



Home Licensing and Support Services Information Session for Texas Kinship Families

Hosted By:
Kinship Advocates of Texas



Welcome

Kinship Advocates of Texas (KAT) strives to effectively advocate for kinship families and implement justifiable solutions to challenges that prevent children from successfully being placed in kinship care.

Our monthly home licensing and support services information session for kinship families. The reason for these sessions is to provide thorough details on the home licensing process and make you aware of Statewide resources for kinship families.

Child Placing Agencies that advocate for kinship care will also be in attendance, representing various regions across Texas. We are grateful for your time and involvement today!

Key Terminology

Kinship Caregiver

Raising of children by grandparents, aunt, uncle, cousin, and other extended family members

Fictive Kinship Caregiver

Unrelated adult who has an emotionally significant relationship to the child and/or biological family and provides care to a child

Unverified Kinship Caregiver

CPS involved with child case, but caregiver is **NOT** licensed as a foster/adoptive parent

Verified (Licensed) Kinship Caregiver

CPS involved with child case and caregiver **IS** licensed as a foster/adoptive parent

Kinship Reimbursement Payment

Eligible kinship caregivers receive \$23.45 per day, per child payment for up to 12 months

Reunification

Child returns to the care of parent(s) of origin

Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC)

Kinship/Fictive Kinship caregiver is legally responsible for the child without having to adopt

Permanency Care Assistance (PCA)

After PMC benefits include monthly financial assistance and health care coverage for the child to age 18

Adoption

Once biological parent parental rights are terminated, the legal process that permanently joins a child to the kinship/fictive kinship family

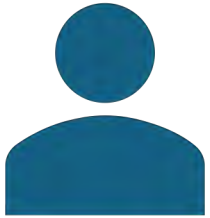
Adoption Subsidy

After Adoption benefits include adoption fee reimbursement, monthly financial assistance, and health coverage for the child to age 18

Waivers and Variances

Exceptions that can be made with compliance to licensing rules without compromising safety of children

The Child's Team



**CPS Caseworker
Kinship Worker
Kinship Specialist
Permanency Specialist**



Child's Attorney



**Medical/Mental
Health Providers**



**Biological Parents and
Other Family Members**



Child Placing Agency



**CASA/Child
Advocates**



Family Court Judge



**Relative/Fictive
Kinship Family**

Unverified Caregivers

CPS has conservatorship of the child in their care

CPS approved you through the home-assessment process

You are not a verified home receiving a monthly stipend



Unverified Caregivers Benefits

The Kinship Reimbursement Payment

- Your total household income is not more than 300% over the federal poverty limit (e.g. household size of 4; FPL \$31,200 / 300% FPL \$93,600)
- Total family income must include all household members. This includes parents and anyone who moved in on or after the child was placed in your home
- Monthly payment per child (\$703.50); time-limited
- DFPS can provide kinship reimbursements to caregivers for up to 12 months, with an option for an extension of up to six months if the agency finds good cause

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

- If you are related to the child by blood, marriage, or adoption, the (TANF) program may provide financial assistance and Medicaid for the child
- If you qualify for TANF and are a grandparent, great-grandparent, or great-great-grandparent, you may be eligible for an additional one-time payment of \$1,000 (called a “TANF Grandparent Grant”) to help buy initial items for the child

Verified Caregivers Benefits

- Reimbursement payments do not have a time or income eligibility limit
- Still have access to government-based benefits
- Provides path to future eligibility for the Permanency Care Assistance Program or Adoption Subsidy - monthly stipend, medical insurance, college tuition reimbursement, post permanency services



Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC) with Permanency Care Assistance (PCA)

CPS ruled out returning child back to birth parents BUT adoption is not an option

- Permanency Care Assistance - monthly financial stipend, Medical insurance, College tuition assistance
- Provides path for future eligibility for Post Permanency Support Services
- Required to be verified to qualify for the PCA benefits.

Adoption

- Birth parent's rights are terminated
- Adoption Legal fees covered by DFPS
- Adoption Assistance - monthly financial stipend, Medical insurance, College tuition assistance
- Provides path for future eligibility for Post Adoption Support Services
- Required to be verified to qualify for subsidy benefits.



Adoption Assistance

Eligibility requirements for children

- 6 years old or older
- 2 years old and a member of racial or ethnic minority
- Belong to a sibling group placed in the same home.
- Diagnosed disability that is a handicapping condition (mental, physical, or emotional).

Length of Adoption Assistance

- Child is eligible for adoption assistance until their 18th birthday.
- If the child leaves the home or the family no longer legally supports the child
- Child is removed or if the adoption disrupts.



A black and white photograph of a person walking up a wide staircase. The person is silhouetted against a bright light source at the top of the stairs, creating a lens flare effect. The staircase is flanked by dark, textured walls with metal handrails. The overall mood is one of upward movement and transition.

