



SUPPORTING KINFAMILIES

A Booklet of Resources prepared by and for Ontario Kinship Families

When children and youth can be raised within their extended families, this can increase their sense of identity and belonging, and their long term well-being.

Kinship families need support, connection, training and resources.



Funding for this booklet graciously provided by TMX Group.

<https://adoption.on.ca/support-and-connections/kinship-families>

THANK YOU

Adoption Council of Ontario (ACO) is grateful for the wisdom and expertise provided by Samantha, Cheri, Janice, Susan and Evelyn, all of whom are kinship caregivers to their children across the province. Their willingness and resolve to share their knowledge and learning with others to help them on their journeys is very much appreciated.

We are also grateful to TMX Group who generously provided the funding to enable the ACO to produce this booklet of resources for Ontario Kinship Families.

If you have any comments or suggestions for future editions of this booklet, please email contact@adoptontario.ca.



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Terminology

Legal terminology is often changing or varies based on situation, but below is a list of commonly used terms with Kinship Families.

What is Kinship?

Kin are individuals who have a relationship with a child or youth and may include biologically related kin or individuals without a biological connection but with a significant social connection. Examples include a stepparent, godparent, friend, teacher, coach and neighbor.

Kinship Out of Care

The child is placed in your home while in Children's Aid Society (CAS) custody. You are often under a supervision order. You will be set up with a Kinship worker who visits and is your go to for all things related to your case and the child(ren).

This situation does not usually require PRIDE training (see below).

You will undergo a Kinship study where your home will be assessed, all adults in the home will be interviewed.

Kinship in Care

The child remains in custody of the Child Protection System, but is placed in your home in a situation similar to a foster placement. There is often a per diem rate of pay offered to cover the expenses. There are regular check-ins with the child protection society, sometimes access visits are still in place as well.

Customary Care

First Nation, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) family structures differ from the typical nuclear family in Western culture. FNMI families have strong family values, are often extended, and share collective responsibility towards children. FNMI families may be related by blood, but can also be tied by clan or other social structures. This collective responsibility for raising children is known as customary care.

Access/Visitation/Visits/Parenting Time

These are the terms used to describe the time the child[ren] spend with the non-custodial parents.

These often take place at supervision centers, community spaces, or even in homes.

Kinship Worker

This is a CAS worker who deals with Kinship families & is the bridge between the Family Services worker & the kinship family. They check in monthly with at home visits, they can provide resources CAS offers as well.

SAFE Home Study

SAFE (Structured Analysis, Family Evaluation) is a standardized assessment model for all Ontarians interested in expanding their family through kinship care, fostering, and adoption. A SAFE home study includes:

- **Application**
- **Home safety checklist and questionnaires**
- **Medical report, police and child welfare clearances, and references**

A SAFE home study may only be completed by a Children's Aid worker or a Ministry-approved practitioner. A SAFE home study can take 4–6 months to complete and is generally valid for up to 2 years.

PRIDE Training

PRIDE (Parent Resources for Information, Development & Education) pre-service is a nine-module (27-hour) training program used to prepare and educate families interested in kinship care, fostering, and adoption. This is often provided by CAS for no cost or can be done by a private trainer for a fee.

SUPPORT & CONNECTION

Support Raising Our Families

Throughout its over 35 year history, ACO has known that kids need families, and families need support.

That support is just as critical for kinship families. Sometimes it is even more important as kinship parents/caregivers often did not have the opportunity to prepare for this change in their life. As well, the impact of this on family relationships can be complex and challenging. ACO believes in supporting kinship families throughout their lifelong journey.

ACO has created a page on its website where current resources for kinship families are available.

Please see:

<https://adoption.on.ca/support-and-connections/kinship-families>



"Thanks for helping me to take a step back and parent this child the way she needs to be parented."

Support Groups

There are support groups on Facebook that offer a lot of support, advice & help for families like ours. A simple search of “Kinship” will likely populate a lot of results.

CANGRANDS is a group that has different chapters based on region & a national support group as well. They can be found on Facebook.

