

# Kinship Care in Kentucky



When children cannot remain safely with their parents, grandparents, other relatives, and close family friends often step up to help raise them. This situation is commonly known as **kinship care**—or in the case of a close family friend raising children, “fictive kin.”

## Benefits of Kinship Care

Kinship care—ranging from placements with relatives by blood or marriage to placements with caring adults like teachers or pastors—helps to relieve trauma children often face upon removal from their home. Children living with relatives or close family friends have fewer behavioral and mental health problems and experience fewer educational disruptions. Kinship care also helps to keep kids connected to their culture, family traditions, and siblings.

## Types of Kinship Care in Kentucky

Kinship care may be informal or may involve the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) in the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS).

### Informal Kinship Care

Children who live with relatives or close family friends with varying types of custody depending on arrangements made within those families

### Kinship Care Due to Removal from Home

Children are placed with kin as a result of removal by the Cabinet or courts. Either the caregiver or CHFS may maintain custody.

### Relative Foster Care

The relatives or close family friends raising children become certified as foster parents. CHFS maintains custody of the child.

## 96,000 Kentucky kids

live in kinship care. That rate—9% of all children—is the highest in the nation.<sup>1</sup>

Estimated 15,000 kids in kinship care due to removal from home<sup>2</sup>

Of those 15,000, only 5,140 are in the Kinship Care Program. No new families have been able to enroll and receive financial support since a moratorium was put on the program in 2013.<sup>3</sup>

1,182 kids live in relative foster care<sup>4</sup>



**Majority of kids living with relatives are in informal kinship care**



**Kinship Families**  
COALITION OF KENTUCKY



**SOURCES:** 1. U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2016-2018. 2. Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department for Community Based Services, October 2017, received November 2017. 3. Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department for Community Based Services, October 2017, communicated July 2018. 4. Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department for Community Based Services, Foster Care FACTS, March 2019.

[kinshipky.org](http://kinshipky.org)  
[kyyouth.org/blueprintky](http://kyyouth.org/blueprintky)