



Report to the Legislature

Washington State Kinship Care Oversight Committee

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**Washington State Kinship Care Oversight Committee
Report to the Legislature
December 2010**

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Interspersed throughout this report are the winning poems and essays from the “2010 Voices of Children” event, writings by children who are living the experience of being raised by kinship caregivers.

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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. 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.
- Area Agencies on Aging are better able to serve kinship caregiving families with available resources.
- DSHS has a direct line to hear from the caregivers themselves.
- 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 itself.
- Legislators have a better understanding of caregiver issues and have passed budget and policy items that have positively impacted caregivers.

Kinship caregivers, most often grandparents, often struggle with the challenges of parenting a second family. The Kinship Care Oversight Committee facilitates the coordination of programs 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, 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 and regional kinship collaborations are very active and successful in their work with families.

The Kinship Navigators directed by eight Area Agencies on Aging are on the front lines, 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.

The federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (Fostering Connections) is designed to promote permanency through relative guardianship and adoption. This act is having an impact on the DSHS partners on the Oversight Committee. Through this federal legislation, grant applications were submitted and the Family Connection Discretionary Grant was awarded. This grant includes Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Yakima which is expanding their regional Kinship Navigator Program, Family Team Decision Making and family search and engagement. Fostering Connections also supports more complete and immediate relative searches at the beginning of child welfare cases.

Kinship Care Oversight Committee 2011 Recommendations

The Kinship Care Oversight Committee comprised of kinship caregivers, child advocates, legislative staff, state agency representatives, non-profit services providers and legal community representatives made the following recommendations for 2011:

- Advocate for the continuation of the Kinship Oversight Committee beyond the June 2011 sunset date.
- Maintain funding for Kinship Navigators, ADSA's Kinship Caregiver Support Program, CA Relative Support Funds, and other services for Kinship caregivers.
- Work with CA to promote the relative guardianship option made available through Fostering Connections federal legislation.
- Work with CA to increase the number of licensed relative homes.
- Seek creative ways to provide kinship caregivers with much needed Timeout/Needed breaks. Work in collaboration with the Respite and Crisis Care Coalition of WA state (RCCCWA) on the three-year, federally funded WA State Lifespan Respite Grant.
- Continue to explore ways to provide legal assistance to kinship caregivers by expanding legal kiosks in courthouses and by other means.
- Participate in efforts to explore the passage of an Indian Child Welfare law in Washington state.

When I lived with my mom I had to live in fear. Now that I live with my grandparents I live a normal kid life. I can hangout with friends, have fun and not constantly be in trouble. I don't have to worry if somebody's going to be home when I get off the bus because I know grandma will be there. With my mom there was no schedule, dinner would be late and homework would go unfinished. Grandma and grandpa have changed my life, we now have dinner at a certain time, homework done all in time to relax. My grades have went from failing to passing every class with a B or better. I actually enjoy going to school because grandma makes me feel like I can do things and become someone if I try. Living with my grandparents has really made and impact on my life that I enjoy. I'm not scared anymore I actually talk about how I feel. My life is better than it could have ever been if I was still living with my mom.

Nerissa, Rochester, WA Age 14

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.

As stated above, 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 and the legal community. The improvements cited above in the Executive Summary represent the progress made since that time.

What Do We Know About Our Kinship Caregivers?

A report just published by the Pew Research Center in September 2010 provided updated 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 current 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. There are notable differences by race, ethnicity, and income among grandparents who are primary caregivers for grandchildren. Fifty-three percent are White; (the fastest growing kinship caregiver population), 24 percent are Black, 18 percent are Hispanic, and three percent are Asian.

A presentation given by the department's Division of Research and Data Analysis on September 15, 2010 at the TANF redesign One Table meeting on "Children on TANF in Washington State" provides information on the well-being of children and caregivers in this state:

- The average age of the household head is 50 years.
- The household head is at or above the medical risk of the average SSI client.
- About half of the household heads are employed with an income of around \$26,000 per year.
- Children in TANF child-only cases comprise 39 percent of the total children on TANF, 44 percent of whom are in kinship care families.
- Half of those children are White.
- The largest age group is 6-12 year olds (39 percent).
- Teens are next at 32 percent; 0-5 year olds are 28 percent of the population.
- The number of boys and girls is approximately the same.
- Almost half of the children aged 12-18 years had a documented mental health need, only slightly less for children aged 6-11 years. The most common diagnoses for

younger children were ADHD and anxiety disorders, and for teens depression and anxiety disorders.

