



Kentucky can...

## Prioritize investments for children who have experienced abuse and neglect by supporting kinship caregivers

When children cannot remain safely with their parents, 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.”

### Kinship care has substantial benefits for kids:

- Reduce trauma often faced upon removal from their home
- Experience fewer behavioral and mental health problems and educational disruptions
- Maintain connections to culture, family traditions, and siblings

For every **6** Kentucky kids in foster care

There are an estimated **10** additional kids in kinship care

Many kinship caregivers are grandparents raising one or more grandchildren. Kentucky children raised by grandparents have a lower median family income than the state’s general population and are likely to struggle financially, with a quarter of all grandparents raising grandchildren living in poverty. **When grandparents or other relatives or close family friends take in a child who has experienced abuse or neglect as a result of Department of Community Based Services (DCBS) intervention, it is often without notice or preparation.** Undertaking the full-time responsibility for raising a child who has experienced trauma often includes physical, emotional, social, legal and financial challenges for the caregiver.

### Kentucky has two opportunities to provide commonsense resources to support kinship families:

**1.** Kentucky provides a one-time financial support, known as the **Relative Placement Support benefit**, to those caring for a child who has experienced abuse or neglect to purchase essential items, such as clothing, bedding, formula, and school supplies. Currently, even those eligible are not receiving this support. The commonwealth can invest in this crucial support and ensure DCBS connects kinship caregivers with it to help ease the transition for child and caregiver.

**2. Respite care**, a temporary break from the ongoing responsibilities of caregiving, can provide a much-needed opportunity to help caregivers balance caring for the child with caring for themselves. Foster families already receive respite care resources, and Kentucky can offer those same options for safe, affordable respite care to kinship caregivers.

### Blueprint for Kentucky’s Children Solution:

Prioritizing kinship and fictive kin care by investing in critical financial and respite care supports