

# NJ Kinship Connections

A Publication of the NJ Kinship Legal Guardianship Resource Clearing House



A PROGRAM OF CHILDREN'S AID AND FAMILY SERVICES

Winter 2023

## Tips for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

### Inside this issue:

When parents are absent or unable to raise their children, grandparents are often the ones who step in. Raising a second generation brings many rewards, including the fulfillment of giving your grandkids a sense of security, developing a deeper relationship, and keeping the family together. It also comes with many challenges. Regardless of a grandparent's love for their grandchildren, taking them into your home requires major adjustments. But with good support and guidance, grandparents can make a real difference in the lives of grandchildren.

When life circumstances change—through divorce, the death of parents, or changes to a parent's work or school-related responsibilities, for example—it often falls to grandparents to assume full- or part-time responsibility for their grandchild-



dren. Also known as “kinship care,” a growing number of grandparents are now taking on the parenting role for their grandchildren, thus foregoing the traditional grandparent/grandchild relationship. Instead, once again taking on responsibility for the day-to-day maintenance of a home, schedules, meals, homework and play dates. This often means giving up leisure time, the option of traveling, and many other aspects of independence. If it was tragic circumstances that required the change to parenting role, there will be many other stressors, such as coping with grief for everyone involved. But raising grandchildren, while challenging, can also be

incredibly rewarding. Dealing with colicky babies or moody teenagers are challenges, but there are also the benefits of greater connections to the children's world and activities. The companionship of younger people can also rejuvenate and keep grandparents feeling young. Providing a safe, nurturing and structured home environment where grandchildren feel loved and grow can provide immense satisfaction. The prospect of raising grandchildren is bound to trigger a range of emotions. The following are some tips that may be helpful:

1 - Acknowledge your feelings about parenting again; the good and the bad.

2 - Take care of yourself. Healthy adults mean healthy grandchildren, and a sick adult cannot take good care of a child.

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### No PC? No Problem!

Contact a KinKonneCT warm-line representative at 877-KLG-LINE ((877) 554-5463) to request a book or ask a question about statewide resources!

### FOR THOSE WITH COLLEGE STUDENTS

**FEDERAL APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA) DEADLINES VARY BY COLLEGE. CHECK WITH THE COLLEGES YOUR CHILD IS APPLYING TO FOR THEIR DEADLINES. CONTACT YOUR HIGH SCHOOL FOR DETAILS.**



## NJ Kinship Connections

### Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (Con't)

#### DID YOU KNOW?

ARE YOU CARING FOR A CHILD/GRANDCHILD WHO HAS A BEHAVIORAL ISSUE, DEVELOPMENTAL OR INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY AND/OR NEEDS SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT SERVICES?

#### CONSIDER CONTACTING PERFORMCARE:

PERFORMCARE HELPS FAMILIES ACROSS NEW JERSEY BY OFFERING SERVICES TO ELIGIBLE CHILDREN SUCH AS:

- IN-HOME THERAPY
- FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES
- BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS
- MOBILE RESPONSE
- CARE MANAGEMENT
- OUT-OF-HOME TREATMENT
- SUMMER CAMP ASSISTANCE AND MORE

CALL  
1-877-652-7624  
24 HRS A DAY/ 7 DAYS  
A WEEK

[HTTPS://WWW.PERFORMCARENJ.ORG](https://www.performcarenj.org)

**PerformCARE**



Eat nutritious meals, exercise regularly, and get adequate sleep. Don't let doctor's appointments or medication refills slide.

3 -Support makes all the difference. Talk to a friend, connect with a grandparent support group, reach out to community for child care help, and connect with other parents raising children.

4- Grandchildren have mixed feelings too. When children are dealing with the loss of regular contact with their parent or parents, the move is even harder.

Grandchildren need time to adjust and may behave in difficult or contrary ways. Wounds from any neglect, trauma or abuse require time to heal after they are in a safe home.

5 - Your grandkids may resent being separated from their parent and wish to return, even if their home situation was dangerous or abusive. Don't take this personally. The parent-child bond is powerful. Even if the children are old enough to understand that they're better off with you, they will still miss their parent and struggle with feelings of abandon-

ment. Your grandkids' feelings may come out in many ways, including behavior, and no matter what, they need comfort and support.

6 - Focus on a stable environment; children thrive on predictability, including routines and age appropriate house rules.

