



Department of  
Children & Family Services  
*Building a Stronger Louisiana*

# RELATIVE/KIN FOSTER CAREGIVERS



# Expectations & Resources

Thank you for choosing to be a relative/kin foster caregiver. When children and youth cannot safely remain in their home, **staying with relatives or close family friends can minimize trauma and protect their connections** to family, community and their cultural roots. Your established relationship, shared family ties, cultural experiences, beliefs, etc. **can help the child adjust better** to being away from his or her parents.

## An Overview of Relative/Kin Foster Care



### Pre-Certified

The child in your care may have been placed with you before you become a certified foster caregiver, but usually after you and other adult members of your household have passed criminal and agency clearances. During this time, you will not receive a monthly board payment for the child in your home. However, DCFS will provide the child with a Medicaid card and pay for or reimburse you for most expenses related to the child's education, recreation, and transportation needs. You can also apply for the [Kinship Care Subsidy Program](#), which provides cash assistance for each eligible child who resides with a qualified relative other than a parent.

All non-certified relative/kin caregivers are expected to move forward with the certification process immediately after the child joins the family.

### Certified

In order to become a certified relative/kin foster caregiver, you must complete the following:

- A home study and required trainings
- A criminal background check
- Child abuse/neglect registry clearances

Once you are certified, you will receive a monthly board payment for the child in your home, as well as a Medicaid card for the child. DCFS will continue to pay for or reimburse you for most expenses related to the child's education, recreation, and transportation needs. Any assistance from the Kinship Care Subsidy Program ceases after you become a certified caregiver and begin receiving the board payment.

## Role & Responsibilities of a Relative/Kin Foster Caregiver

### ■ Basic Care

All children looked after by relative/kin foster caregivers have the right to a safe home and adequate care. At a minimum, caregivers should:

- ✓ Provide for their daily needs of food, clothing, and shelter
- ✓ Offer emotional care and support
- ✓ Monitor the child's medical, dental, psychological, and emotional needs and secure appropriate treatment as needed
- ✓ Assure the child, as age appropriate, is enrolled and attending school
- ✓ Provide an opportunity for the child to have normal childhood experiences
- ✓ Provide guidance, supervision, nurturing, and affection



## ■ Working With Your Foster Care Team



In addition to the list above, certified relative/kin foster caregivers should be active members of the team that is working to help the child and his or her family achieve the goals established by that family.

As a relative/kin foster caregiver, you agree to:

- Support the child's ties to the biological family, including supporting visits with the family, DCFS workers and a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)
- Maintain regular communication and share information about the child with DCFS case workers
- Participate in and/or request meetings to support the child's needs and goals, including Family Team Meetings, court hearings, and school meetings
- Support the child's right to confidentiality about their life and circumstances
- Refrain from using corporal punishment
- Cooperate with the agency in obtaining and maintaining certification as a foster caregiver
- Provide a permanent home for the child should reunification not occur

## Role & Responsibilities of DCFS

DCFS is committed to supporting quality parenting and care for children while they are unable to reside with their parents. We work to provide all possible supports, training, information, and assistance needed to enable you, as the caregiver, to meet each child's unique needs and provide quality care.

Once a child has been placed in your home through DCFS, you can expect:

- Support to ensure the child maintains a bond with biological parents and others with whom he or she has a strong relationship
- A case worker to complete a thorough home study and criminal records check, reference checks and child abuse/neglect clearances
- At least monthly visits in the home to continue assessing the child's status, monitor safety, and to provide supportive services to the child and caregiver
- Support and encouragement of a team approach when making decisions for the child
- Notification of court hearings and team meetings and an expectation of participation
- Assistance in ensuring the child's physical, emotional, developmental, and educational needs are met
- Assessment and/or referral to determine if the child is eligible for other financial benefits
- Support to provide quality parenting, including the child's participation in activities normally associated with the child's age and development



## Relative/Kin Foster Caregiver Resources

As a relative/kin foster caregiver, you may find yourself in a difficult position of trying to provide for the child's needs while addressing the parents' involvement with the agency. Parenting in any circumstance requires assistance, and being a relative/kin caregiver can often come with unexpected needs.



There are benefits for the child and assistance in providing care, which are listed below. You can contact these resources to find out if you qualify for assistance in meeting the needs of the child and reducing stress on your family.

### ■ DCFS Resources & Support Services

DCFS offers the following programs and services to support relative/kin caregivers both outside and inside of foster care.

- **[Kinship Care Subsidy Program](#)** (KCSP), based on income, provides cash assistance for each eligible child who resides with a qualified relative other than a parent. Please note that this assistance ends when a relative/kin becomes a certified foster caregiver and begins receiving the monthly board payment.
- **[Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program](#)** (FITAP) provides cash assistance to families with children when the family's financial resources are insufficient to meet their basic needs.
- **[Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#)** (SNAP) provides eligible low-income families monthly benefits to help buy food.

For information on these programs, visit <https://dcfs.louisiana.gov/page/grandparent-relative-caregiver> or <https://dcfs.la.gov/grandparents>.

### ■ Other Resources & Support Services

- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) Information Center of Louisiana - information, resources, and support group services for relative/kin caregivers. [www.lagrg.org](http://www.lagrg.org) or 225-810-3555
- Medicaid and LaChip - Health insurance programs that provide health coverage to eligible low-income, uninsured children or families and families with disabled children.
- <https://ldh.la.gov/subhome/1>
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides income eligible families with children under age 5 food benefits and nutrition education. [www.louisianawic.org](http://www.louisianawic.org) or 1-800-251- BABY (1-800-251-2229)
- Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) helps low-income families pay for childcare while working or attending school or training. <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/early-childhood/child-care-assistance-program> or 1-877-453-2721
- Social Security Survivor Benefits, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), benefits for disabled children and children of disabled parents, and Social Security cards. [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) or 1-800-772-1213
- Information on legal topics and locating low cost legal aid in your community. [www.LouisianaLawHelp.org](http://www.LouisianaLawHelp.org)
- Obtaining a birth certificate. [www.ldh.la.gov/subhome/21](http://www.ldh.la.gov/subhome/21)
- Louisiana 211 connects callers to information about critical health and human services available in their community. **[Louisiana 211](#)**, call 2-1-1, or text your zip code to 898-211