Local child protection agencies do sometimes also offer groups & education sessions specifically for Kinship Families so be sure to reach out to your team/workers for additional information on their offerings.

Other programs across the province include:

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

<https://www.children.gov.on.ca/>

Interwoven Connections

<https://www.interwovenconnections.ca>

Child and Family Centres (EarlyON)

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-earlyon-child-and-family-centre>

Aboriginal EarlyON and Aboriginal Head Start Programs

<https://nativechild.org/early-years/aboriginal-head-start/>

Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program

1-647-615-6724

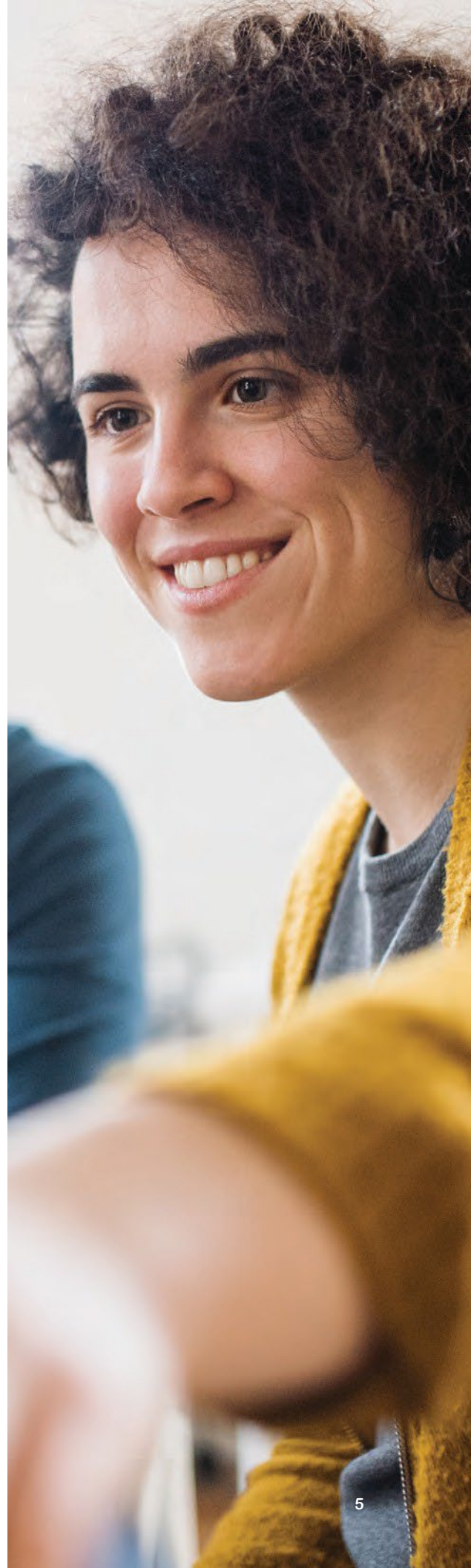
Email: alexandrian@metisnation.org

Professional Support

Sometimes kinship families may also need the support of professionals. To find an Ontario professional who has training in adoption and permanency journeys including kinship journeys, the ACO has created a webpage with information to assist you in finding professional support including an online search function.

Please see:

<https://adoption.on.ca/support-and-connections/find-a-professional/>



TRAINING

Training Programs

Pathways to Permanence 2 Training (Pathways)

The Pathways training is an 8-week program that empowers caregivers to effectively parent their children and help them heal.

Pathways provides families with an understanding of early childhood adverse experiences and the impacts they have on a child's brain, attachment and learning. Parents are then supported to develop skills that are developmentally and therapeutically helpful to a child's healing. Through connections with other families and the increased knowledge and skills, research has found that families are more able to parent children with trauma symptoms.