7- Offer your time and attention and keep open lines of communication.

For more tips, please visit: [www.helpguide.org/articles/parenting-family/grandparents-raising-grandchildren.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/articles/parenting-family/grandparents-raising-grandchildren.htm).

### Kinship Navigator Programs:

#### Dial 2-1-1

By dialing 2-1-1, eligible Kinship caregivers can get help addressing immediate problems, and they will also be referred to a local New Jersey Kinship agency which will work with caregivers to access additional services.

The local kinship agencies serve three functions. First, staff from the agencies help caregivers "navigate" other forms of government assistance. Secondly, Kinship agencies determine if the caregiver's family is eligible for Kinship Navigator program benefits and help with short-term expenses for the relative child, such as furniture, moving expenses, and clothing. Finally, the Kinship agencies provide technical support and guide the family through the process of Kinship Legal Guardianship if the caregiver wishes to make a legal commitment to the child.

*Have other Kinship-related questions? Call KinConnect at 877-544-5463.*

## Our Library “Kin” Korner, Book Review

**Welcome readers!**

### **Hey, Kiddo: How I Lost My Mother, Found My Father, and Dealt with Family Addiction**

Jarrett J. Krosoczka is a graphic novel and memoir detailing the life of the author. A New York Times bestselling author and illustrator, in this memoir, Jarrett J. Krosoczka takes the reader on the journey of his life from birth through high school graduation. Born to a single mother battling heroin addiction and raised by his grandparents in a multigenerational home, Jarrett honestly portrays his childhood and coming of age story. His cartoon-style narrative enables the reader to empathize with his ever-changing feelings toward his grandparents, parents, and life situation. Jarrett J. Krosoczka's depiction is honest and not always pretty, yet it shows his growth and development as he establishes his own identity and comes to terms with his upbringing.

Hey Kiddo deals with relationships with grandparents, birth parents, and the support system of family and friends. Through his art, which became his key to survival,

Jarrett's story becomes relatable to anyone being raised in a kinship care relationship. This cartoon-style memoir is the perfect match for the teen and young adult reader and for the older reader, a chance to empathize and truly understand. As stated on the book's back cover, Hey Kiddo is "A true story about how complicated the truth can be."

### **Sometimes It's Grandmas and Grandpas Not Mommies and Daddies**

by Gayle Byrne, illustrated by Mary Haverfield, is a beautiful children's book. The main character is a little girl who lives with her Nonnie and Poppy in a loving and supportive home. Each page is filled with beautiful photos of the little girl being loved and nurtured by her grandparents. She describes vividly the natural ways she feels her grandparents support and love. But she also wonders about her parents. Her grandparents realize this and help her to see that they can do all the things that Mommies and Daddies can do too. The author's note at the end of the book details how she felt

raising her granddaughter without books to describe their unique circumstances. She writes, "I knew the child cuddling in my lap had a valid and valuable story too. And that story was nowhere to be found in any of the books in the library or bookstore. It was a story that needed to be written and I knew from living in this different kind of family that I could write this different kind of story."

### **Our Grandfamily: A Flip-Sided Book About Grandchildren Being Raised By Grandparents**

by Sandra Werle, M.Ed. is a wonderful children's book that explores the daily life and emotions of grandchildren being raised by their grandparents. Flip the book over and the story is told from the grandparents' perspective. This book helps the reader to normalize the concerns and thoughts of both grandparents and grandchildren and to put labels to all their feelings. The chapters end by stating, "Sometimes it's hard to be a skip-generation. Mostly it's just fine- because we love each other. This is our normal."



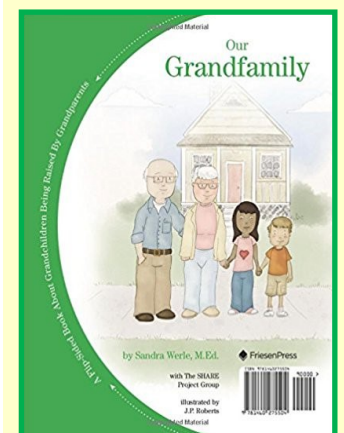
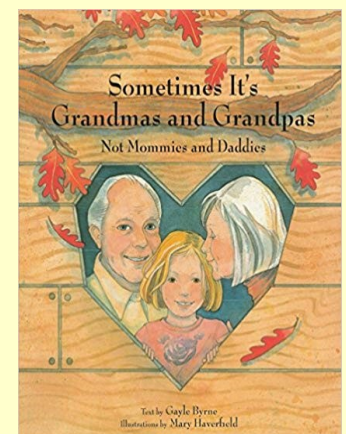
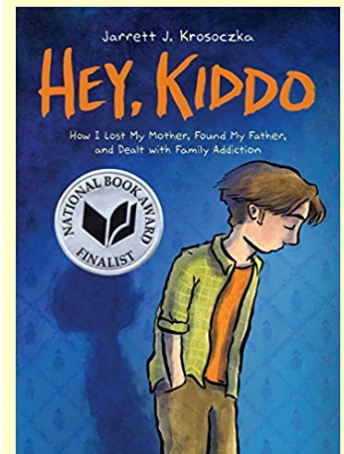
### **The KinKconnect Free Lending Library**

