

Grandfamilies Tip Sheet Series

For grandparents & other relatives raising children



KINcare Program Supports

The pandemic had far-reaching effects, but KINcare providers have unique strengths and talents to help families navigate and thrive.

Here's what can make a difference!

Two national COVID surveys of Kin Caregivers administered by GrOW offer important feedback directly from the **voices of caregivers** that can lead KINcare providers to improve their practices to support families.

Key Findings

- In Wave 2 of the national GrOW study, 58% of Kin Caregivers said that they had no involvement with the child welfare system
- Kin Caregivers identified that 43% of their children have behavioral health challenges, school and learning issues which can be directly connected to loss and trauma. Counseling services were requested but not always readily available
- Older Kin Caregivers expressed feeling discriminated against due to their age while seeking assistance in accessing financial aid, counseling, legal services and academic support online.
- Many Kin Caregivers report seeking out family, friends and local public health experts to get credible information during the pandemic
- Kin Caregivers reported concerns with child care, respite, and needing time for themselves

“Kinship family support group is the best!!! Love the peer support from those who either have been there or are still in the trenches.”

— Kinship Caregiver

Recommended Citation

Cooper, L., Devine, A., Fedus, D., Langosch, D., Littlewood, K., & Rosenthal, M. (2023, January). KINcare Program Supports. Grandfamilies Outcome Workgroup (GrOW): Grandfamilies tip sheet series for grandparents and other relatives raising children. <https://www.grandfamilieswork.org>

Resources

- Do kinship navigation programs impact permanency and equity for youth? casey.org/kinship-navigation-study
- Kinship Navigator Programs grandfamilies.org/Topics/Kinship-Navigator-Programs
- Child Welfare Information Gateway childwelfare.gov/organizations/?CWIGFunctionsaction=rols:main.dspList&rolType=Cu&custom&RS_ID=148
- Grand Fact Sheets grandfamilies.org/State-Fact-Sheets
- Area Agency on Aging eldercare.acl.gov/Public/About/Aging_Network/AAA.aspx

Key Concepts and Practical Recommendations

Providers can be instrumental in educating Kin Caregivers about how to advocate for themselves, their family and community.

Support Groups and training opportunities can build confidence, competence, inspiration and community.

What families need to know and do

Kinship Navigator programs are growing and developing in each state and many territories around the U.S. guided by Families First Preservation Services Act (FFPSA).

- Locate Kinship Navigator programs through 2-1-1 or local kin helplines that offer connections to information and resources
- Seek out support groups that offer connections among kin caregivers, such as Relatives as Parents Programs (RAPPs), funded across the US by the Brookdale Foundation
- Access local legal aid providers to advocate and assist with custody concerns as well as to protect the rights of caregivers facing discrimination or issues with housing, benefits, health care and educational needs

How providers can help

- Build community awareness of what KINcare programs are available and how they can be accessed
- Engage with aging services (including Area Agencies on Aging) for outreach to seniors and how to contact for help
- Consider a Kin Caregiver's access to their support systems, both informal and formal, within their cultural context via eco-mapping, genograms and family team conferencing
- Highlight how Kin caregivers have coped adaptively in the past when faced with adverse or overwhelming situations, and use data on outcomes and impact to communicate with local, state, public and private funding sources
- Build collaborative partnerships that make services and supports more accessible
- Help create warm-handoffs to partners within complex systems of care such as child care, education, health, mental health systems in order for resources and services to be more welcoming and accommodating
- Destigmatize getting help and identify where to find it through peer to peer conversations
- Maintain a focus on the families' cultural norms and utilize culturally responsive providers
- Develop Kincare friendly and supportive intergenerational communities by teaming with youth groups

KINcare providers can meet both physical and emotional needs of families

Kin Caregivers can benefit from programs that work side by side with peers and Kinship Navigators to enroll in benefits and needed services. **Peers and Navigators can validate and empathize with the Kin Caregivers' feelings and experiences.** Providers can increase trauma-informed and culturally-competent practices. This may help to inspire hope to seek assistance, including:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| ● Building trust | ● Acknowledging grief and anger | ● Assisting with benefit enrollment |
| ● Reducing isolation | ● Offering a sense of hope and community | ● Linking to high quality child care, respite and early education (i.e. Head Start & VPK) |
| ● Understanding fears | ● Connecting to vetted resources | ● Offering support groups and social opportunities |



The Grandfamilies Outcome Workgroup (GrOW) is a national collective comprised of multi-disciplinary stakeholders that work across systems of care in partnership with kinship families.

GrOW intentionally integrates the lived experiences of kinship caregivers in its evaluation methods, tools, and resources to support best practice in the field of kinship care. GrOW: Research to Inform Practice.

To learn more about GrOW, visit grandfamilieswork.org

Tip Sheets are made possible by funding from:

The Brookdale Foundation Group