Pathways was developed by the Kinship Center in California for adoptive, kinship and legal guardian families. The Pathways evaluation programs done in Ontario and in the US demonstrated strong positive results. In fact, the US evaluation actually demonstrated stronger results in some areas for kinship families

More information about Pathways can be found here:

<https://adoption.on.ca/training-education/pathways/>

Funding is now available through Interwoven Connections Peer to Peer Program for Kin Caregivers. Pathways is offered to kin families at no cost to Caregivers registered with Interwoven Connections.

Training for Kinship Caregivers by Joseph Crumbley.

Watch a free four-part on-line video training series specifically designed for Kinship Families: Coping with the Unique Challenges of Kinship Care With Joseph Crumbley.

<https://www.aecf.org/blog/training-series-coping-with-the-unique-challenges-of-kinship-care>



Joseph Crumbley also offers free on-line video training for professionals working with kinship families at

<https://www.aecf.org/blog/engaging-kinship-caregivers-with-joseph-crumbley>



Online Training, Webinars & Other Resources

Many kinship families have found support through webinars, training & support sessions.

ACO Online Learning Hub

[Online Learning Hub](#)

Families Rising (formerly known as “NACAC”)

[Training and Events](#)

Creating A Family

<https://creatingafamily.org/kinship-care/>

Mental Health Foundations Resources

<https://www.mentalhealthfoundations.ca/resources>

Center for Adolescent Studies Trauma Informed Care Course

<https://courses.centerforadolescentstudies.com/traumainformedcare/>

Trauma Research Foundation

<https://traumaresearchfoundation.org/>

Center For Adoption Support & Education
Education Resources for Parents & Families

<https://adoptionssupport.org/webinars/>



RESOURCES

Financial Resources

Given the importance of Kinship Families in the lives of their children ACO has developed a new resource webpage for them. View our new webpage for information on trainings, kinship support groups and other helpful resources.

Ontario's Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services

Ontario Increasing Funding for Kinship Service, Adoption and Customary Caregivers

<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1001235/ontario-increasing-funding-for-kinship-service-adoption-and-customary-caregivers>

Canada Child Benefit

- The Canada child benefit (CCB) is administered by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). It is a tax-free monthly payment made to eligible families to help with the cost of raising children under 18 years of age.
- There is an application process, which can be found: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/canada-child-benefit-overview/canada-child-benefit-apply.html>

Temporary Care Assistance/TCA

- TCA is a monthly payment of \$274 to Kinship Families through Ontario Works.
- There is an application process through your local Ontario Works office.
- This program also assists with providing medical insurance and other needs of children in Kinship Care.
- There is a bit of inconsistency with whether or not families are eligible after they have received full/permanent/final custody.
- Some families have been deemed ineligible and have had to complete an appeal process to have the benefits returned (with back pay) to them.
- This is a common conversation in Kinship Support groups & we have found that eligibility after a final order depends greatly on your county/township.

Parental Leave

- Kin families do qualify for Parental Leave through the Province of Ontario Employment Insurance Program.
- This leave is similar to the more well known Maternity Leave, and comes with the same job protections and application process. You will need to inform your employer & then apply for Employment Insurance.
- These benefits do often mention “a newly adopted child”, please note that you do not have to have a completed adoption to qualify. You simply need to have a child in your care and verbally attest that if/when the child would ever be legally freed for adoption you intend to adopt them.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-maternity-parental.html>

“If we could get the consistency in financial support, emotional support, resource support...you would see more kin families being able to step up and help.”



Financial Resources

Daycare Services

Some cities/counties offer subsidized daycare services for children in Kinship placements, both temporary and permanent Kinship placement. These services & the process to utilize them depends on your area.

Temporary Care Assistance

Temporary care assistance (TCA) provides income assistance and benefits to an adult on behalf of a child.

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/ontario-works-policy-directives/310-temporary-care-assistance>

If the child has a diagnosis of a disability there are programs that can help such as:

Disability Tax Credit (DTC)

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/segments/tax-credits-deductions-persons-disabilities/disability-tax-credit.html>

Child Disability Benefit (CDB)

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/child-disability-benefit.html>

Special Services at Home

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/special-services-home>

Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities Program

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/assistance-children-severe-disabilities-program>

Easter Seals Foundation

<https://services.easterseals.org/>

Canadian Tire JumpStart Program

<https://jumpstart.canadiantire.ca/>

Tim Horton Foundation Camp

<https://timscamps.com/>

Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Canada.