Changes to Kinship Licensing Requirements



Changes to Licensing

- Training Requirements- caregivers will have more time to complete training and several training topics were removed or cut in hours.
 - Psychotropic training by a nurse no longer required
 - General pre-service cut down to 4 hours

Disclaimer caregivers still must complete all trainings required by DFPS and SSCCs contracts.
- Licensing age dropped to 18- this will be considered on the case-by-case basis
- One Spouse can now be licensed- it removes additional steps of interviewing prior spouse. We must still confirm they do not live together.
- CPAs can utilize DFPS or SSCCs Home Assessments
 - This is applicable to meet the foster standard; however, CPA's must still assess and ensure the adoption standards are met.

Changes to Licensing cont.

- Requirements regarding income have changed we are still required to assess that caregivers have sufficient income or access to sufficient resources to support the household and all children in care.
- Capacity Ratios are now 1 caregiver per 6 children
Disclaimer foster licensed homes must still meet the 24-hour Awake requirements when there are more than 6 children in the home
- Kinship homes can only provide respite services to kinship children- caregivers licensed under kinship standards cannot accept unrelated placements or offer respite to unrelated children.
- Transportation- vehicle insurance no longer required. CPA must still assess for safety and space.
- Weapons- CPA does not have to see all weapons but does need to know how they are being stored. Children/youth in care need approval from service plan team prior to being allowed to use projectile toys.

Changes to Licensing Home Environment

- Inspections- Home and Fire Inspections are still required. The forms have been updated.
 - Environmental Inspection- Form 4005
 - Fire Evaluation- Can be created by CPA
- Only one fire extinguisher required but must be operable. No weight requirement.
- Pet vaccinations are no longer required. CPA must assess animal condition and safety.
- Medication must be stored where it is inaccessible to children.
- No requirements on square footage of rooms or dimensions on sketch plans.
- Children (does not include infants) can now share beds with siblings or other relatives. CPA must assess for safety.
- Children are allowed to sleep on different surfaces deemed appropriate (sofa, futon, air mattress)

Pathway to Kinship Home Licensing

Step 1: Select a child placing agency within your area

Step 2: Attend an initial orientation

Step 3: Background Checks

Step 4: Home file paperwork

Step 5: Kinship Caregiver Training

Step 6: Home inspection

Step 7: Final file review

Step 8: Home Study

Step 9: Final Verification

Step 10: Home Opening

Step 11: Ongoing Home monitoring & support

Step 12: Permanency

Step 1
**Select a Child
Placing Agency
Within Your Area**

DFPS Kinship caseworker
provides a list of Child Placing
Agencies (CPA) in your area



Caregiver determines which
agency fits best for their family



Caregiver contacts the agency to
schedule an initial orientation

Step 2

Attend an Initial Orientation

- Caregivers will receive information about expectations required for becoming a licensed caregiver for one of the following programs:
 - Foster to Reunification
 - Foster to PMC with PCA
 - Foster to Adopt
 - Straight Adopt
- Orientations may vary between agencies
 - Often offered virtually or in person
 - Individually or in groups

This is a great opportunity to ask questions!

Step 3 Background Checks

- The agency you select will run a background check (criminal history - name and fingerprint-based, Central Registry) for every caregiver, household members over the age of 14, frequent visitors to your home, and babysitters.
- Application for background check and instructions for fingerprinting will be provided by the agency.
- **Risk Assessment** can be completed if the individual has criminal history or history of child abuse and neglect. Background check department assesses severity and relevance to determine the level of risk.

Step 4

Home File Paperwork

All Agencies follow the same Statewide requirements

Below are some general documentation that will be collected.
Agency will provide you with a more detail list.

Identifying
information
*(all household
members)*

Pet Questionnaire
(if applicable)

Domestic Violence
Statement

Health Statement

Weapon/Firearm
Acknowledgment

Step 5

Kinship Caregiver Training

Training requirements will vary by agency. Below is a brief description of what to expect

- Instructor Led Trainings - may be offer in person or virtually
- Self-Instructional trainings - training you take on your own time.
- The licensed caregivers and anyone who will provide unsupervised care for the child will need to take pre-service training.
Requirements will vary by agency and the individual's role.
- General training topics across most agencies:
 - CPR/First Aid
 - Online DFPS training
 - Emergency Behavior Intervention Training
 - Trauma Focused Topics
 - Human Trafficking
 - Other topics

Step 6 Home Inspection



Agency representative will verify that the home is clean and safe for children



Inspection will include fire safety and environmental checklists



Sleep area of the child(ren) will be observed as well as other areas based on minimum standards and requirements from the child placing agency

Step 7

Final File Review



Agency reviews the completed home file



There are various criteria that a home file must meet to be considered ready for home study (may depend on the agency)



Once all requirements are met, the family is referred for a home study



Agencies can submit waivers or variances for certain standards (rules) your home may not meet. The exceptions can not pose as a safety concern to children placed in your home.

