



**YOU'RE INVITED!**  
**OCTOBER 22, 2013**  
**KINCARE SUMMIT**

The NYS Kinship Navigator, recipient of one of seven national Children's Bureau Kinship Navigator Demonstration Project awards, with the support of the NYS KinCare Coalition, AARP NY and the NYS Council on Children and Families, invites you to a KinCare Summit. The Summit seeks your input to identify gaps in services, legal resources, and improvements in system responses to the special challenges facing grandparents, relatives, and others who are raising children.



**What**

Fourth New York State Kin Care Summit

**Where**

NYS Convention Center, Rooms 1-5  
 Albany, New York

**When**

10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

**Who**

Policy Makers, Agency Leadership, Kinship Service Providers, Advocates, Caregivers, and Youth

**Why**

Renew New York's Commitment to Kinship Families by Seeking a System of Care that Integrates Services Across Public and Private Agencies

**RSVP**

Please attend and/or send a representative.

Contact:  
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 www.nysnavigator.org

The New York State Kinship Navigator Summit Project is funded through the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, Grant #90CF0044/0.



*A Tradition in Search of a Champion*



- Why Kinship Families are a National Resource
- Why Kinship Families Need Help
- Why Kinship Families Succeed
- What New York Does to Help





#### Grant Disclaimer

The New York State Kinship Navigator provides a statewide information and referral service for kinship caregivers and is funded through the NYS Office of Children and Family Services and the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, Grant #90CF0044/0.

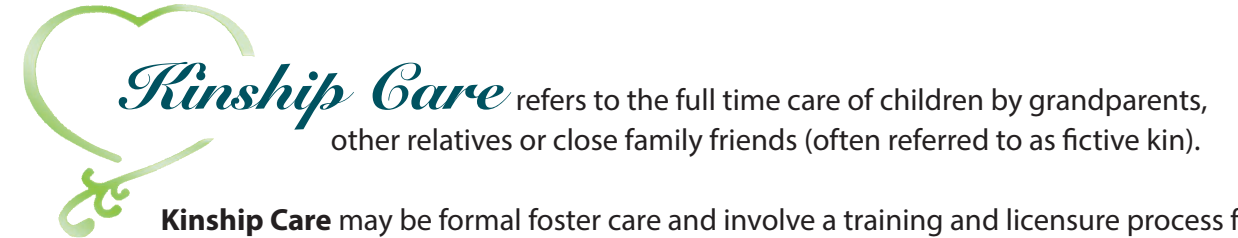
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Deborah Faulks (Family Enrichment Center, Binghamton)  
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*Kinship Care* refers to the full time care of children by grandparents, other relatives or close family friends (often referred to as fictive kin).

**Kinship Care** may be formal foster care and involve a training and licensure process for the caregivers, monthly foster care payments to help defray the costs of caring for the child, and support services.

Much more frequently, **Kinship Care** is informal, where relatives become caregivers without agency involvement, or with some agency contacts but no formal placements. Under such circumstances, kin are on their own with no supports or when an agency is involved, assistance is limited to an assessment process.

**Kinship Care** is as American as apple pie, starting with the Nation's Founding Father, George Washington. He and Martha raised many orphan nieces and nephews and adopted two of Martha's grandchildren, who were the first children to live in the presidential residences, first in New York City and then Philadelphia (1789-97).

### *Kinship Care at work...*

Joseph is caring for Cameron, his six-year old grandson who has had an up-and-down relationship with his mother (Joseph's daughter). His father has never been a part of his life.

Joseph had temporary custody of his grandson for one month when the child was placed back in the care of his mother. Not long after being returned to his mother, Cameron witnessed his mother attempting to commit suicide and he was returned to his grandfather.