- Children on child-only TANF experienced higher rates of mental illness and substance abuse if they had been a part of a CPS investigation for abuse or neglect.
- Around two-thirds of the parents of children living with relatives had substance abuse and/or mental health issues.
- Half of the children had a father and 33 percent had a mother with a history of incarceration.
- Thirty-nine percent of the birth dads and 30 percent of the birth moms of children living with relatives were homeless.
- Approximately half of the relative caregiver heads of household had identified behavioral health needs and about 13 percent had a substance abuse need. While these seem like high numbers, they represent only those relative caregivers who are involved in the Medicaid health system. Around 12 percent of the kinship child-only TANF cases had CPS involvement which related to the kinship placement.
- Around 10 percent of the household heads had historical CPS involvement compared to 19 percent of parents in adult TANF households.

With the steady increase of kinship care nationally and in Washington state, the Kinship Care Oversight Committee continues to be committed and guided by the 2002 recommendations. An update on the progress on each recommendation is included in Attachment 1.

My Aunty

My Aunty is always there for me. She loves me & when my mom passed away she was there & took me in to her care. She loved me and helped me with all the things I needed, she's not just a aunty that takes me to the mall she's more. She's someone who makes me happy when I'm sad & makes me glad when I'm mad, she makes me happy inside and out. She tells me its ok when to me its not. If she were your aunty you would say I'm smart. Anyone would want a aunty like this one.

Nubia, Seattle, WA Age 11

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*. **Read some of the entries scattered throughout this report.**
- Regional Kinship Care conferences, trainings or support groups in all six DSHS regions.
- Local celebrations and recognition events honoring the contributions of kinship caregivers.
- Annual *Parenting the Second Time Around* Facilitator Training workshops.
- Proclamations by the Governor honoring relatives raising children.

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 state of Washington;
- Exploration and development of respite care service options and models;
- Representing kinship care in other DSHS and/or statewide related efforts, such as Children and Families of Incarcerated Parents, Respite and Crisis Care Coalition of WA State;
- 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 (AAAs). The AAAs provide the services directly or contract out the service(s) to a local community service organization. ADSA facilitates a bi-monthly conference call with the Kinship Navigators to provide access to information and subject experts and to create networking opportunities.

The award of a federal Family Connection demonstration grant to Catholic Family and Child Services (CFCS) in Region 2 has expanded the number of Navigators in the state from 7.9 FTEs to 10.4 FTEs. These additional Navigators have focused their services on a couple of underserved counties in the Southeast region along with serving Native American caregivers in the Yakama Nation. The project is a collaboration between the Yakama Nation, the Children's Administration, Casey Family Programs, and CFCS.

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. Areas which do not yet have Kinship Navigators include Kitsap, Snohomish, Island, San Juan and Skagit Counties, and the Colville Indian Reservation.

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.

In King County, 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 for 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 a 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 Clark County, the YWCA hosts a monthly seminar, facilitated by Family Court lawyers, to educate kinship care providers on the third party custody process and inform them of available resources.

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 the Northwest Regional Council.

Collaboration to Support Kinship Care Families

The *King County Kinship Collaboration*, the Yakima area's *KINDred Spirits Coalition*, and the *Clark County Kinship Care Coalition* have been in existence for several years and each continues to expand. The Kinship Care Oversight Committee actively works with these and the other newer coalitions (Lewis-Mason-Thurston, Pierce, and Whatcom counties) to share information, resources, and events. Following are examples of specific activities.