<https://bigbrothersbigsisters.ca/>

Open Door Counseling

<https://www.open-door.ca/>

Rotary Organization

<https://www.rotary.org/>

Other community and faith based organizations may also be of assistance.



Other Videos & Helpful Links

Molly Wright. How Every Child Can Thrive By Five

<https://youtu.be/aISXCw0Pi94>

Attachment Theory: How Childhood Affects Life

<https://youtu.be/WjOowWxOXCg>

Trauma and the Nervous System
a Polyvagal Theory Perspective

<https://youtu.be/ZdIQRxwT1I0?si=kaVAHuMcS3mHtW2v>

Polyvagal Theory Explained Simply

<https://youtu.be/0zrIKLgnov4?si=Fu54aKtFINMqXEHy>

Robyn Gobbel Free Resources Videos & Ebooks

https://robbygobbel.com/freeresources/?fbclid=IwAR06IBKcGc-JQAKD-SZw_NJBpk4Doumeul4T10z4AiKdm4shQPn6NfPQr1EM

Dr. Bruce Perry Early Brain Development
Reducing the Effects of Trauma

https://youtu.be/Hp6fZrzgiHg?si=k9LFj_PseXYo9kc9

What Parents and Caregivers Need to Know
About Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder FASD

https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/fasd/pubs/fasd_caregivers.pdf

Trauma-Informed Care for Professionals Working with Youth

<https://courses.centerforadolescentstudies.com/traumainformedcare/>

Developmental Trauma Close Up

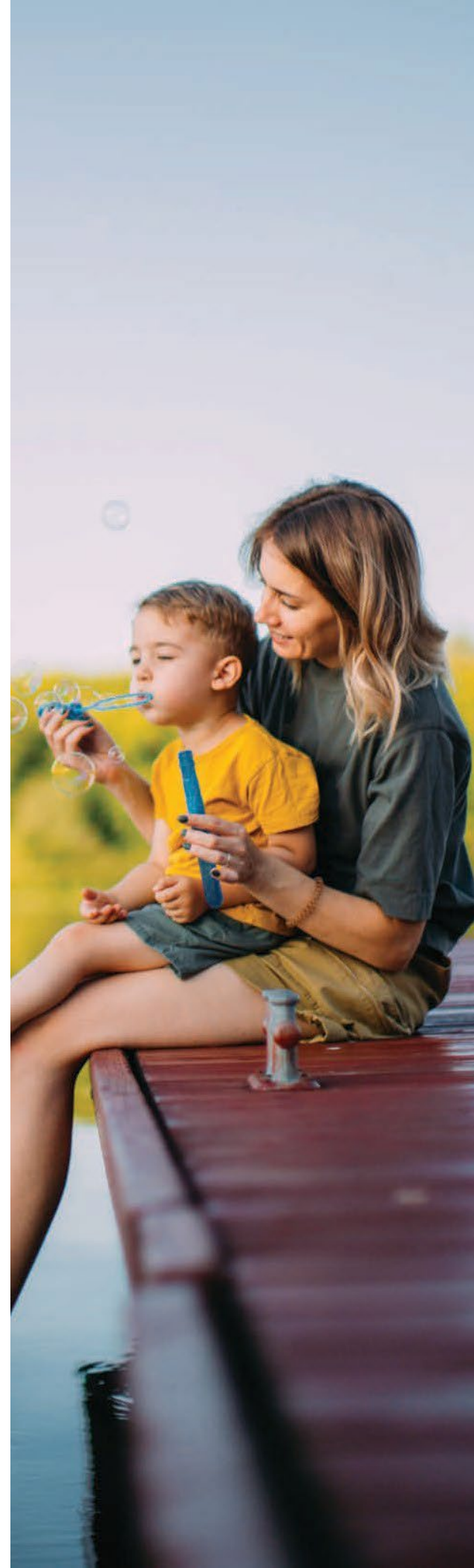
<https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Developmental-Trauma-Close-Up-Revised-Jan-2020.pdf>

Developmental Trauma and ACE's Resources

<https://adoption.on.ca/dt-resources/>

Can an Adopted Newborn Have Adoption-Related Trauma?

