



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

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Kinship Foster Care Parents on the Rise in Pennsylvania

New video educates potential kinship providers

HARRISBURG—Since 2012, 24 percent more children have been placed in “kinship” foster care, according to 2014 data collected by the Office of Children and Families in the Courts (OCFC), a unit of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court’s Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC).

Kinship care is the full-time care, nurturing and protection of children by relatives or any adult who has a “kinship” bond with the children. These caregivers may include grandparents, aunts or uncles, siblings of the children requiring care, cousins or nonblood “relatives,” such as a teacher, coach or family friend.

“The increase in kinship care placements is significant because I firmly believe there’s no question that kids are better served by staying with people they know – staying in their familiar school, peer groups, church or synagogue,” said Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Max Baer. “Many of the children are traumatized when they come into the system, and our job is to make them better, not to create additional trauma.”

With the rise in kinship placements, the AOPC and OCFC developed a [new, educational video](#) to help potential kinship providers learn about and understand kinship foster care, navigate the dependency court system and take the necessary steps to become a kinship parent.

The video highlights:

- different types of kinship foster care providers – formal and informal kinship providers
- benefits of kinship foster care in terms of maintaining stability, reducing trauma associated with out-of-home care and keeping connections to extended family and sibling relationships
- situations where the biological parents cannot continue to care for their children – such as parental drug abuse, incarceration, abandonment or homelessness
- family finding practices in Pennsylvania and what to expect in court
- resources available to kinship foster parents

“Reducing trauma for children and viewing decisions from their perspective is certainly a priority for our state’s dependency courts,” said Sandy Moore, Administrator of OCFC. “Focusing on both the physical and emotional well-being of children is critical, and safe kinship care can help us accomplish both.”

“Kinship caregivers can have a tremendous impact on childrens’ lives by offering them a place where they can feel safe,” added Justice Baer. “I encourage people to consider serving as kinship providers as it will likely change life as they know it today. We’ll do our part by working in concert with judges, social workers and other child welfare professionals to provide the educational, financial and emotional resources needed to help children succeed.”

[Watch the video online](#) or obtain copies by contacting the Office of Children and Families in the Courts at 717-231-3300 ext. 4255 or elke.moyer@pacourts.us.

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Editor’s Note:

Since 2006, the Office of Children and Families in the Courts, along with the Department of Public Welfare and other partners, has reduced the number of dependent and delinquent children in temporary foster care homes by more than 7,000, or 33 percent. Placing these children into a permanent family setting greatly improves their chances to succeed and significantly reduces the cost of institutional care, saving an estimated \$117 million annually.