Call us to borrow a book!

1-877-KLG-LINE

(1-877-554-5463)

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







## NJ Kinship Connections

### Supports for Relatives Raising Relative's Children

#### **Looking for a Summer Camp?**

***Now is the time to check them out and reserve your spot!***

***Visit our website or call our KinKconnect Warm Line at 877-KLG-LINE (877-554-5463) for a list of Summer Camps***

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#### **Touched by Adoption?**

***Visit the NJ Adoption Resource Clearing House at [www.njarch.org](http://www.njarch.org)***



Are you raising your grandchild, your niece/nephew or other relative? The services below may help you find some emotional support and help answer some questions and gain additional confidence.

**embrella:** Most NJ counties offer support groups for those who have adopted or are currently licensed foster parents and/or Kinship Legal Guardians (KLG) through the Division (DCP&P). To locate a group in your area, contact embrella at 1-800-222-0047 or visit their website at [www.embrella.org](http://www.embrella.org).

**Caregiver Connections: Family Connections' Older Adult Services.** Supports older adults, individuals caring for older adults, and older adults who have become legal guardians to their grandchildren. Services include assessments, case management, resource sharing, counseling, and more. For more information visit [www.familyconnectionsny.org](http://www.familyconnectionsny.org)

**Family Support Organizations (FSO's) and/or Family Success Centers may offer parent/grandparent support groups.** For a list by county, visit <https://www.nj.gov/dcf/families/support/support/>

**Parent2Parent Support Group:** Bergen County Family Support Organization of Bergen County. Visit <https://www.fsobergen.org/parent2parent>

**Rutgers Cooperative Extension—** Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program, Cape May. 609-465-5115 x 3609.

You may also contact our warm line to find a support group near you.

### Governor Murphy Signs Bill Establishing New Jersey Siblings' Bill of Rights

In an effort to maintain sibling relationships in the child welfare system, Governor Phil Murphy signed the bill, S1034/A1357, establishing the **Siblings' Bill of Rights in New Jersey**. The bill, which took effect in mid-January, will supplement the Child Placement Bill of Rights, adding a number of provisions to strengthen sibling bonds

in the child welfare system and during placement. The bill aims to ensure children involved with the Division of Child Protection & Permanency in the Department of Children and Families (DCF) who wish to maintain relationships with their siblings are supported by the department in doing so. The bill recognizes that children placed outside their

home have several rights related to maintaining sibling relationships, including the right to remain actively involved in the lives of their siblings, and, where appropriate, to have their voice heard in the permanency planning process for their siblings.

For more information visit: <https://loctoday.news/nj/gov-murphy-signs-legislation-introducing-siblings-bill-of-rights-into-new-jersey-130892.html>

## Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA) Update for 2023

Monthly Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for approximately 70 million Americans increased by 8.7% in January 2023.

The 8.7 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) began with benefits payable to more than 65 million Social Security beneficiaries in January 2023. Increased payments to more than 7 million SSI beneficiaries began in December 30, 2022.

Some of the same people receive both Social Security and SSI benefits.

The maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) was increased to \$160,200.

The earnings limit for workers who are younger than "full" retirement age (66 – 67 depending on your date of birth) increased to \$21,240. Social Security deducts \$1 from benefits for each \$2 earned over \$21,240.

The earnings limit for people reaching their "full" retirement age in 2023 increased to \$56,520. Social Security deducts \$1 from benefits for each \$3 earned over \$56,520 until the month the worker turns "full" retirement age.

There is no limit on earnings for workers who are "full" retirement age or older for the entire year.