The *King County Kinship Collaboration* reports the following activities in 2009:

- Held monthly networking meetings with an average attendance of 25 people.
- Piloted kinship programming at a South Seattle Family Center.
- Continued outreach and networking with new partners.
- Held quarterly social events (a mini-conference, a holiday gathering, a kinship caregiver day celebration, and picnic) attended by more than 400 people, which provided county-wide networking opportunities, information, and support for kinship families and service providers.
- Published a quarterly newsletter and maintained the collaboration's website (www.kckinship.org).
- Supported and partnered with the Kinship Navigator's work.
- Held two trainings and helped eight support group leaders/caregivers form a team to produce the kinship resource specialist training.
- Collaborated with Seattle Pacific University on a health promotion project which included a living well class with caregivers, home visits by student nurses, and a health-focused event.
- Supported ten Kinship Support Groups.
- Helped Organize Kinship Advocacy Day at the Legislature, organized visits with legislators, and developed a fact sheet.
- Organized kinship camp for 32 adults and children.

The *Yakima Region's KINdred Spirits Collaboration* reports the following activities in 2009:

- Held monthly networking meetings.
- Facilitated the One Heart Support Group.
- Maintained a clothing bank out of a caregiver's home.
- Began a new support group in Sunnyside.
- Published bi-monthly newsletters in both English and Spanish.
- Received a \$5,000 grant from Yakima Sunrise Rotary to put on a back-to-school BBQ for over 300 kinship and foster children.
- Provided a Legal Options training in Yakima and Tri-Cities.
- Formed a legal options committee to look at ways to help kinship families obtain third party custody.
- Held a Caregivers Appreciation Dinner and workshop with \$2,000 seed money from Catholic Charities USA and the Annie E Casey Foundation.
- Held its annual KINdred Spirits working retreat to assess what goals we reached and what new goals we want to reach in the next year.
- Participated in the quarterly Oversight meetings.
- Held a Parenting the Second Time Around class for foster and kinship families.

I was living in a tent by the river with mom and dad. Before I was adopted by Aunt Becky I was living in a foster home. She gives me plenty of food, lots of love, toys, and a bed to sleep in. Sometimes we go camping too.

Dominic, Seattle, WA Age 9

The *Clark County Kinship Caregiver Coalition* was formed in 2005 to provide a forum for information sharing and networking around kinship caregiver services. The goal is to encourage “no wrong door” referrals, identify gaps in kinship care services, and to assure that those who work with families in a wide variety of settings are aware of the various resources and support that is available for families who take kin into their care. Partners include Southwest Washington Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities, Children's Administration Region 6, Educational Opportunities for Children and Families (EOCF), Clark County Volunteer Lawyers Program, Children's Center, and Children's Home Society of Washington. The Coalition has been involved in the following:

- Held monthly networking meetings.
- Supported and partnered with the Kinship Navigator's work in five southwest Washington counties.
- Received a Community Foundation of Southwest Washington grant (with Clark County Volunteer Lawyers program as lead) for a Kinship Caregiver Resource Fair.

- Coordinated the successful Clark County Kinship Caregiver Resource Fair that included nine workshops, resource bags, and free massage therapy.
- Participated in various community resource fairs and outreach events to increase awareness of Kinship Navigator, Kinship Caregiver Support Program, Parenting Again and other partner resources that help relatives taking on the awesome challenge of parenting a second time around.
- Publicized special activities and events for Relatives Raising Relatives in the Parent Education Consortium monthly e-newsletter distributed to over 3,000 agencies, organizations, and individuals.
- Created links between Kinship Caregiver Support Program, Family Caregiver Support programs, Kinship Navigator program and local services including support, education, and counseling resources.