<https://adoption.org/can-adopted-newborn-adoption-related-trauma/amp>



Books

Hey Kiddo

Jarrett J. Krosoczka (2018)

Empowering Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Cox, C. B. (2000)

Grandparents as Parents,

A Survival Guide for Raising a Second Family

Toledo, S. (1995)

Raising Our Children's Children

Doucette-Dudman, D. (1997)

Relatives raising children: An overview of kinship care

Crumbley, J., & Little, R.L. (1997)

Tear Soup: A Recipe for Healing After Loss

Schwiebert, P, & DeKlyen, C. (1999)

Ticklebelly Hill: Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Osborne, H. (2003)

This is My Family

Julie Grabowski-McGowan (2023)

What's Your Story? Let's Talk About Adoption & Kinship

Lynn Deiulis, 2021



Websites

About Kinship Care (Child Welfare Information Gateway)

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/outofhome/kinship/about/>

What is Kinship Care? (The Annie E. Casey Foundation)

<https://www.aecf.org/blog/what-is-kinship-care>

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (HelpGuide)

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/parenting-family/grandparents-raising-grandchildren.htm>

Grandparents raising grandchildren: Social support needed (McMaster)

<https://www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org/blog/detail/blog/2020/01/29/grandparents-raising-grandchildren-social-support-needed>

Kinship (OACAS)

<https://www.oacas.org/childrens-aid-child-protection/kinship/>

Kinship Families: Keeping Kids Connected (OACAS)

<https://www.oacas.org/2022/09/kinship-families-keeping-kids-connected/>

How kinship families are improving child welfare outcomes for children and families in Ontario (OACAS)

<https://www.oacas.org/2017/09/keeping-kids-connected-sharon-cabrera-talks-about-how-kinship-families-are-improving-child-welfare-outcomes-for-children-and-families-in-ontario/>



Legal Assistance & Resources

Family Law Information Centres (FLICs)

Family Law Information Centres are free services available across Ontario that provide information about:

- separation, divorce and related family law issues
- child protection
- family justice services
- alternative forms of dispute resolution
- local community resources
- court processes

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/family-law-information-centres>

Legal Aid Ontario

Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) will provide you with the services best suited to your legal matter. All our services are available in both English and French.

To receive assistance, you must qualify financially and your legal matter must be one that LAO covers.

Duty Counsel Services

LAO can provide you with a duty counsel lawyer who helps you on the day of your court appearance. Duty counsel are lawyers who can quickly assess a client's legal problems and provide advice, information and representation to someone who would otherwise be unrepresented and unassisted in the courtroom.

Ontario Ombudsman

Ontario Ombudsman can assist when problems arise with different CAS agencies. They will also work directly with youths who are old enough to express their own opinions, views, questions, concerns. CFSRB, The Child and Family Services Review Board conducts reviews and hearings on a number of matters that affect children, youth and families in Ontario, including issues with CAS.

Black Legal Action Center

A non-profit community legal clinic that provides free legal services for low or no income Black residents of Ontario. Help with education, human rights, income assistance, housing law, police complaints etc.

<https://www.blacklegalactioncentre.ca/>

Pro Bono Ontario

Delivers a unique and diverse range of services that safeguard the legal, personal and financial interests of certain private individuals and estates.

<https://probonoontario.org>

The Office of the Children's Lawyer

Represents children under the age of 18 in court cases involving custody and access and child protection, as well as in civil, and estates and trusts cases.

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/office-childrens-lawyer>

Aboriginal Legal Services

Provides legal-related programs for Aboriginal people in Toronto.

<https://www.aboriginallegal.ca/index.html>

