Family Day game in 2012 and spoke at the pre-game ceremony.</p> <p>There are no dedicated funds for public education and awareness, so most efforts are generally local.</p>
Improve the delivery of TANF benefits to relative caregivers	<p>The DSHS Kinship Care webpage provides a wealth of information about various state resources available to kinship caregivers, including TANF and Medicaid.</p> <p>ESA is working on instructions which will assist relatives in appropriately filling out the benefit application form.</p>
Create an education/medical consent waiver	<p>The creation of the medical/dental/mental health waiver has been helpful, but there continues to be some confusion about what services a relative caregiver can consent to. The Oversight Committee is continuing to discuss what is needed to improve access to care.</p> <p>Information about the medical consent law is going out through the Washington State Hospital Association and the Washington Chapter of the American Association of Pediatrics. The brochure on medical consent has been updated and reprinted.</p> <p>There is also no education waiver in statute. The Oversight Committee continues to assess whether a statute related to education is warranted.</p>
Establish a legal services pilot project	<p>In addition to the various small kinship legal projects located around the state, a subcommittee of the Oversight Committee will continue to discuss recommendations regarding improving the availability of legal kinship resources. Both ESA and Children’s Administration have, or are developing a legal options document for caregivers.</p>

2002 Recommendations High Priority/Short-Term	2012 Status
Create a statewide respite care inventory	A three-year Lifespan Respite grant awarded to DSHS in 2010 is continuing to be used to improve the access and information about available respite care services for caregivers of individuals of all ages (including a future statewide website and 1-800 telephone number).
Establish a support services fund for relative caregivers	<p>The Kinship Caregivers Support Program continues to receive \$1 million per year (ADSA/DSHS). These funds support relative caregivers who are not involved with the formal child welfare system who have an emergent need or crisis.</p> <p>The Children's Administration budget includes in FY 2013 \$575,000 for Relative Support Services for relatives caring for children with an open case with CA. The KCOC spent time this year working on determining the status of the money, how much had been spent and how to determine an open case. The group has discussed other ideas about distributing the funds or determining eligibility, including having Navigators administer the funds. Currently, CA staff at headquarters handled policy questions around use of fund. Headquarters staff contacts field CA staff to work on child-specific uses of the money.</p>
Support Lifespan Respite Act and position state to receive funding	The recently received grant provides \$189, 000 over 3 years for lifespan respite programs. Work continued in 2012 to put the grant money to work most effectively.

Shay Lynn, Age 14



2002 Recommendations High Priority/Long Term	2012 Status
Provide full TANF payment for all multiple-child kinship families	This recommendation has not been implemented, in great part due to budget constraints. This is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. The Oversight Committee is exploring ways other states are addressing financial assistance to kinship caregivers. The implementation of the relative guardianship option is seen as one way to increase support, but this is only available to a limited number of families with child welfare involvement.
Promote systems collaboration	<p>The DSHS Kinship Workgroup is an example of the commitment to collaboration among multiple state agencies serving kinship families. Collaboration between the Navigators and CSOs began in 2011 with meetings in three regions. That collaboration continued in 2012 with two more meetings.</p> <p>Collaborations between the Kinship Navigators and Foster Parent Liaisons were enhanced in 2011 and continued in 2012.</p> <p>Foster parent and kinship care leaders continue discussions begun in 2011 about ways in which they could work together for children in their care. The state Foster Parent Association has included a Kinship Navigator (who is also a kinship provider) on its board and she is working collaborative to bring the kinship issues forward to the board so foster and kinship caregivers can work together on issues of mutual concern.</p>
Provide GAL/CASA services	No formal action steps have been taken to address this issue specifically for kinship families. Progress is not expected in these tight budget times.
Provide respite care services for relative caregivers	<p>Respite care continues to be a critical need for kinship caregivers and is one of the top two priorities identified by the cross-agency kinship committee.</p> <p>Children’s Administration is now able to provide respite for kinship caregivers in the child welfare system.</p> <p>The Kinship Care Oversight Committee continues to advocate for the provision of respite dollars.</p> <p>ADSA has awarded four, 19 - month, \$20,000 grants to Area Agencies on Aging (one eastern, three western WA) where respite pilot programs are available for kinship caregivers raising children.</p>

2002 Recommendations High Priority/Long Term	2012 Status
Provide training opportunities for all caregivers	Children’s Administration offers training sessions to foster parents and relative caregivers each month. The training catalog is distributed through the Kinship Navigator network and is available online on the CA kinship webpage. Specific training aimed at kinship caregivers will be provided at the Pacific Northwest Caregivers Conference in January 2013, as it was in 2012. Kinship providers will also be eligible to participate in all trainings at the conference, sponsored by the Foster Parents Association of Washington State.