## Kinship Care by the numbers...

### Children

- 153,000 children in Kinship Care
- 6,000 in Kinship Foster Care (*foster care by a relative while legal custody of that child is with the state or the agency acting for the state*)
- 24% receive financial assistance (foster care or public assistance)

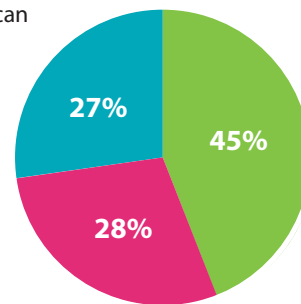
**One in five African American children will live with relatives.  
One in 11 of all children will live with relatives.**

### NYS Grandparent Caregivers

- 21.7% had income below the poverty level
- 54,305 were sixty years of age or older

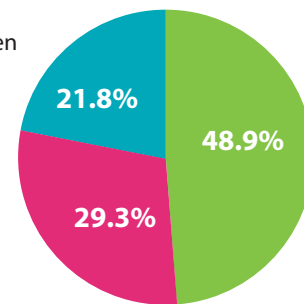
### Race of the 141,157 grandparents who are primary caregivers:

- White
- African American
- Hispanic



### Ages of children in grandparent care:

- Under six years of age
- Six to eleven years
- Twelve to seventeen years old



In New York state, the number of children in Kinship Care is split almost evenly between NYC and the rest of the state.

## The causes and benefits of Kinship Care...

### Causes of Kinship Care

Kinship children live with relatives for the same reasons children are in foster care: abuse, neglect, abandonment, parental substance abuse, mental illness, incarceration, death, and debilitation.

### Value of Kinship Care/Cost Benefit

- **Cost of Kinship Navigator:**
  - Local Kinship Services = \$466 per year per child
- **Cost of Foster Care:**
  - \$23,000 per year per child (regular foster care)
  - Up to \$56,000 per year per child (special, exceptional, or institutional care)

*Children living with relatives experience as good or better outcomes than those living with foster parents.*



### Causes ...

Karen was given joint custody and legal guardianship over her daughter, Mia's, child. Mia is 38 years old, lives in the home, but is a drug addict and alcoholic and unable to work. The father, who has never met the child, lives in Arizona and pays \$25 monthly child support.



Nicole and Samual have been taking care of their grandchild, Jackson, for three years. Jackson's father is in and out of his life, but really does not want anything to do with him. Jackson's mother disappeared and has not been heard from.



## Families who are turning to us...

Maria is caring for her four grandchildren. Lexi, her daughter, is simply not responsible. She is unemployed, and recently left her last partner (the father of two of the children) because of domestic violence. CPS told Lexi they would remove her children if she did not give custody to her mother, Maria. She is a nurse and she is dedicated to caring for her grandchildren.



## Families seeking guidance...

Janelle has custody of Jada, her 11-year old granddaughter. She is also caring for her own adult child who is disabled. Jada's mother has a mental illness and her father is incarcerated. Janelle wants to know if there are support groups available for her granddaughter. Jada feels very isolated from her peers and gets hurt at school when she is put in a position where she has to tell others she is being raised by grandparents.

## *Special Challenges - Special Help*

Brianna has raised her 5-year-old grandson Eli since he was about age one, due to his mother's incarceration on drug-related charges. When she attempted to enroll him in preschool and to obtain a child-only grant in summer 2012, she was unsuccessful at both "because she did not have legal custody" of him.

Adding to the stressful situation, Brianna also received a legal notice of impending eviction, although she was adhering to an informal written agreement she had made with her landlord to bring her arrears up to date.

In September 2012, she contacted NYS Kinship Navigator and was referred to the NYC Family Permanency Center. With an array of additional concerns (Eli's mother was released from prison, had resumed a transient life, apparently continued to use illegal substances - and continued to receive HRA funds for him, as she had throughout his life), Project staff agreed with Brianna that

it would be beneficial for her to obtain legal custody of Eli.

With in-person Project support, Brianna went to and obtained legal representation at Housing and Family Courts. Payment of her actual rent arrears (and rejection of her landlord's false claims of additional rent owed) was structured at Housing Court in Fall 2012 and is now completed. In early summer 2013 she was finally granted Legal Custody of Eli. Once Legal Custody was granted, Project staff was able to assist her in applying for and obtaining a certified original birth certificate for Eli (who was born in Texas) and a replacement Social Security Card. The HRA project staff advised her to inform her interviewer that Eli's mother was fraudulently receiving funds for him. NYCFPS staff also assisted Brianna in obtaining a developmental evaluation of Eli. He has started to receive early childhood intervention services and began attending Kindergarten in September 2013.



