

# NJ Kinship Connections

A Publication of the NJ Kinship Legal Guardianship Resource Clearing House



A PROGRAM OF CHILDREN'S AID AND FAMILY SERVICES

Spring 2010

## NJ Kinship Connections Welcomes You!



The New Jersey Kinship Legal Guardianship Resource Clearing House (KinKonnnect) welcomes readers to the first edition of our newsletter, *NJ Kinship Connections*. The goal of KinKonnnect is to address the growing need for information and resource services for those families who have obtained kinship legal guardianship (KLG) of

children currently in their care or being placed permanently in their homes. *NJ Kinship Connections* is one way that KinKonnnect will share knowledge among the kinship care community.

The NJ Kinship Legal Guardianship Resource Clearing House (KinKonnnect) is a program of Children's Aid and Family Services, grant funded by the State of New Jersey's Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS). This new information and

resource center offers services free of charge to families formed through kinship legal guardianship.

KinKonnnect is committed to providing the following services to individuals, families, and kinship care parent support groups in an effort to preserve families formed through kinship care:

- We are publishing this newsletter in an effort to provide the most up-to-date information on kinship care

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## Find Strength in Social Support

On the fourth Friday of every month grandparents gather at the South Orange library eager to meet others, who like them, have been raising their grandchildren as kinship caregivers. They eagerly receive informa-

tion, support and advocacy from the Grandma K.A.R.E.S support group. Louise Eagle, a kinship caregiver herself, has been leading and coordinating the group meetings in an effort to share the support services

available to grandparents and other relative caregivers. Support groups are a proven method for caregivers to gain strength, confidence and an appropriate outlet to share their day to

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### Points of Interest:

NEW RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE KINSHIP CARE COMMUNITY.

FIND STRENGTH THROUGH SOCIAL SUPPORT.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ADOPTION AND KINSHIP CARE.

FREE ARTICLES & FACT SHEETS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE KINKONNECT LENDING LIBRARY

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## NJ Kinship Connections

### Permanency Planning: Adoption vs. KLG

THE 2000 U.S. CENSUS REVEALED 1 IN 12 CHILDREN LIVES IN A HOUSEHOLD THAT IS HEADED BY GRANDPARENTS, OR OTHER RELATIVES, AND THIS NUMBER HAS GROWN IN RECENT YEARS.

The 2000 U.S. Census revealed 1 in 12 children lives in a household that is headed by grandparents, or other relatives, and this number has grown in recent years. As aunts, uncles, grandparents and family friends open their hearts and homes to a relative's child, they often begin to explore the permanency options for that child. While most are familiar with the conditions of adoption, far less are

sufficiently informed of kinship legal guardianship (KLG), and nearly all have questions as to the difference between the two. The Association for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ) has designed a side-by-side comparison chart to assist family members to better understand the legal and financial differences between adoption and KLG (DYFS and non-DYFS) so they can make the best choice for their family

when deciding on a permanency plan for the child. Below you will find a portion of the Adoption vs. Kinship Legal Guardianship chart. **The complete ACNJ chart is available to download free of charge at [www.kinkconnect.org](http://www.kinkconnect.org), or you may request a free copy by contacting a KinConnect warm-line representative at 877-KLG-LINE (877-554-5463) or [warm-line@kinkconnect.org](mailto:warm-line@kinkconnect.org).**

#### 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.kinkconnect.org](http://www.kinkconnect.org) or contact the warm-line at 1-877-KLG-LINE (1-877-554-5463)

	Adoption	Kinship Legal Guardianship (KLG)
<b>Legal authority over child</b>	The adoptive parent's legal authority over the child is the same as if the parent had given birth to the child. Adoption judgment is final.	The kinship legal guardian (KLG) has almost the same decision-making authority over the child as a parent until the child turns 18 or judgment is changed. The parent can seek return of custody at a later date. If the KG wants to adopt the child after KLG judgment is entered (or after the DYFS case is closed) s/he must file a private adoption complaint.
<b>Contact between child and birth parents</b>	As the legal parent, an adoptive parent can choose to maintain contact between the child and the birth parent, but the birth parent has no enforceable right to contact with the child. The birth parent may register with the Adoption Registry and can contribute to the child's Life Book.	Parent retains right of visitation through court order, although court may limit or restrict visitation if contact with the birth parent is harmful to the child. Parties work out logistics. In DYFS cases, once a KLG judgment is entered, DYFS no longer assists with arranging visits.
<b>Subsidy payments</b>	Subsidy is paid if the child is determined to be a "special needs" child, and generally at the board rate at the time the adoption is finalized. For children with extreme needs, the subsidy can exceed the board rate and can be renegotiated if the child's needs change. Subsidy can be reduced by amount of child's SSI payment and stops at age 18 or when child graduates high school, whichever occurs later.	The subsidy amount is established when the final KLG judgment is granted and cannot be renegotiated. The subsidy can be reduced by amount of child's SSI payment, and stops at age 18 or when child graduates high school, whichever occurs later.