Cooking smores' on the fire pit in the back yard.

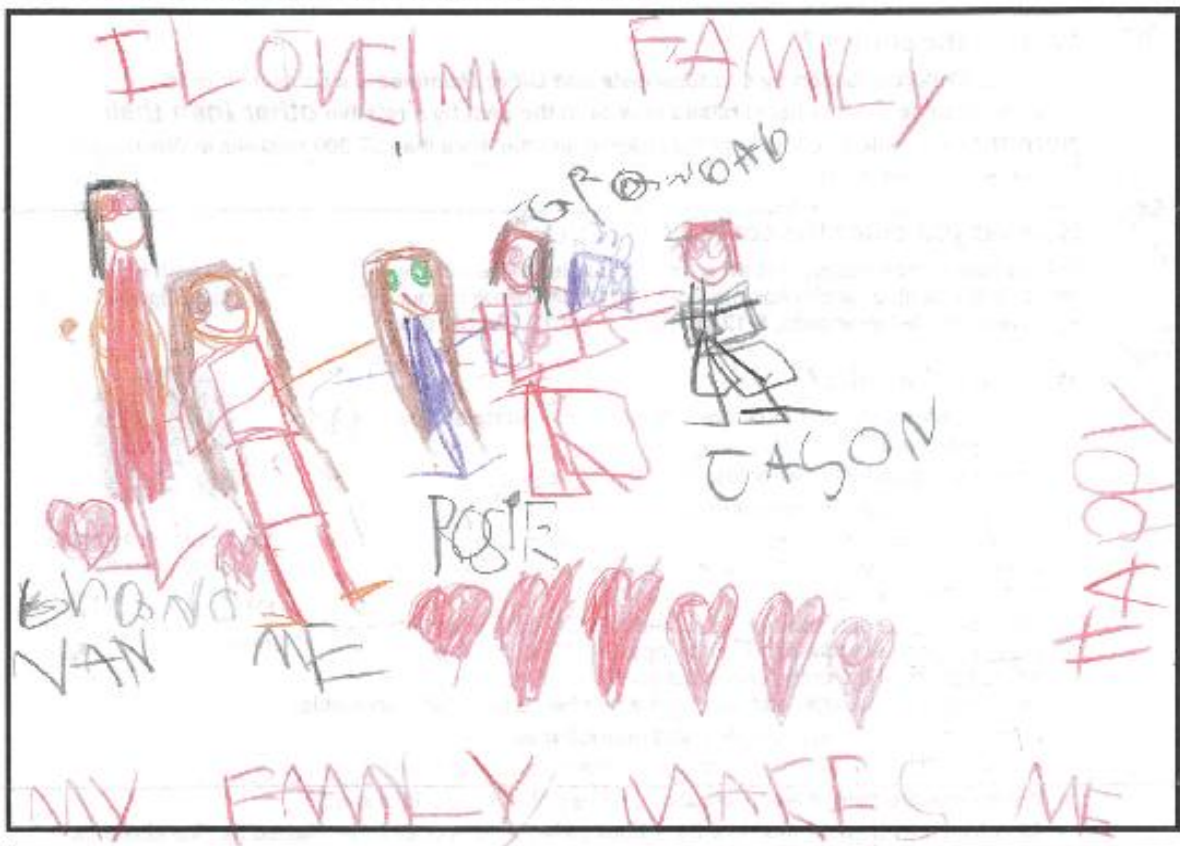
Thank you grama

Ivan, Age 6

2002 Recommendations Medium Priority/Short-Term	2012 Status
Increase oversight and accountability for non-parent caregivers on TANF	This is being considered as part of a TANF redesign.
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	The legal resources guide, developed by Legal Voices of Seattle, continues to be published and distributed. Additionally, a DVD on Washington State legal options for grandparents and other relatives and a video on mediation for kinship caregivers were developed and are circulated to support groups, kinship navigators, and to caregivers. The Oversight Committee continues to work on ways to identify and improve ways to improve access to legal resources. The Thurston County legal kinship kiosk model is seen as a possibility for other counties and states as a mechanism for information sharing.
Educate judges and attorneys about kinship care issues	This is an ongoing effort and is happening around the state in various ways. The local collaborations have partnered with many legal professionals in their communities, including judges, attorneys, and other service providers. Judges and attorneys are members of task forces and advisory committees with kinship caregivers, which provide opportunities for education and collaboration. The federal Fostering Connections legislation provided an opportunity for the court system to look at their practice regarding kinship care.
Support statewide Unified Family Court (UFC)	No formal action steps have been developed to address this; however, many members of the Oversight Committee supported recent legislation that moved in the UFC direction.

2002 Recommendations Federal Recommendation	2012 Status
Amend National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFSCP)/Older Americans Act/U.S. Administration on Aging	The Older Americans Act was amended in 2006, allowing for relatives, age 55 years or older who are raising their grandchildren to receive services under the NFSCP. Only 10 percent of the funding to states is permitted to serve relatives raising children.
Subsidized Guardianships	R-GAP has been implemented in the Children’s Administration and is being revised as needed to stay in alignment with Fostering Connections changes and the needs of caregivers and licensing in this state.