## *Preventing Foster Care Placements*

In 2012 Sandra was 48 and had raised two children of her own when, in spite of her better judgment, she allowed her step son Paul and his eight year old daughter Alyssa to move in with her. They had planned to stay with her for a few weeks while Paul searched for a job and an apartment. But a few weeks turned into four months, during which time Paul would leave home for days at a time leaving Sandra in charge of Alyssa. Sandra enrolled her in school and after-school activities. She made sure she did her homework and she assumed a caretaker's role. Alyssa is diabetic. Her medication, which had been poorly monitored up to now, required constant attention as her insulin levels were completely out of control. Sandra enrolled Alyssa in Child Health Plus, got her to the doctor, and attended to her medication and diet - even making sure her school monitored her glucose levels during the day.

Alyssa's health had improved, and she was doing better in school. As time passed, Alyssa and Sandra were growing attached to one another. Then Paul decided to take Alyssa to live with her mother in the Dominican Republic - and Alyssa was gone from Sandra's life.

Sandra had no intention of interfering with Paul's decisions. In the Dominican Republic, Alyssa's mother, who had walked out on her once before, refused to take the child. A month later, Sandra got a call from an airline stewardess asking her to pick the young girl up at the airport. She called Paul and he plainly told her he was done being a parent and he wanted Alyssa to go into foster care unless Sandra would agree to care for her.

There were no other relatives willing to take Alyssa. Sandra felt manipulated and used by Paul, and contemplated turning Alyssa over to the foster care system.

But she didn't. Instead she contacted NYC's The Family Center and with their help she petitioned Family Court for guardianship over Alyssa.

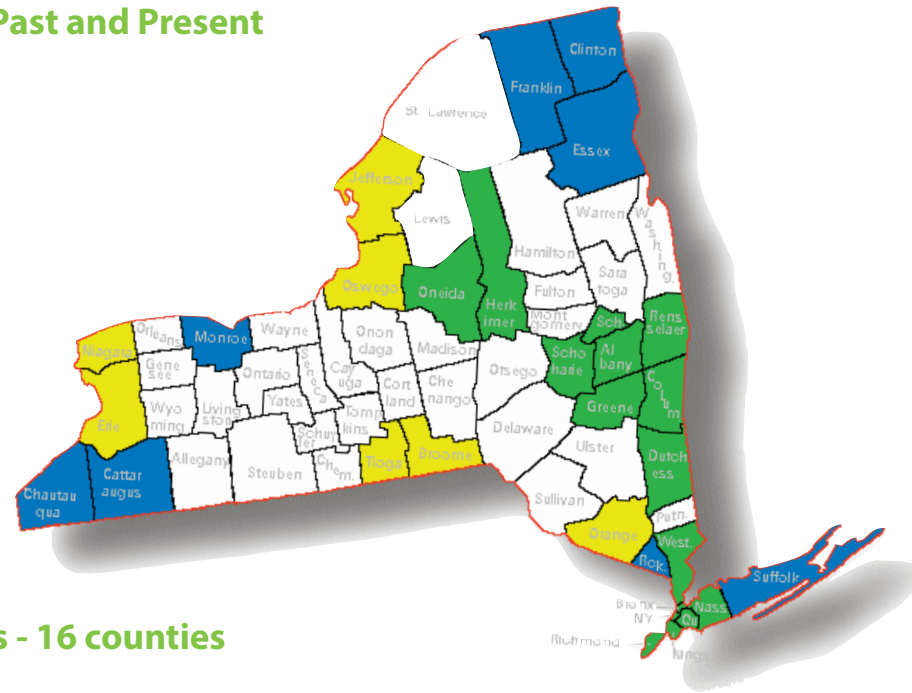
Alyssa was just one phone call away from entering foster care. A conservative estimate of what her care in the child welfare system would cost is \$21,535 a year. Considering her significant health issues, that estimate could easily skyrocket. By contrast, the kinship staff attorney spent less than 20 hours, from intake to judgment, on Sandra's application for guardianship. Additionally, Sandra has refused to apply for temporary assistance or any other subsidies.



