

NJ Kinship Connections

A Publication of the NJ Kinship Legal Guardianship Resource Clearing House



A PROGRAM OF CHILDREN'S AID AND FAMILY SERVICES

Fall 2025

Celebrating National Kinship Care Month

Inside this issue:



As September ushers in a season of changes, we'd like to take a pause to honor our kinship caregivers who change lives everyday, love unconditionally, and provide an unwavering commitment to so many children.

Here at KinKconnect, we observe **Kinship Care Month** by shining a light on the incredible caregivers who step up to care for children when their birth parents cannot. Kinship caregivers include grandparents, aunts, uncles, older siblings, or trusted family friends, they provide love, permanency, and a deep sense of belonging to many children.

In New Jersey, over 180,000 children are living in homes where a relative is the head of the household and 54,000 children are being raised by kin with no parent present. Let's recognize what the vital role kinship caregivers are playing in these children's lives.



Kinship care helps maintain important ties to family origin, culture, and identity. This often means that children in kinship care will experience more stability, less trauma, and the ability to heal and thrive. Kinship caregivers are truly life savers and their love and support should always be recognized.

We take this opportunity to not only celebrate the strength and commitment of these caregivers, but to also raise awareness about the need for resources, policies, and community support to uplift them.

To all kinship caregivers: **THANK YOU!** Your commitment is a gift and your impact immeasurable.

For more info on Kinship Care Month and resources:

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/permanency/kinship-care/?p=3&top=123>

<https://www.fosterkinship.org/celebrating-kinship-care-month/>

www.gu.org

www.grandfamilies.org

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No PC? No Problem!

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

Touched by Adoption?

Visit the NJ Adoption Resource Clearing House at www.njarch.org





DID YOU KNOW?

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

CONSIDER CONTACTING PERFORMCARE:

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

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- SUMMER CAMP ASSISTANCE AND MORE

CALL
1-877-652-7624
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A WEEK

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Back to School Jitters: Tips for Caregivers



Like most summers, this one flew by! It's back to school time and reality is slowly sinking in. We know this is often an exciting yet challenging season for families.

Here are a few ways kinship families can prepare for a new and successful school year:

Get Organized

- Get a list of school supplies from the school or teacher as early as possible.
- Ensure you have up-to-date medical records, immunizations, custody/guardianship papers,

and IEP or 504 plans.

- Check with the school about your current contact info and any relevant custody documents.

Establish Routines

- Start practicing early bedtimes and wake up times at least a week before school starts.
- Create a dedicated space for homework and studying.
- Limit screen time and encourage after school activities.

Communicate with School Personnel

- Share approaches that work well with your child.
- Don't be afraid to ask for what you and/or your child might need.
- Be open and honest about behavior but in a

positive way. Be sure to identify your child's strengths and interests.

Support Emotional Well-Being

- Discuss with your child what to expect for the school year—new teachers, classrooms, routines, etc.
- Acknowledge any anxiety they might have, especially if there have been recent changes at home.
- Validate their feelings—kids in kinship care often struggle with grief, loss, or trauma.
- Encourage journaling, drawing, or other expressive activities.
- Seek professional counseling if needed.

For more info:

<https://creatingafamily.org/adoption-category/adoption-blog/easing-the-back-to-school>

DID YOU KNOW THAT NEW JERSEY OFFERS ADOPTION AND KINSHIP LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP CLINICAL SERVICES?

If you live in NJ, your children are under 20 years of age and placed with your family through NJ's Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P), you may be eligible for free counseling. For more information, contact the program coordinator at 551-224-2711 or e-mail AKLGprogram@cafnsj.org



Adoption and Kinship
Legal Guardianship
Clinical Services



NJ Kinship Connections

Our Library “Kin” Korner Review

We’ve had the pleasure of featuring Beth Tyson in our Library “Kin” Korner before, and her first book, [A Grandfamily for Sullivan](#), remains one of the most popular titles in our collection. We are thrilled to introduce her newest book.

[Sullivan Goes to See Ma-ma](#) continues the Sullivan series. In this book, Sullivan’s grandmother prepares him for a super-

vised visit with his mother. Drawing on her trauma-informed background and expertise in attachment theory, Tyson validates the “big feelings” children experience during family visits while modeling how caregivers can provide support before, during, and after these emotional events. Grandma anticipates Sullivan’s questions, creates flexible backup plans, and offers post-

visit comfort and calming activities. The story not only normalizes a wide range of emotions but also shows caregivers how to approach family time with empathy, preparation, and sensitivity.

With heartfelt storytelling and practical caregiver guidance, Beth Tyson helps children feel seen, validates their experiences, and opens the door to

healing conversations. Her books are more than stories—they are invaluable resources for families navigating difficult times with love and understanding.



Beth Tyson’s personal note to NJ

Hi KinKconnect Families and Professionals,

I’m deeply honored to be featured in this month’s newsletter! My children’s books grew out of my real-life experiences as a trauma therapist working alongside kinship, foster, and adoptive families in New Jersey. In those years, I witnessed not only the immense courage of children facing adversity, but also the heartbreaking lack of resources to help them heal. I wanted to create something children could hold in their hands, a story that gave them words for their feelings, and a way for caregivers to better understand the storms inside a child’s heart.

I know how passionate you are about giving children the connection and support they deserve, and I’d love to welcome you into my community of over 60,000 Trauma Champions! You can join by [subscribing](#) to my free monthly Childhood Trauma Newsletter™ and/or by connecting with me on social media.

Healing from trauma is built slowly, through self-reflection, connection, and trust. These three keys open the door to a child’s resilience, but they require patience and persistence. When the road feels rough, return to these keys and let them guide you forward.