I love my Family!



Donavan, Age 6

ATTACHMENT 2

Washington State's Kinship Navigators Serving Grandparents and Relatives Raising Children

- **Benton, Franklin, Columbia, Garfield, Walla Walla, Yakima, Kittitas and Asotin Counties:** Catholic Family and Child Services - **Kinship Navigator:** Mary Pleger, mpleger@ccyakima.org, (509) 965-7100 or 800-246-2962
- **Chelan, Douglas, Okanogan, Grant, Lincoln, and Adams Counties:** Catholic Family and Child Services - **Kinship Navigator:** Jennifer Santillan, jsantillan@ccyakima.org, (509) 662-6761 ext. 4557 or 1-800-261-1094.
- **Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Skamania, Wahkiakum Counties:** Children's Home Society, Southwest Washington Region - **Kinship Navigator:** Tammy Bedlion, Tammyb@chs-wa.org, (360) 695-1325 ext. 4214
- **Ferry, Pend Oreille and Stevens Counties:** Rural Resources Community Action - **Kinship Navigator:** Vicki Pontecorvo, vpontecorvo@ruralresources.org, (509) 684-3932
- **Spokane County:** Elder Services - Spokane Mental Health - **Kinship Navigator:** Angela Andreas, aandreas@smhca.org, (509) 458-7450 ext. 3007
- **Whitman County:** Rural Resources Community Action - **Kinship Navigator:** Amanda Rich, arich@ruralresources.org, (509) 332-0365 or 800-873-5889
- **King County:** Catholic Community Services - **Kinship Navigator:** Helen Sawyer, HelenS@ccsww.org, (206) 445-1360 ext. 210
- **Lewis, Mason and Thurston Counties:** Family Education and Support Services - **Kinship Navigator:** Lynn Urvina, Lynn@FamilyESS.org, **Spanish-speaking Navigator Assistant:** Rosa Venancio, Rosa@FamilyESS.org, (360) 754-7629 or 1-877-813-2828
- **Pierce County:** HopeSparks - **Kinship Navigator:** Rosalyn Alber, ralber@hopesparks.org, (253) 565-4484 ext. 112, **Kinship Navigator:** Jesie Holden, jholden@hopesparks.org, (253) 565-4484 ext. 134
- **Whatcom County:** Northwest Regional Council (AAA) - **Kinship Navigator:** Laina Berry, berryls@dshs.wa.gov, (360) 676-6749
- **State contact:** Hilari Hauptman, Aging and Disability Services Administration, DSHS, Hilari.hauptman@dshs.wa.gov, 1-800-422-3263 or (360) 725-2556

Kinship Care in WA State Website: www.dshs.wa.gov/kinshipcare

**Attachment 3
KINSHIP CARE WORK GROUP WORK PLAN**

Goal 1: Improve access to medical and mental health care for children in kinship families.