The *Lewis-Mason-Thurston County Kinship Advisory Committee* organized the following activities in 2009:

- Sponsored the Second Annual Kinship Connections Conference, October 24, 2009 at Little Creek Conference Center, Shelton, WA.
- Collaborated with local service groups to sponsor a Kinship Family Holiday Event; December 10, 2009 at Hands on Children's Museum, Olympia, WA.
- Organized Kinship Advocacy Day at the Legislature. Kinship Caregivers received advocacy training and had the opportunity to discuss their needs with two members of the legislature. Many caregivers also met with other elected officials following the training. February 17, 2010, Olympia, WA
- Organized a Kinship Family Gathering at Great Wolf Lodge, Grand Mound WA; May 19, 2010 - Washington State Kinship Caregiver Day.
- Coordinated the statewide Voices of Children contest for Kinship Children. Winners and their families met with Governor Gregoire for an Award and Recognition Ceremony held on June 25, 2010 in Olympia, WA.
- Facilitated four Kinship Family Support Groups in the three-county area. Local specialists and resource personnel provided educational trainings at these group meetings.
- The Kinship Navigator participated on the Child Only TANF re-design team chaired by Tom Berry, Economic Services Administration; this group reviewed current policy and submitted recommendations to DSHS for improving the program.
- Continued to coordinate with local and state Children's Administration personnel to raise awareness of resources available to relative caregivers. This has resulted in improved collaboration and increased referrals to the Kinship Navigator program.

In Whatcom County, several networks focused on kinship issues:

The *Whatcom County Collaborative* highlights include:

- Planning and Facilitation of Caregiver Appreciation Events: 260-280 caregivers and children attended the Holiday Winter and Summer Carnival events.
- In May 2010 the Northwest Regional Council received a \$2,500 grant from Whatcom Community Foundation for Kinship Respite Care Services.
- Collaborative meetings with the Northwest Regional Council and local youth and family service organizations.
- Camp Scholarship opportunities for relative children, resulting in summer camp services for 15 relative children.
- Free monthly Kinship Non-Parental Custody Clinic began at Northwest Regional Council on July 28, 2010. This service is a collaborative effort between LAW Advocates of Whatcom County and Northwest Regional Council. There are ongoing collaborative efforts between Northwest Regional Council, Rebound, YMCA, and local licensed child care providers to provide respite services for relative caregivers.

The *Whatcom County Kinship Partnership Group* includes: LAW Advocates, DSHS, Brigid Collins Family Support Center, Whatcom County Readiness to Learn, Opportunity Council, Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center and Northwest Regional Council staff. This group meets quarterly and supports Kinship Navigator activities.

The *Whatcom County Family and Community Network* provides collaboration through monthly “Family 2 Family” meetings, which includes the Children’s Administration, community organizations, and support groups. This group also works with Fostering Together to organize support groups and hold recognition events. Brigid Collins Family Support Center, Catholic Community Services, and the Resource Family Training Institute collaborate to provide training specifically targeted to kinship caregiver needs.

The *Pierce County Kinship Care Group* meets bi-monthly to provide networking and information sharing opportunities. Guest speakers are frequently invited to talk on subjects of interest to the caregivers.

A Poem
*Live Love Laughter
Family Friends forever
Ready to catch me when
I fall. Our Love and Laughter
Will go on forever. And how
Their always there for me
When I need them. I'm glade
Their mine forever and ever.*

Becky Marie, Silver Creek, WA Age 13

Activities to Support Kinship Care Families 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.

DSHS Collaborations Supporting Kinship Care

In the spring of 2010, a cross-agency workgroup was formed to address the issues of kinship care families. The group started with the Children's Administration, the Aging and Disability Services Administration, and the Economic Services Administration reconvening a collaborative group that had met in the past. This core group quickly decided that a comprehensive approach to meeting kinship caregiver needs required a broader collaboration. The group now meets regularly and includes:

- Children's Administration
- Aging and Disability Services Administration
- Economic Services Administration
- Department of Early Learning
- Department of Health
- Medicaid Purchasing Administration
- Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration
- Planning, Performance, and Accountability

The group has identified six key goals for 2010-2011: addressing food insecurity in kinship families, improving children's access to medical and mental health care, improving the health of caregivers, promoting children's readiness to learn, improving caregiver access to information and resources, and improving access to respite care. The group continues to work on strategies for meeting these needs.

Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act - (H.R. 6893)

The Federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (H.R. 6893) was passed in October of 2008. The focus of this legislation is to help children and youth in foster care by promoting permanent families for them through relative guardianship and adoption and improving education and health care. Fostering Connections Program

Instructions were received in 2010 that clarified some of the requirements and allowed the Children's Administration to move ahead with additional planning.