For more information on the Cost of Living Increase, please visit: <https://www.ssa.gov/cola/>

## DID YOU KNOW?

### FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing their central role in U.S. history.

Discover more at:

<https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-history-month>



## New Suicide Hotline Number

New Jerseyans are now able to use the new, three-digit number **988** to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. 988 will be available for call, text, or chat for those experiencing a mental health-related or suicidal crisis, or those looking to help a loved one through a crisis.

The aim of 988 is to improve access to crisis services in a way that meets the country's growing suicide and mental health-related crisis care needs.

### *So what's the difference between "988" and "911"?*

**911** is focused on public safety and will dispatch Emergency Medical Services, the fire department, and police - as needed. If someone is in immediate danger, if there is a fire, a crime, or someone has already hurt themselves and needs immediate medical care, call 911.

**988** allows easy access to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline network which provides de-escalation and support as well as linkage to mental health and/or substance use services and other services as needed. If someone is having suicidal thoughts or is experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis, call 988.

For more information, please visit <https://988lifeline.org/>.



NJ KINSHIP LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP  
RESOURCE CLEARING HOUSE

WWW.KINKONNECT.ORG

A PROGRAM OF CHILDREN'S AID AND FAMILY SERVICES

WWW.CAFSNJ.ORG

Children's Aid and Family Services  
76 South Orange Avenue, Suite 209  
South Orange, NJ 07079

KLK Warmline: 877-KLG-LINE  
877-554-5463

E-mail: [warmline@kinkconnect.org](mailto:warmline@kinkconnect.org)  
Visit us at: [www.kinkconnect.org](http://www.kinkconnect.org)

*Founded in 1899, Children's Aid and Family Services is one of northern New Jersey's leading non-profit human service agencies. Our mission is to strengthen families and empower individuals—children and adults alike—to reach their fullest potential.*

**DISCLAIMER**

While NJ Kinship Legal Guardianship Resource Clearing House (KinKconnect) or Children's Aid and Family Services makes every effort to present accurate and reliable information, neither KinKconnect nor Children's Aid and Family Services guarantees the completeness, efficacy or timeliness of such information. In addition, reference herein to any specific product, process, service, organization, or viewpoint does not constitute or imply endorsement, recommendation or favoring by KinKconnect or Children's Aid and Family Services.



Affordable health coverage. Quality care.

**Affordable health coverage. Quality Care - NJ FamilyCare -**

New Jersey's publicly funded health insurance program - includes CHIP, Medicaid and Medicaid expansion populations. That means qualified NJ residents of any age may be eligible for free or low cost health insurance that covers doctor visits, prescriptions, vision, dental care, mental health and substance use services and even hospitalization. NJ FamilyCare is for people who do not have employer insurance. The entire application process can be completed online at <https://njfamilycare.dhs.state.nj.us/apply.aspx>

or call **1-800-701-0710**; multi-lingual operators are available.

Easily navigate the online NJ FamilyCare application with:

- ◆ New menus, subheadings and smart technology.
- Applicants can register to:
- ◆ Save partially completed applications
  - ◆ View submitted applications, and
  - ◆ Receive future Medicaid notifications electronically.

**Who is Eligible?**

NJ Family Care includes: children, pregnant women, parents/caretaker relatives, single adults and childless couples. Financial eligibility will be determined by the latest federal tax return which, when filed, will be electronically verified.

**Children under 19** are eligible with higher incomes up to 355% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) (\$8,210/month for a family of four). Parents still need to renew the coverage each year. Children can qualify regardless of their immigration status.

**Adults age 19-64** with income up to 138% FPL (\$1,563/month for a single and \$2,106 / month for a couple). In general, immigrant adults must have Legal Permanent status in the U.S. for at least five years in order to qualify for NJ FamilyCare. Some immigrant adults can qualify if they are lawfully present, regardless of when they entered the U.S. (refugees and asylees, and others.) Immigrants 19 and 20 who are lawfully present and have very low income (\$509/month for a single person and \$805/month for a family of 2) can also qualify.

**Pregnant Women up to 205% FPL** (\$4,741/month for a family of four). Pregnant women who are lawfully present can qualify regardless of the dates they entered into the U.S.

**People over 65, blind or permanently disabled, including long term care, please visit:** <https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dmahs/clients/medicaid/abd/index.html>

For more information, please visit <https://njfamilycare.dhs.state.nj.us/>