Short Term Action Items

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next Steps	Resources
<p>Mail automated EPSDT (well child exam) reminder letters from Provider One to caregivers of children outside the formal child welfare system.</p> <p>EPSDT exams are associated with improved health outcomes for children.</p>	<p>Beginning in November, 2011 were mailed to children in the formal child welfare system and continue to be mailed.</p> <p>The functionality to mail letters to kinship care providers could not be supported because of cost.</p>	<p>We will explore other avenues of disseminating EPSDT promotional materials.</p>	<p>Mailing costs</p>
<p>Provide caregivers with access to healthcare information available in PRISM and Child Profile systems.</p> <p>Since older caregivers in particular are far removed from contemporary child rearing practices and resources, they are an appropriate audience for this information.</p>	<p>DOH only mails Child Profile health promotion materials to birth parents. A newly funded e-mail project will make it possible to send to other caregivers.</p> <p>The EPSDT brochure and a link to the Child Profile health promotion materials were posted on the DSHS Kinship Website.</p>	<p>DOH will pilot test the email project in 2013.</p> <p>Develop ability to mail immunization history in CHILD Profile to kinship caregivers.</p> <p>Develop ability to mail two years of healthcare history in PRISM to kinship caregivers.</p> <p>DOH Child Profile staff are training Kinship Navigators on Child Profile materials in October 2012. They will also train PLU student nurses involved with the Kinship Home Visiting Wellness Program.</p>	

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next Steps	Resources
Connect caregivers to DEL's Early Support for Infant and Toddlers (ESIT) and DOH's Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) programs. Research and Data Analysis (RDA) report ("Children on TANF in WA State") shows high incidence of mental health needs among children in kinship care (based on Medicaid data).	The DSHS Kinship Website was updated to include links to ESIT, Medical Home Leadership Network, and CSHCN Programs.	Continue sharing resource information with kinship support groups and Navigators in 2012/2013.	
Garner support for further data analysis to compare medical and dental health status access between children on Medicaid/TANF Child Only who are living with relatives and are not involved with the formal welfare system with those who are involved with the system as well as all children on Medicaid.	Seeking management from HCA and DSHS (RDA staff) to compile data or agree to have a researcher through local university have access to data.	Submit a letter from Kinship Care Oversight Committee and DSHS Kinship Care Work Group to provide appropriate staff at DSHS/HCA for staff for analysis.	Seeking pro bono staff or obtain funding.
<p>Proposed Metrics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish baseline and measure improved outcomes by use of EPSDT encounter data. 2. Add two kinship-related demographic questions to the 2012 State Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) to gather more accurate health information on youth living in kinship care families. Develop a baseline, and compare kinship youth in foster care to those living with relatives. ADSA and DBHR collaborated on kinship and housing questions which were reviewed by researchers nationally and within DSHS and piloted with older youth through the DSHS Passion to Action Youth Advisory Board. State HYS committee has approved the recommended questions. Funding has been obtained through ADSA. Analysis to be completed by June 2013. 			

Longer Term Action Items

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next Steps	Resources
Promote EPSDT well-child exams as a requirement or recommendation for kinship caregivers receiving child-only TANF. See above.	Proposal advanced as part of TANF re-design process, including establishing baseline EPSDT rates.	Explore including EPDST letter and brochure as an attachment to the TANF award letter; will be taken up during TANF re-design implementation.	

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next Steps	Resources
<p>Improve access to mental health services for children with moderate impairment by adding out of home/kinship care status to risk factors for “access to care” eligibility in Medicaid state plan.</p> <p>See data in RDA report.</p>	<p>DBHR has provided a Children’s Mental Health redesign plan that broadens access for moderate needs Medicaid youth, and will integrate healthcare and mental healthcare services without access-to-care restrictions.</p>	<p>Continue work to broaden access-to-care, and clarify how kinship placement status increases risk for higher-level service need in RSN care.</p>	
<p>Include care coordination referral component within managed care contracts for children in kinship care.</p> <p>Caregivers often receive children unexpectedly with little information about their prior healthcare history.</p>	<p>Inclusion of an automatic case management referral in the Healthy Options (HO) will not proceed at this time, though it may be taken up in the future. In the meantime, the number of quality measures that MCOs report on will be increased which may help to identify gaps in access to care.</p>	<p>Reconsider development of an automated case management referral for children in kinship care within the Healthy Options contracts, if data from quality care measures suggests there is a gap in healthcare access.</p>	
<p>Expand provider access to healthcare history for children in their care.</p>	<p>Functionality has been established to allow Provider access to Medicaid billing data for children in formal foster care.</p>	<p>Efforts are underway as a part of healthcare reform to promote HIT, electronic health records and medical homes which may improve provider access to healthcare history information.</p>	