Recent implementation activities in CA that may positively impact kinship placements include:

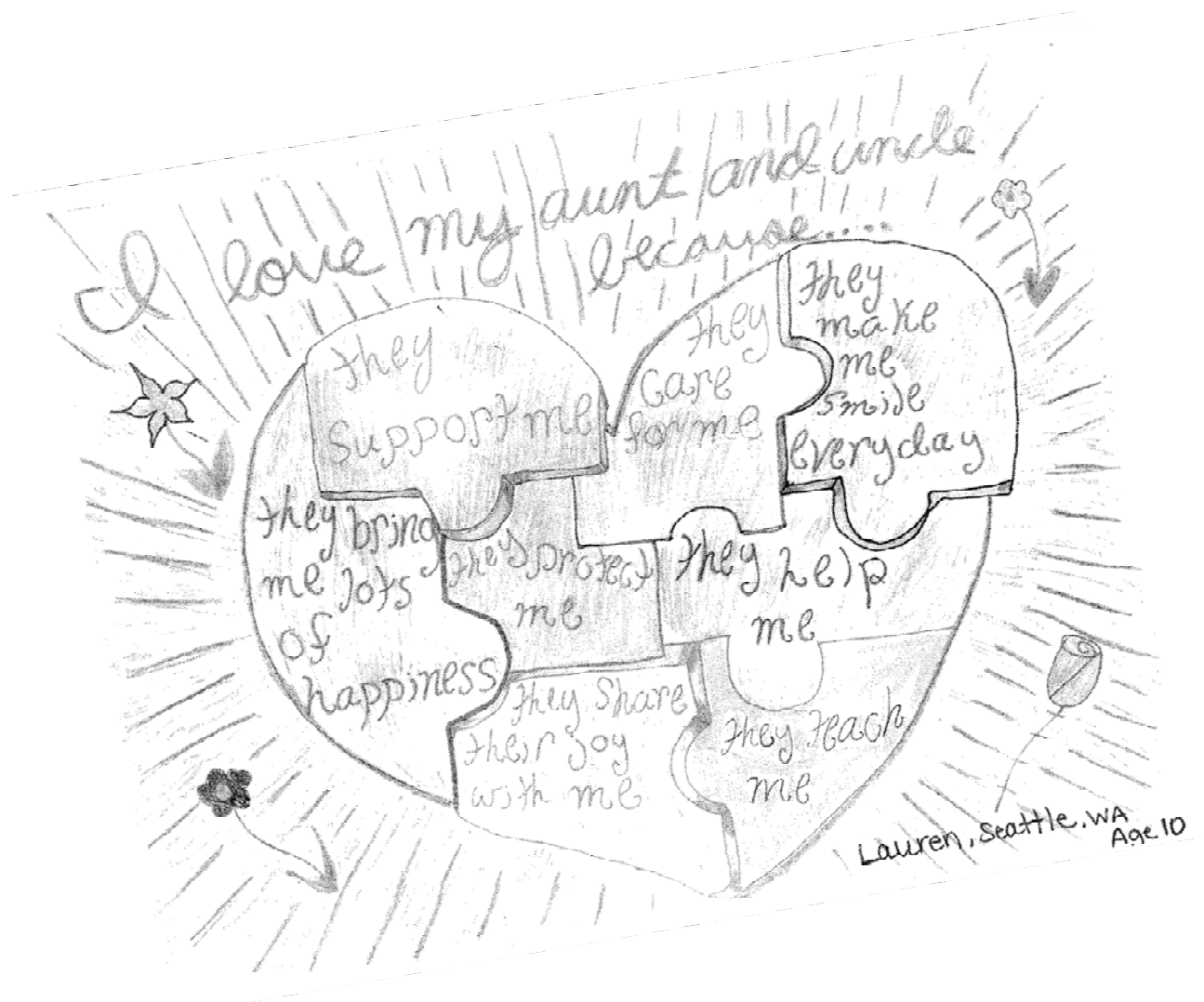
- The state's subsidized relative guardianship program (R-GAP) is in operation and is being closely monitored to ensure success.
- The 30 day letter notifying relatives of a child's placement has just been revised to include information about R-GAP, and to bring it into alignment with the recent clarifications received regarding Fostering Connections. Social workers are effectively using this new tool and are more diligently researching relative resources very early in a case.
- The Foster Care to 21 program, which allows youth to stay in care after age 18 if they are in a post-high school education or training program, has been continued as a result of Fostering Connections.
- Licensed Resources is encouraging relative caregivers to become licensed in order to increase eligibility for R-GAP. The Division of Licensed Resources Administrator will visit kinship coordinators with the AAAs to explore barriers to licensing and receive input regarding strategies to increase the number of licensed relatives.
- We now have agreements with 188 school districts across the state, covering 91 percent of the children in out-of-home care. Regional Education Coordinators have facilitated ongoing, positive communication with schools and they continue to work on those relationships and on completing agreements with the remaining school districts with kids in care in their catchment areas.
- CA social work practices are resulting in more siblings being placed together.
- Policy has been revised to provide the same supports and resources to relative caregiver families as are provided to foster families. This means that now relative caregivers are eligible for such resources as clothing vouchers, transportation reimbursement, and respite.
- CA has convened a relative framework workgroup to look at practice regarding relative families and rewrite the Relative Framework Guidebook to provide better information and direction to social workers.
- CA has located relative search specialists in each region to help locate relatives when children come into out-of-home care.

