



Tools for Working with Kinship Caregivers

by Susan Dougherty

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Training Materials

1. *A Tradition of Caring* is a comprehensive six-module, nine-session curriculum, providing kinship caregivers with 27 hours of valuable information and support related to kinship care. Sessions are designed to facilitate interaction and the sharing of experiences and support among participants. Meetings utilize a task-based, strengths-oriented approach to learning. During the course of this program, each participant develops a comprehensive individualized action plan for accessing needed resources and meeting identified family needs. Order from:

Child Welfare League of America Publications

PO Box 932831

Atlanta, GA 31193-2831

1-800-407-6273

E-mail: order@cwla.org

Website: <http://www.cwla.org/pubs/>

2. The Kinship Care Practice Project at the Jane Addams College of Social Work has developed curriculum materials intended to prepare child welfare caseworkers for engaging family members of children in the custody of the child welfare system in the development of a permanent plan for the child. The materials may also be useful tools for child welfare practice and policy, generalist practice, family intervention, and human behavior courses. The six learning units are:

- The Context of Practice in Kinship Foster Care: Formal and Informal System Constraints and Opportunities
- The Sociocultural Contexts of Kinship Care
- Substance Abuse and its Impact on Family Systems
- Convening the Kinship Network
- Decision-Making & Family Empowerment
- Supporting Permanent Plans

¹ This paper was originally prepared by the Casey Family Programs National Center for Resource Family Support in 2001. It was updated in 2009 and 2010 by the National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections.

Both written materials and video segments can be downloaded at:

http://www.uic.edu/jaddams/college/kinicare/curriculum_videos/curriculum_videos.html

3. The Center for Child and Family Programs at Eastern Michigan University has developed two curricula dealing with kinship care:

- The *Kinship Training Program* for child welfare workers is designed to provide factual information, sensitize workers to the strengths and needs of kinship families, and highlight strategies and techniques for developing effective helping relationships and interventions with the extended family system to support intra-familial child placements. It consists of four 3-hour modules.
- The *Kinship Caregiver Forums* provide the guidelines for presentation to caregivers. Each of the nine forums provides participants an opportunity to discuss issues of concern, exchange ideas, and develop supportive networks. Each forum provides instructions for the presentation of the session as well as participant handouts.

Materials are available for purchase from:

Institute for the Study of Children, Families and Communities

203 Boone Hall

Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Phone: 734-487-0372

Fax: 734-487-0284

Website:

<http://www.iscfc.emich.edu/Publications/ISCFC%20-%20Publications%20-%20Kinship%20Training%20Materials.htm>

4. *Kinship Care: A Manual for Families* and *Kinship Care: Trainer's Guide* by Charles E. Confer, LSW, ACSW, RTC.

- *Kinship Care: A Manual for Families* is a skills-based text that can be used in group instruction or as an independent study for kinship caregivers. You may order from <http://www.afcr.com/content/9610-11.html>, or from a general text supplier, such as Amazon.
- *Kinship Care: Trainer's Guide* by Charles E. Confer, LSW, ACSW, RTC. This kit is intended to aid the facilitator in presenting curriculum to kinship care group members. It is supplied with step-by-step instructions, exercises, and overhead transparencies that can be used as a format and adapted for individual group work. You may order from <http://www.afcr.com/istresources/index.html>, or from a general text supplier, such as Amazon.

5. Cox, C. B. (2000). *Empowering Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: A Training Manual for Group Leaders*. New York: Springer Publishing Co.

Grandparents who have accepted the task of raising their grandchildren often need assistance navigating the child welfare system, refining parenting skills, and becoming informed of legal and entitlement issues. The author presents training sessions focused on these issues, as well as:

- Communicating with children
- Dealing with problem behaviors
- Teaching their grandchildren about sex, HIV, and drugs
- Helping the child cope with grief and loss
- Developing advocacy skills
- Helping children build self-esteem.

To purchase a copy, contact:

Springer Publishing Company, Inc.
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New York, NY 10012-3955
Phone: 212-431-4370
Fax: 212-941-7842
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Assessment Tools

1. Assessing Adult Relatives as Preferred Caregivers in Permanency Planning: A Competency-Based Curriculum

This curriculum was developed by the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning (now the National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections) in March of 2002. It is intended to be used in coordination with your existing state laws, policies and best practices regarding safety and family study assessments, placement, permanency planning efforts, child and family well-being initiatives and foster/adoptive family licensing/approval procedures. Download from the NRCPPFC website at:

<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/downloads/assessing-adult-relatives-as-preferred-caregivers.pdf>

2. Assessment Guide: A Tradition of Caring--Information, Resources, and Support for Kinship Families (Child Welfare League of America)

The Assessment Guide is a tool for conducting family assessment in kinship care. The guide is a resource for agencies that wish to develop an effective assessment process that not

only meets agency and legal requirements, but also helps and supports kinship families.