“When children have experienced trauma, the presence of one safe, attuned adult can be the difference between despair and hope.” — Dr. Karen Treisman

With hope and care,
Beth Tyson, MA

Owner of Beth Tyson Trauma Consulting:

Tools and Training to Transform Trauma into Trust

My website and newsletter sign-up: [BETHTYSON.COM](https://www.bethtyson.com)

Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/emotiminds>

Youtube channel: Free webinars on childhood trauma

<https://www.youtube.com/@bethtysontraumaconsulting>



Raising Grandchildren in the Digital Age: Understanding Social Media and Setting Healthy Limits

Grandparents stepping into the parenting role once again are navigating a world that looks very different from the one they raised their own children in — especially when it comes to technology. Social media, online gaming, smartphones, and constant screen time are the new normal for today's kids. But what do you do when you're unfamiliar with the platforms and worried about keeping your grandchild safe?

The good news is you don't have to be a tech expert. What matters most is understanding the basics, staying curious, and building open communication with your grandchild.

Why Social Media Matters

Social media is where many kids connect with friends, express themselves, and stay up to date with trends. Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube are hugely popular among young people. However, they also come with risks like exposure to mature content, cyberbullying, and too much screen time.

Knowing a little about each social media platform can go a long way. For example:

TikTok features short videos, often funny or creative, but sometimes inappropriate for younger viewers.

Snapchat lets users send photos and messages that disappear quickly, making it harder for adults to monitor.

YouTube offers a wide range of videos, from educational to entertainment, but also includes content not meant for children.

Setting Limits Without Starting a Fight

Grandparents often walk a fine line between offering protection and avoiding the appearance of being overly critical or controlling. The key is creating clear, consistent boundaries and involving the grandchild in setting them.

Here are some simple strategies:

Set Tech-Free Zones and Times.

- * No phones at dinner.
- * Devices off for one hour before bedtime.
- * No screens in bedrooms overnight.

Use Parental Controls

* Apple Screen Time (for iPhones/iPads) and Google Family Link (for Android) let you set time limits and block inappropriate content.

* Apps like Bark, Qustodio, or Net Nanny monitor usage and alert you to potential problems.

Make a Family Media Agreement

* Sit down together and agree on rules for screen time, online behavior, and app downloads.

* Use a simple contract like the ones available at www.common sense media.org or screensanity.org

Keep the Conversation Open

Technology should never replace your relationship. Check in regularly:

- * Ask what your grandchild enjoys online.
- * Encourage them to talk if they see something upsetting.
- * Show interest, not judgment. You might say, "Can you show me how that app works?" or "What do you like about this game?" That curiosity builds trust and makes it more likely your grand-

child will come to you if something goes wrong.

Learn Together

You don't have to do it all at once. Take it step by step:

* AARP, CyberWise, and Common Sense Media all offer simple guides.

* Ask a tech-savvy friend, librarian, or even your grandchild to help you explore.

* Consider joining a support group for grandparents raising grandchildren. Many meet online or through local churches, libraries, senior centers, or family success centers.

Connect with www.kinkconnect.org by emailing or calling us for help finding a group: kinkconnect@warmline.org or (1-877-554-5463)

♥You've Got This !

Raising grandchildren in the digital world can feel overwhelming, but you are not alone and you are more capable than you think. By staying informed, setting healthy boundaries, and keeping communication open, you're giving your grandchild the tools they need to grow up safely and responsibly in a connected world.

Support Groups

Stafford Grandfamily Group

- In-person meetings
- 3rd Tuesday of the month at 10 am
- 25 Pine Street
Manahawkin, NJ
- Staffordgrandfamilies@gmail.com

Relatives Raising Children Support Group

- In person meetings
- Wednesdays at 5 pm
- 1623 Whitesville Rd
Toms River, NJ
- Register at
dbaudo@co.ocean.nj.us

Grandparents Raising Children

- Monthly meetings
- Cape May Court House
- Call 609-465-5115
ext 3609 for more information

Grandparents Group

- Virtual meetings
- 2nd Tuesday of the month at 1 pm
- RSVP required
- Call 732-497-3811
or email:

familysuccess@ymcanj.org

Be sure to check out our website for other support groups in your area.
www.kinkconnect.org or give us a call at 877-554-5463 and we'll be happy to connect you to some supports.



Upcoming Conference

EMBRELLA'S ANNUAL
KINSHIP CONFERENCE &
PASSPORT TO EDUCATION
(P2E) EVENT: SEPTEMBER
13, 2025 AT 9 AM LOCATED
IN NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ.
FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT:

www.embrella.org/p2e-and-kinship-conferences/



No More Paper. All the Same Great News

KinKconnect is Going Digital! Starting next issue we're saying goodbye to paper newsletters and hello to a greener, faster future. No more waiting by the mailbox—your updates will now arrive conveniently in your inbox, with the same great content and a smaller footprint. It's our way of making things easier for you and better for the planet.

Make sure you're on the list!

Sign up for the digital version at [Sign up for our eNewsletter](http://www.kinkconnect.org) or scan the code below! If you need any help contact us at warmline@kinkconnect.org or give us a call at (877-554-5463).



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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

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

E-mail: warmline@kinkconnect.org
Visit us at: 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 empower individuals, strengthen families, and support healthier communities.

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.

NJ FamilyCare, a federal and state-funded health insurance program created to give qualified New Jersey residents of any age access to affordable health insurance. NJ FamilyCare is for people who do not have employer insurance. That means qualified NJ residents of any age may be eligible for free or low-cost healthcare coverage that covers doctor visits, prescriptions, vision, dental care, mental health and substance use services, and even hospitalization.

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.

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.

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) (\$9,512/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 (\$1,800/month for a single and \$2,433/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 (\$5,493/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.nj.gov/humanservices/dmahs/clients/medicaid/abd/index.html>

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