



Eric J. Holcomb, Governor
Eric Miller, Director

"Children will live in safe, healthy and supportive families and communities."

If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, call the Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline at (800) 800-5556.

DCS celebrates importance of family, highlights resources and support during Kinship Care Awareness Month

INDIANAPOLIS (Sept. 4, 2024) – The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) is promoting awareness, resources and support during Kinship Care Awareness Month – a time to celebrate family members who help maintain familial connections, provide stability, reinforce cultural identity and support the well-being of children who can no longer live with their birth parents.

Governor Eric J. Holcomb has proclaimed Kinship Care Awareness Month to promote and preserve kinship, sibling and other familial connections for Indiana's children. Read the Kinship Care Awareness Month proclamation [here](#).

"Family is the backbone needed to help keep kids safe and loved," said DCS Director Eric Miller, MPA, MBA. "It's a selfless act to step forward and care for the child of a relative or a close family friend, often with little notice or training, to help that child maintain close connections and stability when they are needed most."

According to [The Annie E. Casey Foundation](#), Indiana has about 60,000 children in kinship care. About 3,500 of those children have DCS involvement.

Kinship placements among children in DCS care have risen by 20 percent since 2019 and now represent more than half of DCS out-of-home placements. DCS has been working to increase the number of kinship placements because [research](#) shows children removed from their parents generally experience better outcomes when placed with kin, including reduced trauma, better mental health, improved behavioral, social and educational outcomes, increased stability and stronger connections to the child's biological family.

Most kinship caregivers in Indiana are grandparents between the ages of 55 and 64, with more than 20 percent being age 65 or older. Grandparents and other adults who agree to be kinship caregivers are often faced with unexpected challenges and barriers, such as shifting family dynamics, struggles with bonding or financial issues.

DCS recognizes the importance of ensuring that both the caregivers and the children receive the appropriate assistance to ensure success and offers a Kinship Navigator program to help identify kinship placements and support relatives as they care for children.

Additionally, DCS offers a monthly stipend of \$300 per child to unlicensed kinship caregivers who are caring for a child in DCS custody. Since stipends were launched in July 2023, over \$14 million has been distributed to more than 3,000 families. Other resources, including financial, health, legal, educational/developmental and adult support, can be found [here](#) or by calling Indiana 2-1-1 (866) 211-9966). DCS encourages all members of the community to help connect kinship families with these much-needed resources.

Anyone interested in becoming a kinship caregiver for youth in DCS care can email dcs.kinshipcare@dcs.in.gov for more information, resources and trainings.

Visit [Instagram](#), [X](#), and [LinkedIn](#) for more resources about kinship care throughout the month.

For more information about Indiana kinship care, visit indianafostercare.org.

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***About Indiana DCS:** The Indiana Department of Child Services leads the state's response to allegations of child abuse and neglect and facilitates child support payments. We consider the needs and values of all we serve in our efforts to protect children while keeping families together whenever possible*

