

Fostering Family

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

More resources available at fosteringfamily.com

On a national level, for every one child in foster care, there are 19 children being raised by grandparents or other relatives outside of the foster care system. In New Mexico, 10.9% of grandparents are raising their grandchildren. This lack of parental involvement in New Mexican families was associated with substance abuse, incarceration, divorce, mental health diagnosis, domestic violence, and military deployment.

Kinship guardians are the preferred option for placement. Advantages include minimizing trauma for the kids, improving children's wellbeing, increasing permanency and stability in children's lives. Behavioral and mental health outcomes are improved.

When the typical child goes into foster care, siblings are separated because there's not one family that is able to take care of them all. With Kinship Guardianship sibling ties tend to be preserved.

Especially in foster care, youth age out of the system. When relatives are able to take care of their grandchildren, care can extend into young adulthood. Kin caregivers also preserve the children's cultural identity and community connections.

If you're trying to seek any kind of health, mental health services, or even enroll children in school, a lot of relatives and grandparents don't actually have required legal documentation of legal guardianship or power of attorney. This makes it really difficult to secure needed services for the children in their care.

A lot of our relatives and grandparents don't receive any financial support or childcare payments. That makes it difficult, especially for those living off of a fixed income. Family relationships can become strained, especially with the biological parents and those closest to them.

Caregivers face a lot of emotional challenges: loss, the redefinition of roles and boundaries, guilt, embarrassment, transference, projection, split and dual loyalties, anger and resentment, evolving child rearing practices and responsibilities, overcompensation, competition, and morbidity to name a few.

Fostering Family provides and facilitate services for kin caregivers and the children in their care. We help navigate other systems such as legal, financial, school, et cetera. Any relative, godparent, member of a child's tribe or clan, or an adult with a significant bond which we call fictive kin who are raising the youth because the biological parents are unable or unwilling to do so qualifies for our program. Legal guardianship does not have to be established. When a client requests services, we do an assessment of needs, and then a community support worker is assigned. We provide professional referrals for services and make ongoing follow-ups. All these services are provided without charge.

We'll help get you some information and resource referrals for local state and national services. We do a lot of education such as this virtual training related to kinship care. We'll help complete guardianship packets, school registration, and medical services. We are partnered with four legal agencies. The majority of our caregivers seem to have a need for legal services for guardianship or custody orders, child-parent visitation, public benefits and financial matters, and assistance with negotiations.

We help with housing and culturally appropriate services for immigrant caregivers. We provide mental health referrals for behavioral management services, case management, peer support services, and individual and family therapy.

We hold virtual support groups every first and third Wednesday of the month from 6:00 to 7:00 where you can connect with other families in similar situations. You can vent without judgment, and support each other with feedback and advice. A Spanish speaking support group waitlist is also available, we need more participants to start running a regular schedule.

We provide ongoing virtual trainings and archive past trainings on our website fosteringfamily.com. This is where you can find all our resources and information about the program.

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