

NJ Kinship Connections

A Publication of the NJ Kinship Legal Guardianship Resource Clearing House



A PROGRAM OF CHILDREN'S AID AND FAMILY SERVICES

Fall 2010

Getting Involved in Your Child's School



For many grandparents, parenting the second time around can at first seem overwhelming, especially as the new school year begins. Grandparents raising grandchildren often need to be reminded that they bring not only a wealth of life experience, but often, the experience of school

involvement during their early parenting years.

According to the Children's Defense Fund, Grandparents and other relative caregivers may want to find new ways to participate in their children's educational and related activities. By being involved, they can build on what the children are doing in school when they are home.

In addition to volunteering to participate in school-sponsored parental activities, kinship caregivers should get involved in the Grand-

parents Club or Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) in their children's school. Many grandparents struggle to get clear answers from young kids when they ask, "What did you do in school today?" Those who volunteer may know more.

So how do you get involved?

- Begin by assessing your skill set. Are you an expert baker, eloquent storyteller, or master gardener? Applying skills that you

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Points of Interest:

- ◆ SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT IDEAS
- ◆ FIND YOUR LOCAL FAMILY SUPPORT ORGANIZATION
- ◆ LINK BETWEEN FAMILY DINNERS AND CHILD'S SUBSTANCE ABUSE RISK
- ◆ SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL GRANDPARENTS MONTH

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Family Support Organizations of NJ

Support, Advocacy, Education for Families and Caregivers

In 2004, the New Jersey Division of Child Behavioral Health Services began a bold initiative of funding a statewide organization with the purpose of establishing and supporting Family

Support Organizations (FSO) throughout the State of New Jersey.

Family Support Organizations are family-led, community-based non-profit agencies whose

mission is to provide support, advocacy, and education to families and caregivers of children with emotional, behavioral and mental health needs.

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Family Support Organizations of NJ

Support, Advocacy, Education for Families and Caregivers

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DID YOU KNOW?

THOSE FAMILIES WHO ACHIEVE KINSHIP LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP THROUGH DYFS MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR **FREE IN-HOME COUNSELING.**

TO LOCATE A PROVIDER NEAR YOU, CHECK OUT WWW.KINKONNECT.ORG OR CONTACT THE WARM-LINE AT 1-877-KLG-LINE (1-877-554-5463)

THE KINKONNECT FREE LENDING LIBRARY OFFERS ARTICLES AND BOOKS ON HUNDREDS OF TOPICS.

CONTACT A WARMLINE REPRESENTATIVE AT 1-877-KLG-LINE (1-877-554-5463) OR WARMLINE@KINKONNECT.ORG TO MAKE YOUR REQUEST.



Family Support Organizations provide:

- One-on-one, peer-to-peer support for families receiving Care Management services through the New Jersey Division of Child Behavioral Health Services.

- Support Groups, educational forums, and events for families in the community who have children with emotional, behavioral or mental health needs.
- Warm-lines for reassurance and information.
- Youth Partnerships.

- Opportunities for family leadership and parent/professional partnerships.

To locate a Family Support Organization in your County, log on to www.nj-alliance-fso.org or contact a KinKconnect warm-line representative at the KLG Warmline (877) 554-5463.

KinKconnect is proud to be partnering with the FSO of Morris-Sussex Counties to present a workshop to parents and caregivers addressing the challenges and techniques of dealing with a child's difficult history. This 1 ½ hour workshop will be held on October 28th at their Newton, NJ office beginning at 12:00 p.m. To learn more about this free event and to reserve your seat, please contact Patty at (973) 940-3194 or patty@fsohsw-ms.org. Reservations are appreciated, but not required. Visit www.fso-hsw.org to learn more about the FSO of Morris-Sussex Counties.

Getting Involved in Your Child's School

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enjoy and are passionate about can be rewarding for both you and the school, which may be facing serious budget cuts for special activities and/or after-school enrichment programs.

- Find out what is needed in your school to help you get an idea of how your skills may

be put to use. Set up an appointment with the teacher, guidance counselor and/or principal to learn how you may be able to support the school's needs.

- Work with the parent or grandparent club. Most Parent Teacher Organizations are open to members of the community, and most will be happy to have

your help. To find out more about local parent-teacher programs, kinship caregivers can contact the National Parent Teacher Association at (312) 670-6782 or visit www.pta.org.

For more information on how to support your child's school, visit www.grandparents.com/gp/content/expert-advice/education/article/how-to-support-

Dinner Makes a Difference!

Celebrate *Family Day*, Monday, September 27th

Where are they Eating?

Hopefully, they're sitting down at home with their parents, grandparents, or caregivers. According to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University, young people who eat dinner with their families at least five times a week are 70 percent less likely to abuse drugs, half as likely to smoke, one-third less likely to drink and more apt to get better grades.

Family Day - A Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children™ is a national movement to inform parents that the parental engagement fostered during frequent family dinners is an effective tool to help keep America's kids substance free. Family Day reminds parents that *Dinner Makes A Difference!*

Whether you're cooking a gourmet meal, ordering food from your favorite take-out place or eating on the go, rest assured that what your kids really want during dinnertime is **YOU!**

Family meals are the perfect time to talk to your kids and to listen to what's on their mind.



7 Secrets to Successful Family Dinners

1. Start the pattern of family dinners when children are young.
2. Encourage your children to create menu ideas and participate in meal preparation.
3. Turn off the TV and let your answering machine answer calls during dinnertime.
4. Talk about what happened in everyone's day: school, work, extracurricular activities or current events.
5. Establish a routine to start and end each meal. Light candles or tell a story.
6. After dinner play a board game or serve dessert to encourage the family to continue the conversation.
7. Keep conversation positive and make sure everyone gets a chance to speak.

For more ideas on how to make your Family Day dinner a success including downloadable word games, placemats, menu planners and recipes, and tips on how to raise a drug-free child, visit the official Family Day website at www.casafamilyday.org.

See You at
Dinner!

XOXO

Conversation Starters

Looking for a way to engage in conversations with your kids? Use these conversation starters for a fun way to get everyone talking.

- Where would you go for a dream vacation?
- If you could have any superpower, what would it be?
- What is your favorite thing you learned today?
- If you had to eat just one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?
- What book are you reading right now? What do you like about it? What do you dislike about it?

No PC? No Problem!

Contact a KinKconnect warm-line representative at the KLG Warmline (877) 554-5463 to request a copy of any article referenced in this newsletter.



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Children's Aid and Family Services is one of northern New Jersey's leading non-profit human service agencies. Since 1899, we have built better lives for thousands of disadvantaged children who have been abused, neglected, or abandoned. For more information, visit our website: www.cafsnj.org

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It's Great to be Grand in September and All Year Long

September is National Grandparents Month and home to National Grandparents Day. In the years since Jimmy Carter first declared Grandparents Day a national holiday in 1978, we've been following his call to reflect on the impact grandparents have on our lives—and on our society.

On September 12, 2010, Grandparents Day will reach its 31st anniversary. It's a time for celebration and a chance to honor the important role grandparents play in children's lives.

Today, an increasing number of grandparents have actually assumed daily responsibility for their grandchildren. According to AARP, 4.5 million children are being raised in households headed by grandparents. For those kids and millions of others, grandparents create special relationships and impart lessons that last a lifetime.

For more information and Grandparents Day/Month celebration ideas, visit www.grandparents.com.



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AARP provides kinship care articles and resources all year long on their website www.aarp.org/relationships/grandparenting/. KinKonnnect invites you to access the AARP articles and much more by visiting our website www.kinkonnnect.org.