Step 8 Home Study

- The foster/adoptive home study has a similar format to the kinship study
- All household members must be present for the interview
- Important to provide honest and forthright responses to the questions with as many details as possible
- There may be follow-up questions after the interview is complete
- References may be required based on agency

Step 9 Final Verification

The average home study/kinship assessment is reviewed in 3 - 6 weeks



Upon approval, the home is opened as a licensed home for one of the following:

- Foster to Reunification
- Foster to PMC
- Foster to Adopt
- Straight Adopt

Step 10 Home Opening

- Family signs home opening paperwork
- An official home license is given to the family
- If the home is licensed as a foster home, the daily reimbursement starts on the date of foster placement (this date is coordinated with DFPS caseworker and the agency)
- If the home is approved as an adoptive home, the DFPS caseworker prepares the packet for subsidy negotiation (may take up to 30 business days). Once negotiated, adoption placement can be coordinated with DFPS caseworker and the agency

Kinship Verification Reimbursement

- Reimbursement provides up to \$750 paid to a kinship caregiver after completion of foster home verification.
- Intended to offset costs associated with the verification process and is not intended to offset any costs incurred by the CPA working to verify the family.
- The Kinship Worker assists the family in requesting and obtaining this financial resource.
- This is a reimbursement for costs already paid – not paid ahead.
- There is no income level base requirement for this reimbursement.
- Not all Kinship placements will require this benefit, and not all expenditures would be \$750.

Step 11 Ongoing Home Monitoring & Support

- Monthly visits from DFPS caseworker and Agency worker will continue until permanency plan is executed
- Sample inspection from Residential Child Care Regulation Inspector may occur in some cases. This is to verify that the home is compliant with standards, and appropriate services are being rendered by the child placing agency.
- Caregivers will submit monthly progress reports to update CPS workers on the status of the child(ren) in the home

Step 12 Permanency

Reunification

Child returns to the care of biological parent(s)

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Post Adoption/ Post Permanency Services

Casework and Personalized Permanency Planning

- Parent Education
- Support Groups
- Counseling
- Respite Care
- Information and Referrals
- 24-hour crisis intervention
- Residential Treatment Services (post adoption only)

Frequently Asked Home Licensing Questions

- **What is the typical duration of the licensing process?**
 - Generally, most agencies can guide families through the process within a timeframe of 3 to 6 months.
- **What are the financial benefits for foster care and adoption?**
 - The average monthly foster care payment is approximately \$854.00, while the adoption subsidy and PCA average around \$400.00 per month.
- **Will there be changes to medical insurance following adoption or adoption placement?**
 - Yes, medical insurance will transition from Superior Health (Foster Care Medicaid) to one of the STAR Medicaid Plans.
- **If I am married but separated, have criminal history, or do not have legal citizenship, am I still eligible to participate in the home licensing process?**
 - Yes! The selected child placing agency can guide you through the steps for these specific status.

Frequently Asked Home Licensing Questions

- **What expenses should I anticipate during the home licensing process?**
 - Child placing agencies typically do not impose fees. However, families may need to cover costs for fingerprinting caregivers and household members aged 14 and older, and safety equipment. Some agencies may cover these expenses for kinship families and CPS reimburses up to \$700.00 after home is active through the Kinship Verification Program.
- **How many training classes am I required to complete?**
 - Usually, caregivers need to complete up to 35 hours of training, which varies based on the needs of the child. Most agencies currently provide this training in a virtual format. While it may seem extensive, the content is engaging and progresses quickly, with many caregivers finding the information beneficial.
- **After achieving permanency, will there still be visits from "people" in my home?**
 - NO! However, post-adoption or permanency services will remain accessible to the child(ren) until they reach 18 years of age.

Summary of the Pathway to Home Licensing



Child Placing Agencies

Listing of Child Placing Agencies in your area

<https://tacfs.org/resources-insights/kinship/>

Statewide Resources for Kinship Families

- Resources for Employment and Financial Stability for Kinship Care <https://everytexan.org/our-work/policy-areas/worker-power-thriving-families/kids-living-with-relatives/>
- Family Help Link Texas Law Help <http://www.texaslawhelp.org/familyhelplink>
- Kinship Navigator Program providing State-Wide assistance in Texas https://www.dfps.texas.gov/Child_Protection/Kinship_Care/default.asp
- Family Support Services <https://fss.hhs.texas.gov/programs/default.asp>
- Texas Grandparents Raising Grandchildren(TXGRG) <https://www.txgrg.com/>

Kinship Navigator Programs

- **REGION 1:** Lubbock - Catholic Charities <https://cclubbock.org/programs/>
- **REGION 3:** Ft. Worth - ACH Child and Family Services (also serves Tarrant, Parker, Palo Pinto, Johnson, and Hill Counties) <https://achservices.org/>
- **REGION 6:** Houston - Depelchin Children's Center <https://www.depelchin.org>

Questions

IF YOU HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS, PLEASE EMAIL AT:

KAT@TACFS.ORG

Thank you!