



February 2020

Dear {!Contact.FirstName},

Momentum Gaining for Kinship Care

What is kinship care? That's a question that we hear often, and now it seems like even more people are interested in learning about it. With the relentless advocacy of many kinship caregivers, the numerous town halls and panels held Downriver through the Guidance Center's Grandparents Raising Grandchildren group, and the first annual Relative Care Day at the Capitol, the attention from Lansing lawmakers is increasing.

Two new bills were introduced in early February to create the kinship navigator program ([HB 5444](#)) in statute and to create the Kinship Care Advisory Committee ([HB 5443](#)). We are grateful for the legislative sponsors, Representative Kathy Crawford, R-Nov, and Representative Frank Liberati, D-Allen Park.

The House Committee on Families, Children and Seniors also held a meeting to hear about kinship care on February 5th. The Committee members had a special presentation from [A Second Chance](#), a foster care provider that delivers kinship support services in two counties in Pennsylvania. Lawmakers also heard from our partners Deb Frisbie from Adoptive Family Support Network (AFSN), Lisa Grodsky from the Oakland-Livingston Human Services Agency (OLHSA) Grandparents Raising Grandchildren and Anita Rotherth and Christina Wasilewski from the Guidance Center Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, who spoke about the challenges and barriers that kinship families experience. We expect that there will be additional meetings on the topic in the coming weeks.

In addition to the legislative energy, around 30 service providers and family leaders gathered in early February to launch the Michigan Kinship Care Coalition. At its' first organizational meeting, the Coalition adopted its' mission and vision:

Mission

The Michigan Kinship Care Coalition (MKCC) is an inclusive network of voices collaborating to strengthen and increase support for kinship families through advocacy, increased education, and raised awareness to equip all families to thrive.

Vision

Our vision is to bring together diverse allies to ensure all kinship families have access to the support they need to provide a vibrant future for the children in their care.

Please reach out to Alicia Guevara Warren at guevara3@msu.edu, if you're interested in getting involved with the MKCC.



New in Washtenaw County: Program Funds Kids' Activities

With the support of the Area Agency on Aging Region 1-B, the Kinship Care Respite Program has been expanded to Washtenaw County kinship caregivers!

The program is a resource for full-time, kinship caregivers age 55 and older who reside in Clinton, Eaton, Ingham, and now Washtenaw counties.

The program provides rest, relief, and a break from everyday caregiving by assisting the full-time caregiver to arrange and pay for an activity for their child to attend.

Activities may include:

- Child care
- Sports camp

Census 2020: Be Counted!

Did you know that young children and children living in kinship families are more likely to be missed in Census counts? You might wonder why it is such a big deal to fill out the Census form correctly.

The State of Michigan receives millions of dollars from the federal government to help support programs like foster care, child care, Head Start, special education, Medicaid, highway construction and planning—and much more. The funding amount is based on the number of people counted through the Census, which only occurs every 10 years, so undercounts and not being counted will have lasting effects on Michigan programs.

[Read more about the Census 2020 and](#)

- Summer class
- Extra-curricular activities
- After-school care/activities

Please contact the Kinship Care Resource Center at 1-800-535-1218 or kinship@msu.edu to see if you are eligible.

Flyers and brochures are also available for service providers to distribute to families.

The Area Agency on Aging Region 1-B provides funding support for Washtenaw County.

In Clinton, Eaton and Ingham counties, the program is funded by the Federal Older Americans Act grant provided to the Tri-County Office on Aging.

[what to expect](#). More information can also be found on the [Be Counted Michigan 2020 website](#).

Head Start Enrollment Guidance

The Kinship Care Resource Center and Chance at Childhood had the pleasure of spending the day with the Michigan Head Start Association and staff from local sites earlier this month to talk about kinship families and their participation in Head Start programs.

The federal Office of Head Start released an information memo with some guidance to improve enrollment for children in kinship families. There are three main categories that can be used to qualify children being raised by relatives:

1. Public Assistance
2. Foster Care
3. Homelessness

[Read more from the Information Memo.](#)

Caregiver Parenting Resource: Screen Time

With children of all ages surrounded by technology and easy access on cell phones and tablets, it can be difficult to limit their screen time, navigate how to set parental controls and monitor the information they see online. However, more and more research is showing how important it is to limit the amount of time kids spend watching TV or playing on their tablets. One [recent report](#) found that limiting screen time for toddlers and young children can lead to healthier behaviors later in life.

[Common Sense Media](#) has several [guides and resources by children's age groups](#) to help caregivers set schedules and manage screen time.

Kinship Support Groups: Update Your Contact & Meeting Information

To increase awareness of kinship support group meetings and contact information for caregivers, the new [Kinship Care](#)

Save the Date: Older Michiganians Day

Older Michiganians Day event on the Capitol Lawn will be on May 12, 2020. This annual advocacy event brought over 1,000 people together in 2019 from across the state to voice support for older adult services, which includes assistance for older kinship caregivers. To learn more and keep up-to-date on the day, please visit the [website](#).

About Older Michiganians Day: This advocacy event is a day for older adults and professionals from the statewide aging network to celebrate our growing senior population and consider policies and budget decisions that are senior friendly. Programming includes presentation of Senior of the Year award and remarks from state policy makers. State Representatives and Senators are invited to join us for lunch to talk with constituents.

Kinship Care in the News

In the fall, Alicia Guevara Warren, Director

[Resource Center website](#) includes a [calendar](#) and contact information for support group meetings across the state. If your meeting or contact information needs to be updated or if your group information is missing, please send an email to kinship@msu.edu.

of the Kinship Care Resource Center, had the opportunity to chat with Russ White at WKAR about kinship care and the services that the Kinship Care Resource Center provides.

[Listen to the podcast.](#)

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