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next Steps	Resources
Explore with Regional Support Networks (RSNs) their knowledge of the needs of kinship care families and gain knowledge of the access issues that these families face.	DSHS RDA report "Children on TANF in Washington State: The Well-Being of Children and Caregivers" (Fall 2010) showed high percentage of children on TANF Child-Only with a mental health diagnosis.	Explore inclusion of kinship placement status as a risk variable in mental health intake assessments conducted by contracted RSN providers.	
<p>Proposed Metrics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand cross-systems data on kinship families, based on fall 2010 RDA report; identify Medicaid health outcomes for children in foster and kinship care. 2. Inclusion of kinship care indicator in Healthy Options plans would allow collection of population-specific data on the quality of healthcare received by children in kinship care. 			

Goal 2: Improve the health of kinship caregivers, including through improved respite.

Short Term Action Items

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next Steps	Resources
<p>Expand and replicate Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) and Seattle Pacific University (SPU) nursing school home visiting wellness programs, which began in 2009 and 2010, in other parts of state. Explore partnerships with other health care teaching institutions.</p> <p>Research shows the interdependence of the health of caregivers and the children in their care. There is also data to indicate that kin caregivers are in poorer health than others of their age.</p>	<p>The PLU nursing school project expanded its reach to Thurston County in Spring 2011.</p> <p>For the project's fourth semester, Spring 2012, 18 nursing students participated in Olympia and Tacoma.</p> <p>University of Washington School of Public Health seeks internship placements for graduate nutrition students. Initial project was a "community rotation" with the September 2011 Annual Kinship Retreat organized by the King County Kinship Collaboration in partnership with the Odessa Brown Children's Clinic in Seattle.</p>	<p>WSU nursing schools in Yakima and Tri Cities will be approached next.</p> <p>Possible projects for graduate nutrition students would be to prepare "wellness talks" to be presented to local kinship support groups.</p>	

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next Steps	Resources
<p>Develop a pilot to provide kinship respite care.</p> <p>Respite care is a key strategy for relieving the stress on caregivers, thus allowing them to maintain their care giving role.</p>	<p>Since 2010, ADSA has contracted with four Area Agencies on Aging (Lewis-Mason-Thurston AAA, Aging and Long Term Care of Eastern WA, Northwest Regional Council and Aging and Disability Services- Seattle/King County) to pilot four kinship respite care projects (\$20,000 each) for 18-month project.</p>	<p>Continue to review the successes and challenges of these projects to help develop kinship respite service best practice information.</p>	<p>Funding is from ADSA's administrative funds from federal National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFSCP). 10 percent limit rule restricts funding to serve relatives raising children.</p>
<p>Encourage participation of kinship caregivers in the evidence-based class series Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) through Kinship Navigators, support groups, and links to the DOH Living Well website.</p> <p>See above on the health of caregivers.</p>	<p>King County was the first to sponsor a class series specific to this population in Spring 2010.</p> <p>ADSA and DOH developed a Living Well website https://livingwell.doh.wa.gov that posts health promotion classes that can benefit kinship caregivers throughout Washington state. A link for the Living Well website was added to the DSHS Kinship website.</p>	<p>Share the information on classes through support groups, Kinship Navigators, county or regional kinship collaborations, the Kinship Caregiver Support Program, and local trainings and conferences. ADSA will continue to support the training of kinship care community partners as leaders in the health promotion classes.</p>	
<p>Distribute health promotion materials to kinship caregivers via support groups, regional kinship conferences, Kinship Navigators, regional kinship collaborations, and through the DSHS Kinship Care website.</p>	<p>Regional kinship conferences since 2010 in King and Pierce counties have put a focus on kinship care families' health.</p>	<p>Promote dental in addition to health information and resources, through support groups, trainings, and kinship navigators in 2012. This will benefit both kinship caregivers and the children they are raising.</p>	
<p>Proposed Metrics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PLU nursing students will continue to collect data to be able to document outcomes in kinship caregivers' health. 2. Analyze kinship caregiver health data from the 2011 DOH Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey to help target health promotion activities. Data analysis results will be available in early 2013. 			