## NJ Kinship Connections Welcomes You! (continued)

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resources available to NJ families. This includes new kinship-related events and conferences, kinship-related publications and articles for both caregivers and professionals, and community support services which may benefit kinship care families.

- Warm-line workers are available to answer your kinship care-related questions, offer information to support groups, mental health professionals and/or DYFS, provide access to kinship care-related articles and books via the lending library. Contact the warm-line toll-free at 877-KLG-LINE (877-554-5463) or by email at our website [www.kinkconnect.org](http://www.kinkconnect.org).

- The NJ Kinship Legal Guardianship Resource Clearing House's website [www.kinkconnect.org](http://www.kinkconnect.org) offers a wealth of information for parents, professionals, and support groups that are interested in kinship care resources. Learn about the basics of kinship

legal guardianship (KLG), locate a KLG parent support group or mental health professional, find out about kinship care-related conferences and events, interact with others on KinKconnect message boards, or contact a warm-line worker to request a book from our lending library or answer your personal kinship related questions.

- Training workshops are in development to address the special needs of kinship care/KLG families. The workshops and trainings will be offered to assist kinship care parents and professionals free of charge. Learn about the differences between Kinship Legal Guardianship (KLG), foster care and adoption or the special issues unique to grandparents raising grandchildren.

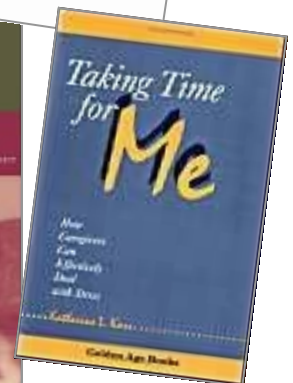
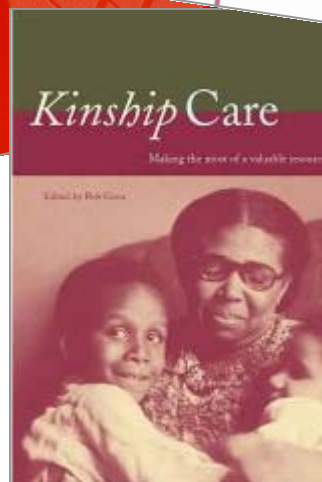
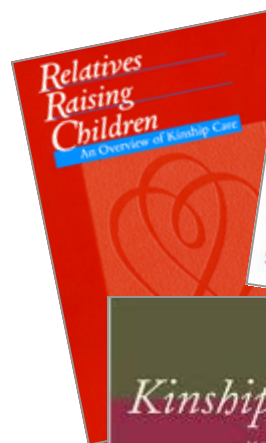
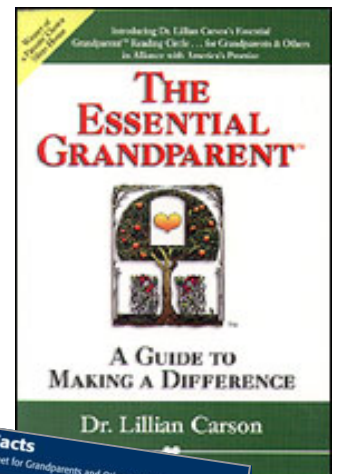
KinKconnect is a strong advocate of kinship care support groups and as such, provides services to establish new or enhance existing groups. Support groups can benefit by utilizing specially devel-

oped training workshops, fact sheets, and online information and resources designed to serve the kinship care families in the community.

The KinKconnect team is dedicated to bringing NJ families and professionals a robust, web-based information and resource center. Visit the KinKconnect website [www.kinkconnect.org](http://www.kinkconnect.org) often to search kinship care resources, and to view future issues of the *NJ Kinship Connections* newsletter.

[www.KinKconnect.org](http://www.KinKconnect.org)

MAKE YOUR REQUEST FROM THE KINKCONNECT FREE LENDING LIBRARY FOR BOOKS, ARTICLES, AND VIDEOS





NJ KINSHIP LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP  
RESOURCE CLEARING HOUSE

WWW.KINKONNECT.ORG

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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](http://www.cafsnj.org)

**DISCLAIMER**

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## Find Strength in Social Support

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day challenges and success stories.

Support groups for kinship caregivers are meeting throughout New Jersey more often than you may imagine. To find a group near you, or obtain a complete NJ listing, please contact the KinKonnnect warm-line toll-free at 877-KLG-LINE or visit the website at [www.kinkonnnect.org](http://www.kinkonnnect.org).

With the power of the internet, support is now available 24/7 with

many online forums, blogs and websites offering information and personal experiences.

Many caregivers also find support in books, articles and fact sheets outlining available resources, parenting techniques or professional advice on dealing with difficult family situations. KinKonnnect has a wealth of literature available through our free lending library. Speak to or email a warm-line representative to make your request.

Workshops and conferences designed for the relative caregiver are available throughout New Jersey and nationwide. Check out the calendar of events posted on the KinKonnnect website to find out more or invite us to your local

support group and we will facilitate one of our no-cost professional workshops. Newest to the KinKonnnect workshop library is "Telling your Child Difficult History."

*You are not alone; find strength in support!*