Topics addressed include:

- the role of assessment in kinship care, the unique aspects of kinship care assessment;
- the mutual assessment process and content in kinship care;
- challenges in conducting assessments with kinship families; and
- ways to build relationships and provide support to kinship families during assessment.

The guide is designed to be used with the *Tradition of Caring* group preparation process. It identifies the benefits of combining preparation with assessment and provides information on how to use the tools in the *Tradition of Caring* curriculum to facilitate a respectful, strengths-based assessment process. Order from:

Child Welfare League of America Publications
PO Box 932831
Atlanta, GA 31193-2831
1-800-407-6273
E-mail: order@cwla.org
Website: <http://www.cwla.org/pubs/>

Handbooks for Caregivers

Each of the handbooks listed here is addressed to a specific population of caregivers. However, each also offers some general information, and may also serve as a template for other organizations seeking to provide such a resource for their caregivers.

1. *Kinship Care Resource Kit*

Children's Defense Fund has prepared a resource kit to assist kinship caregivers with cash assistance, health care and insurance, raising children with disabilities, child care and early education programs, domestic violence issues, food and nutrition programs, and a range of other issues. This clearly written resource kit is designed to answer questions and offer information about federal programs, eligibility requirements, and how to enroll the children they are raising so they receive the supports they need. (2006)

<http://www.childrendefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/kinship-care-resource-kit.html>

2. *Caregiver Resource Directory*

This guide was produced for caregivers of patients with medical problems. However, kinship caregivers may find some of the tools it provides to be useful, and particularly if they are caring for children with medical needs. It provides clear, concise advice on topics ranging from how to communicate with medical staff to self-care for caregivers. The guide also provides blank forms to be used for such things as assessing personal resources,

emergency information, medication schedules, and other features such as a "fatigue journal" to help the caregiver track a patient's energy levels and a page of heavy paper with slits arranged to hold the business cards of physicians and other professionals. Some portions available online; hard copy available at no cost from:

Department of Pain Medicine and Palliative Care
Beth Israel Medical Center
First Avenue at 16th Street
New York, NY 10003
Phone: 877-620-9999
Email: mayday@bethisraelny.org
Website: <http://www.stoppain.org/caregivers>

3. Illinois Department on Aging. A range of information is provided at this web site as part of the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren program; these resources are available for download at: <http://www.state.il.us/aging/1intergen/grg.htm>. While intended for caregivers in Illinois, the site also contains general information and national resources. A resource guide (2003) is available. The site and the resource guide may be useful as a model for agencies seeking to produce local information.

4. American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Benefits QuickLINK
Navigating through the maze of public benefit programs can be difficult and confusing. Many people don't know what assistance is available — or how to gain access to it. AARP offers online tools that take the guesswork out of the process for every state in the U.S. and the District of Columbia. Find resources, information, programs, and policies. This tool is easy to use and is tailored to your local state.
https://www.benefitscheckup.org/index.cfm?partner_id=22

5. *Having a Voice and a Choice: New York State Handbook for Relatives Raising Children*
This handbook was written for relatives who are raising, or considering raising, children in need of a stable home because their parents are unable to take care of them. While intended for caregivers in New York, this handbook also contains general information and national resources. Whether a child needs a placement outside the home because of safety concerns or because of individual circumstances in the family, the handbook provides information on the various options available so that relatives and other nonparent caregivers can make the best decision for their own situation. The handbook covers a range of subjects including: How a child may come into a relative's care; the role of the Department of Social Services; legal arrangements, such as informal care, direct placement, legal custody, temporary or permanent guardianship, kinship foster care, and adoption; the types of financial assistance available to relatives raising children; health care provision and coverage for children in a relative's care; and, the child's education. A list of local, state, and national resources and websites is included. The handbook was a joint project of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services and the New

York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. Available in English and Spanish. (Last Updated: December 2009)

English: <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/publications/Pub5080.pdf>

Spanish: <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/publications/Pub5080-S.pdf>

Websites: Additional Sources of Information

- NRCPPFC Webpage on Fostering Connections
http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcp/inf_services/fostering-connections.html
- NRCPPFC Webpage on Kinship/Relative Care
http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcp/inf_services/kinship-relative-care.html
- AARP Grandparent Information Center
<http://www.aarp.org/life/grandparents/>
- Grandparent Again
<http://www.grandparentagain.com/>
- The Foundation for Grandparenting
<http://www.grandparenting.org/>
- Brookdale Foundation (Relatives as Parents Programs, RAPP)
<http://www.brookdalefoundation.org>

Additional Reading

- State Fact Sheets for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children
In a unique national partnership, AARP Foundation, Brookdale Foundation Group, Casey Family Programs, Child Welfare League of America, Children's Defense Fund, and Generations United have compiled and released state fact sheets and one national fact sheet that include census data, local programs and resources, state foster care policies, public benefit programs, and important state laws. (October 2007)
www.grandfactsheets.org
- Urban Institute. (2003). *Kinship care: Making the most of a valuable resource*. R. Geen (Ed.). Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press