Longer Term Action Items

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next steps	Resources
Increase respite care resources for kinship caregivers	ADSA received a three-year Lifespan Respite Grant from the U.S. Administration on Aging in Fall 2010 to work in partnership with the Respite and Crisis Care Coalition of WA State (RCCCWA) and community partners to increase the information about and access to respite services and develop new respite options.	A Washington State Lifespan Respite website and toll-free number are under development and will include resources to support kinship caregivers over the coming years.	There would be a cost if respite care were expanded beyond ADSA pilots.

Goal 3: Improve kinship caregiver access to information, resources, and services through improved coordination.

Short Term Action Items

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Proposed Next Steps	Resources
Ensure that DSHS' new Washington Connection is designed with the needs of kinship caregivers in mind. There is a long history of caregivers being confused by the benefits application and Washington Connection has the potential to overcome this barrier.	Workgroup members met with IT staff in January 2011 to discuss how to make the benefit portal more user-friendly for caregivers. Kinship Navigators and kinship support group leaders were informed about available local Washington Connection trainings in their areas. DSHS Kinship Website was submitted to Washington Connection IT staff for insertion on resource page of website.	Workgroup members will continue to work with IT staff.	

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Proposed Next Steps	Resources
<p>Provide web-based information to caregivers on kinship care resources.</p> <p>As more caregivers gain internet access, this website should become an increasingly valuable resource.</p>	<p>DSHS Kinship Website, www.dshs.wa.gov/kinship_care</p> <p>Workgroup members continue to review website and make recommendations on updates. Recent updates include the addition of the Did You Know document listing resources for kinship caregivers, which is also being printed and translated into eight languages.</p> <p>The WA State Child Care Resource and Referral Network and Within Reach recently added the DSHS Kinship Care website to their resource pages.</p>	<p>ADSA will continue to take the lead in updating the website in conjunction with DSHS Information System Services Division.</p> <p>Other statewide information and referral websites are considering adding the kinship website to their own web pages.</p>	
<p>Improve communication and coordination between Kinship Navigators, CSOs, and DCFS staff.</p> <p>Partnership between Navigators and state agency staff leverages community resources for the benefit of clients.</p>	<p>Original proposal to out-station Navigators in CSOs was positively received in the TANF re-design process. However, at a March 2011 meeting attended by Lewis, Mason and Thurston counties CSO staff, the local Kinship Navigator, AAA regional staff, and ADSA and ESA headquarters staff, it was decided that out-stationing would not be the best use of Navigators' time and that other ways to improve coordination would be pursued (see below). A similar meeting was held in Pierce County in June 2011. A follow-up meeting for Lewis, Mason, and Thurston counties was held on Oct. 4, 2011.</p>	<p>Follow-up to the June 2011 Pierce County meeting will be held in late 2011 or early 2012).</p> <p>A meeting will be scheduled for the Yakima area in early November 2011.</p>	

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Proposed Next Steps	Resources
<p>Schedule Navigators to regularly address CSO and DCFS staff about the services they offer.</p> <p>See above.</p>	<p>Lewis, Mason and Thurston County meeting attendees agreed that periodic Navigator visits to CSO staff meetings would allow a useful exchange of information and help build relationships. Meetings were set up at the Chehalis and Olympia/Tumwater CSOs.</p>	<p>ADSA and ESA headquarters staff will hold similar discussions in other regions in Fall 2011 and beyond.</p>	
<p>Designate liaisons in each CSO and DCFS office with the Kinship Navigators (these could be volunteers such as social work student interns) and triage situations that need attention.</p> <p>See above.</p>	<p>Under consideration as part of TANF re-design. Regional meetings (see above) determined that while many CSOs might not be able to designate official liaisons at this time, most would probably be willing to identify key contact person(s). DCFS liaisons may also be a useful model.</p>	<p>ADSA and ESA headquarters staff will continue to promote formal contacts to facilitate Navigator access to state agency staff.</p>	
<p>Increase collaboration, and sharing of resources/ knowledge between foster care liaisons and Kinship Navigators.</p> <p>See above.</p>	<p>Liaisons are hired through a state recruitment and retention contract; Navigators through the Area Agencies on Aging. The Liaisons and Navigators have begun exchanging contact information as a first step toward more regular communication.</p> <p>A conference call was held in September 2011 between Liaisons and Navigators to discuss what each does and how they can better work together. More calls are planned. A new conference call will be held in the coming months.</p>		