## History of Office of Children and Family Services Kinship Program

### OCFS Kinship Programs - Past and Present

- Ended Prior 2013
- Ended 2013
- Continued 2014



### 2013-14 Kinship Programs - 16 counties

- Catholic Charities of Albany (Columbia, Greene, Schoharie)
- Cornell Cooperative Extension (Dutchess)
- Family Service Society of Yonkers (Yonkers)
- Hispanic Counseling Center (Nassau)
- Jewish Board of Family & Children Services (Brooklyn)
- Lutheran Social Services of Metro (Queens)
- The Children's Village (Bronx)
- The Neighborhood Center (Oneida, Herkimer)
- Council on Adoptable Children (NYC, includes Staten Island)
- The Family Center (NYC, includes Staten Island)
- Catholic Charities of Albany (Schenectady, Albany, Rensselaer)
- NYS Kinship Navigator (entire state)



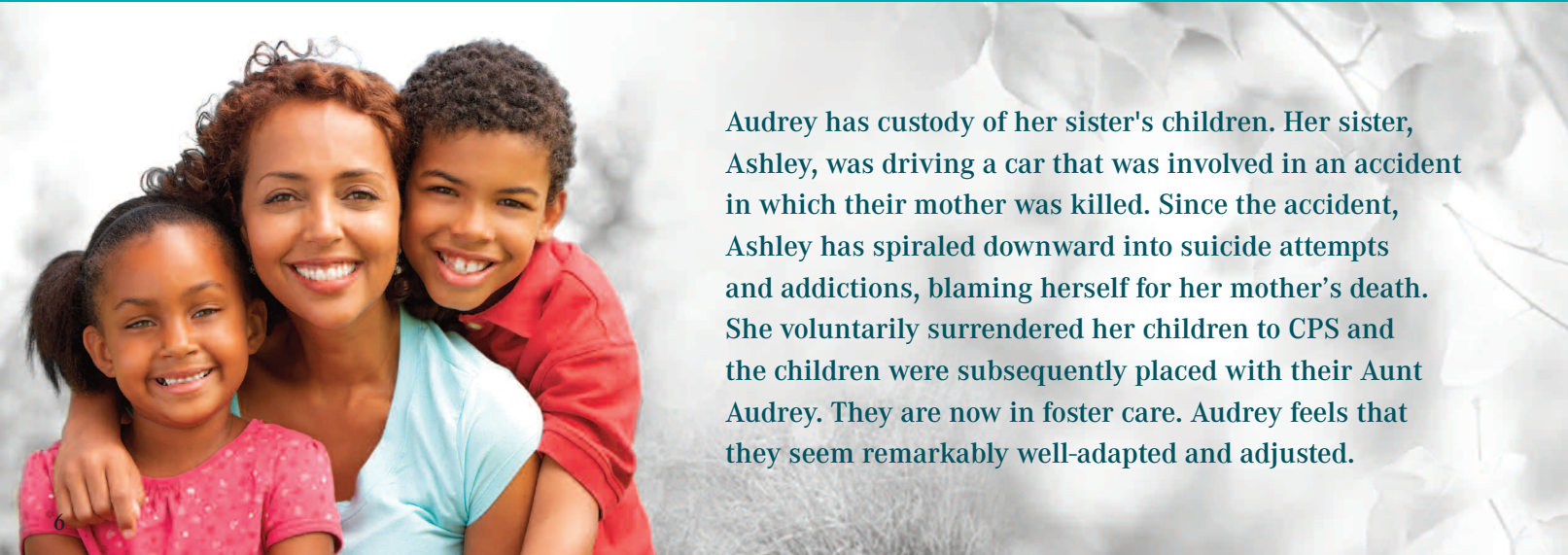
### The NYS Kinship Navigator Federal Children's Bureau Project:

The NYS Kinship Navigator was awarded a three year grant from the Children's Bureau to establish a Kinship Navigator Demonstration Project (2013-15). One of only seven awards, the project targets Broome, Tioga, Orange, Ulster, and Dutchess counties. The project includes:

- Strong collaboration with both DSS Temporary Assistance and Child Welfare
- Pro bono legal assistance network
- Development of grandparent leaders, called the "Kinship Corps"
- Enhanced outreach to caregivers
- Education of kinship caregivers and kinship youth
- Local and state coalitions & summits
- Online database
- Evaluation of outcomes

### Kinship Advocacy - NYS Enactments and Actions 2000 - 2013

- Standby Guardianship Amendment (adds legal custodians and certain caretakers)
- OCFS Kinship Local Services Programs (kinship services across NYS)
- Grandparent Rights Act (two year care grants standing in custody disputes; notice to all grandparents of removals)
- NYS Kinship Navigator Statewide Information and Referral Network
- General Obligations Law Parental Power of Attorney (one and six month designations)
- Family Court Act 1028-a (relatives can petition to become foster parents of children in foster care)
- Family Court Act - Article Ten Amendments (improvements to notice and custody jurisdiction)
- Domestic Relations Law 74 and Family Court Act 647 (legal custody and guardianship mandate school enrollment)
- Permanent Guardianship (alternative to adoption when parents are deceased or rights terminated)
- OCFS ADM's; OTDA ADM's (advisories and regulations related to child welfare and temporary assistance for kinship caregivers)
- Social Services Law 392 (local departments must inform kin about temporary assistance)
- KinGAP (assistance program to kin who are foster parents)



Audrey has custody of her sister's children. Her sister, Ashley, was driving a car that was involved in an accident in which their mother was killed. Since the accident, Ashley has spiraled downward into suicide attempts and addictions, blaming herself for her mother's death. She voluntarily surrendered her children to CPS and the children were subsequently placed with their Aunt Audrey. They are now in foster care. Audrey feels that they seem remarkably well-adapted and adjusted.



Sofia recently obtained legal custody of her five year-old twin nieces, Sydney and Taylor. She is now raising them along with her seven year-old daughter, Ashley. Sofia is having a hard time economically and is overwhelmed because the twins have exceptional needs. They are non-verbal and Taylor does not eat solid foods. The NYC Family Permanency Center has assisted Sofia with referrals to the food pantry and for psychological and psychosocial evaluations, support and advocacy in the SSI application process, and advocacy with appropriate school enrollment.



**Contact the  
NYS Kinship Navigator :  
877-454-6463**

The Kinship Specialists are available from 10am-4pm Monday-Friday

Kinship Specialists can help by:

- Identifying local resources and connecting caregivers with kinship programs in their area
- Providing information on state and federal laws regarding kinship care, caregiver rights, and court procedures
- Accessing resources and assistance
- Mailing, emailing or faxing kinship care fact sheets on financial assistance, legal information and other frequently asked questions
- Providing access to free legal consultations

**Visit the website:  
www.nysnavigator.org**

The NYS Kinship Navigator website provides:

- Interactive New York State map - just click on a county and find local resources
- Links to state and national resources
- Information on kinship events across the state
- Downloadable legal fact sheets and guides for kinship caregivers
- “Contact Us” link to email the kinship specialist
- Social Media for kinship caregivers and professionals
- Articles by well known kinship experts
- Monthly “Kinship News” regarding new events and press releases affecting kinship care
- Training information and resources for professionals

**Professional Assistance**

The Kinship Specialists and attorneys provide individual assistance through our professional resources:

- Network of kinship professionals (including local kinship programs.)
- Attorney consultants specializing in Family Court
- Experts on public assistance, social security and education law

**Training and Advocacy**

The NYS Kinship Navigator works with kinship service providers to get better outcomes for kinship families.

Services include:

- Trainings, seminars and workshops for caregivers and professionals
- Legal trainings (CLE’s) for attorneys
- Assistance in building local partnerships with public and private agencies
- Organization of local networks

- Access to research on policies and best practices
- Networking via participation in the Statewide Kincare Coalition

**NYS Kinship Navigator –  
Assistance, Legal Rights and  
Much More**

Grandparents and other relatives caring for children:

- Are you looking for financial assistance?
- Are you looking for information on your legal rights?
- Are you seeking respite and support?

We Can Tell You About:

- Kinship law
- Special financial assistance for non-parents caring for children
- Specialized kinship and other local resources