Training

Kinship caregivers are able to access all training available through the CA Resource Family Training Institute (RFTI). This includes self-directed online workshops, online video trainings, and classroom trainings. At this point, classroom trainings are only available to "informal" kinship caregivers on a first come/first served basis. Some training is developed specific to kinship caregivers.

The RFTI Lending Library was begun in July, 2009 and made available to all caregivers. More than 500 caregivers have used the library since it began. It continues to be a valuable resource for educational material for caregivers.

Parenting a Second Time Around (PASTA) is a dynamic two-day facilitators' training to better help meet the parenting needs of relatives raising children. This training was developed by Cornell University Cooperative Extension and is presented annually. Over the past seven years Aging and Disability Services Administration has co-sponsored the training with Washington State University Extension and various community organizations. After attending the workshop, participants present two workshops on one or more of the curriculum topics in their local communities over the next year. Among the various topics, the training includes: rebuilding a family; grief and loss; relatives and teens living together; addressing high-risk behaviors, effective discipline; protecting and planning for child's future; and locating resources and support.



ATTACHMENT 1

2002 Kinship Care Report Recommendations and Status Report

2002 Recommendations High Priority/Short-Term	2010 Status
Strengthen relative search process	<p>Social workers have adjusted their practice to include new policies implemented in the past year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social workers are asking parents about relative resources by 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 that searches other databases for information.
Create Kinship Navigator positions	<p>The receipt of a federal Family Connection demonstration grant by Catholic Family and Child Services in southeast WA has expanded kinship navigation services in an the 8-county, rural and urban area that surrounds Benton/Franklin county and also includes a Tribal Navigator which can serve the Yakama Nation.</p>
Implement aggressive public education and awareness campaign on kinship care issues	<p>The annual <i>Voices of Children</i> award ceremony with the 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>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 filling out the form appropriately.</p> <p>DSHS has developed a new on-line benefits portal which may assist relative caregivers in accessing benefits.</p>

2002 Recommendations High Priority/Short-Term	2010 Status
Create an education/medical consent waiver	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. There is also no education waiver in statute. The Oversight Committee continues to assess whether a statute related to education is warranted. The brochure on medical consent has been updated and reprinted.
Establish a legal services pilot project	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.
Create a statewide respite care inventory	A three-year Lifespan Respite grant awarded ADSA/DSHS in 2010 will be used to improve access and information about available respite care services for caregivers of individuals of all ages.
Establish a support services fund for relative caregivers	<p>The Kinship Caregivers Support Program receives \$1 million per year (DSHS/ADSA). 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 allocated \$800,000 for FY 11 to support kinship families with open child welfare cases.</p>
Support Lifespan Respite Act and position state to receive funding	The federal grant is providing \$189, 000 over 3 years for lifespan respite programs (see above).