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Proposed Next Steps	Resources
More bridges between kinship and foster parent leaders are being built.	Kinship providers will be a part of the Pacific Northwest Caregivers Conference in January 2013. A Kinship Navigator serves on the conference planning committee. One event held as part of the conference will be the annual "Night of a Thousand Dreams" to recognize and honor good work in child welfare. For the second year, leaders in the kinship community will be recognized and honored.		
Develop written resource materials specifically for kinship caregivers.	The Kinship Care Work Group updated the Did You Know document to list in one place many resources and contacts for Kinship Caregivers. 25,000 booklets were printed.	Update Basic Food flyer and increase distribution: add to Washington Connection and DSHS Kinship Care websites; share with Kinship Navigators and regional kinship collaborations, etc. Did You Know translations are being done in eight languages.	
<p>Proposed Metrics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Measure hits on DSHS Kinship Care website as a means of determining effectiveness of efforts to inform caregivers electronically about available services and resources. 			

Longer Term Action Items

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next Steps	Resources
<p>Develop trainings to sensitize CSO and DCFS staff to the needs of informal caregivers.</p> <p>State agency staff have engaged minimally with this population in the past but this is changing, making new training necessary.</p>	Under consideration as part of TANF re-design process.	Child Welfare League of America is rolling out a new curriculum to sensitize staff who work with kinship caregivers. Workgroup will get more information about the curriculum.	

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next Steps	Resources
Develop multi-media guide to assist kinship caregivers in completing DSHS benefits application.		Explore development of short kinship video through a public/private partnership, in addition to creating written instructions to explain application process.	
Improve caregivers' access to training. Included will be training for raising high-need behaviorally disordered youth.	Workgroup members met with Resource Family Training Institute (RFTI) staff to discuss access to RFTI-sponsored training. Unlicensed caregivers receive information on all trainings through mailings.	RFTI has provided the following information about training for unlicensed caregivers: A Pre-Service Training that addresses the specific concerns of unlicensed caregivers is available.	

Goal 4: Promote readiness to learn for children in kinship care.

Short Term Action Items

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next Steps	Resources
Coordinate early learning, educational, healthcare, mental health, and income support systems. Non-parent caregivers are important resources in improving readiness to learn among the children in their care.	Worked with Department of Early Learning (DEL) to include the needs of kinship families throughout the state's recently produced Early Learning Plan.	Share information about early learning through support groups, Kinship Navigators, county or regional kinship groups, the Kinship Caregiver Support Program, and local trainings and conferences.	
Promote outreach to kinship families regarding the obligations of the K-12 system toward children with special educational needs, via the OSPI Special Education Ombudsman, the Governor's Office of Education Ombudsman, and the Treehouse Educational Advocacy program.	Treehouse has trained peer kinship advocate trainers who, along with others, are conducting local workshops throughout Washington state. Since 2010, Kinship Navigators and support group leaders are regularly informed of local educational advocacy trainings to share with caregivers.		

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next Steps	Resources
Connect caregivers to DEL's Early Support for Infant and Toddlers (ESIT) and DOH's Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) programs Good health is a key to learning for young children.	ESIT staff presented early intervention and referral/resource connections to Kinship Care Navigators. ESIT continues to present kinship care information and resources at quarterly program meetings, early learning workshops, and conferences.		
Metrics: 1. Incorporate data on children in kinship care in DEL's proposed "Early Learning Information System."			

Longer Term Action Items

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Proposed Next Steps	Resources
Include kinship care families in home visiting wellness programs in WA State.		Work with DEL and home visiting partner agencies to include kinship families (especially especially those receiving TANF) in state planning, direct services, and resource linkages.	

My hart mom and my belly button mom love me and I love them too. My hart mom she adopted me. If she didn't adopt me I would be living in a stranger's home with people I didn't know. She takes care of me and loves.

Nathan, Age 8