2002 Recommendations High Priority/Long Term	2010 Status
Provide full TANF payment for second and additional children in 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	The DSHS Kinship Workgroup is an example of the commitment to collaboration among four state agencies serving kinship families.
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. The Oversight Committee will continue to advocate for provision of CASA services to kinship families.
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 awarded two, 15- month, \$20,000 grants (through 12/31/2012) to two Area Agencies on Aging (one eastern, one western WA) where innovative respite programs for kinship caregivers of children will develop.</p>
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. ADSA co-sponsors the Parenting a Second Time Around Facilitator Training in collaboration with Washington State University Extension and local community organizations.

2002 Recommendations Medium Priority/Short-Term	2010 Status
Increase oversight and accountability for non-parent caregivers on TANF	This is being looked at in the TANF redesign.
Incorporate kinship families in Special Children Health Care Needs pilot	No formal action steps have been developed to address this.
Fund legal information packet and website	The Options for Grandparents and Other Nonparental Caregivers legal resources guide, developed by Legal Voices of Seattle, continues to be published and distributed. Additionally, a DVD on WA 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 professional in their communities, including judges, attorneys, and other service providers. Judges and attorneys sit on task forces, advisory committees and such 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	2010 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 ten percent of the funding to our state (through ADSA) 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.

ATTACHMENT 2

Washington State's Kinship Navigators

- **King County:** Senior Services of Seattle - King County
Kinship Navigator: Helen Sawyer, helens@seniorservices.org, 206-727-6264
- **Asotin, Benton, Columbia, Franklin, Garfield, Kittitas, Yakima, and Walla Walla Counties:** Catholic Family and Child Services –Yakima
Kinship Navigator: Mary Pleger, mpleger@cfcyakima.org, 509-965-7100 or 800-246-2962
- **Spanish Speaking Kinship Navigator:** Terri Aguilera-Flemming
taguileraflemming@cfcyakima.org, 509-965-7100 or 1-800-246-2962, part-time
 - **Benton and Franklin Counties**
Kinship Navigator: (Spanish Speaking) Jennifer Pacheco*
jpacheco@cfcstricities.org, 509- 946-4645
 - **Columbia, Garfield, Walla Walla, and Aostin Counties**
Kinship Navigator Leslie Hamilton* lhamilton@cfcstricities.org, 509.522-8220

* Funded by Federal Grant-Fostering Connections
- **Lewis, Mason and Thurston Counties:** Family Education and Support Services
Kinship Navigator: Lynn Urvina, KinNavigator@qwestoffice.net, 360-754-7629
- **Pierce County:** HopeSparks
Kinship Navigator: Roslyn Alber, ralber@cfgcpc.org, 253-565-4484 ext. 104
- **Spokane and Whitman Counties:** Elder Services - Spokane Mental Health
Kinship Navigator: Angela Andreas aandreas@smhca.org, 509-458-7450 x3080
- **Ferry, Pend Oreille and Stevens Counties:** Rural Resources
Kinship Navigator: Vicki Pontecorvo, vpontecorvo@ruralresources.org, 509-684-3932 (part-time)
- **Chelan, Douglas and Okanogan Counties:** Catholic Family and Child Services
Kinship Navigator: Jennifer Santillan, jsantillan@ccyakima.org, 1-509-662-6761 ext. 4557 or 1-800-261-1094, Jennifer Santillan
- **Grant, Lincoln, and Adams Counties:** Catholic Family and Child Services
Kinship Navigator, Contact Susie Tryon, stryon@ccyakima.org or Jennifer Santillan, jsantillan@ccyakima.org, 800-261-1094 and 800-765-4778

- **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
- **Whatcom County:** Northwest Regional Council (AAA)
Kinship Navigator: Laina Berry, BerryLS@dshs.wa.gov, 360-676-6749 (part-time)

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