

Training for Kinship Caregivers
Last Updated: July, 2009

This resource provides information on state training requirements for kinship families who wish to become licensed foster parents for the related children in their care.

The information was provided by state foster care managers and kinship care specialists, and from state and national websites. The AARP website was particularly informative about many aspects of state kinship programs (www.aarp.org). Useful information can also be found on the following websites: Brookdale Center (www.brookdale.org); Children's Defense Fund (www.childrendefense.org); Generations United (www.gu.org); and Child Welfare League of America (www.cwla.org).

There were several similarities among the states in how they proceed to approve relative caregivers as foster parents. States reported the following:

- In general, related foster parents must meet all the same requirement in terms of background clearances and training as any other foster parent.
- States require foster parents, relative and non-relative, to participate in a basic training program. The exceptions are: Wisconsin (training will be required beginning in 2011) and Pennsylvania and Minnesota, which require orientations, rather than training.
- Licensed relative foster parents receive the same payment and financial support as any other foster parents.
- Some states will waive non-safety requirements for relative foster parents. Examples are income level and space requirements.
- On a case by case basis, some states will waive some training requirements for relative foster parents, or allow them to substitute training or consultation that addresses the specific needs of the children in their care.
- With few exceptions, states train relative and non-relative foster parents together in the same training group using a single curriculum. For exceptions, see CA, ME, and CT.
- A number of states are presently reviewing their kinship care policies and programs to make revisions required by the federal Fostering Connections law.

Note: The phrase "All foster parents" as used in this document means both relative and non-relative foster parents.

Alaska

Training includes an initial program of 16 hours, delivered 2 hours per week for 8 weeks. All foster parent couples must complete 15 hours of inservice training annually; single foster parents must complete 10 hours annually.

Alabama (county administered)

All foster parents must complete 30 hours of preservice (MAPP) and 6 hours of inservice annually.

Arkansas

All foster parents must completed 30 hours of PRIDE preservice training and 15 hours of inservice training annually.

Arizona

Training for all foster parents is through PS MAPP.

California (county administered)

Counties in California either provide preservice training or contract with the state community college system to provide the training. Relative and non-relative foster parents are required to participate in preservice training. Almost all counties use either the MAPP or the PRIDE program.

Exceptions include: LA, which uses the Keeps program designed with CWI; and San Diego, which uses Tradition of Caring (Kinship PRIDE), developed by CWLA.

Colorado (county administered)

Certified kinship foster caregivers receiving foster care reimbursement:

- Must receive the same training hours that all new foster parents must receive (27 preservice + CPR and 1st Aid, and before the 1 yr renewal is done, they must have an additional 20 hours of ongoing training).
- There are specific topics that must be addressed in the first 12 hours of precertification training. Foster care

precertification training is provided by the State and some of the larger counties provide their own. There are several counties that provide 24 hours of training upfront. Beyond that, the counties may require specific topics or the kinship foster family may want to choose certain trainings provided by the agency, State, or in the community.

Connecticut

The Department of Children and Families has a basic training that is geared toward relative caregivers. The agency contracts with the Connecticut Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents to provide training services.

DC

All foster parents must complete 30 hours of preservice and 15 hours of inservice annually.

Delaware

Any person applying to become a foster parents must complete 27 hours of PRIDE preservice training. Additional inservice training is required each year.

Florida

In Florida most kinship caregivers of children who have been adjudicated dependent due to abuse, neglect or abandonment utilize the Relative Caregiver Program instead of becoming licensed foster parents. In this program, based on a home study conducted by the Department of Children and Families, the child is placed by the court into the temporary custody of the relative. The family is eligible for payment under the program, as well as other services. If reunification or adoption is not possible for the child, the court may place the child in the long-term care of the relative. Relatives participating in this program are not required to participate in any training.

If a relative opts to become a licensed foster parent, he or she must complete the same process and meet the same requirements as non-related foster parents. The training requirements include participation in MAPP preservice and 8 hours of inservice training annually for regular foster families and 12 hours for medical foster families.

Georgia

Any person applying for foster care licensing must complete 30 hours of preservice training; 15 hours of inservice training is required annually for license renewal.

Hawaii

All foster parents must complete 18 hours of preservice training.

Idaho

The state requires all foster parents to complete a 27 hour PRIDE preservice training.

By use of a waiver, there is a six month grace period to complete the PRIDE training if necessary for kinship caregivers.

All foster parents must complete ten hours of inservice training each year

Iowa

All foster parents must complete 30 hours of fundamental training (PS MAPP).

Illinois

All foster parents must complete 27 hours of PRIDE preservice training.

Indiana (county based)

All foster parents must participate in an Initial training program called FAKT training. All foster parents must complete ongoing training annually- 10 hours for regular foster families; 24 hours for therapeutic foster families.

Kansas

Kinship caregivers can be licensed as foster parents only if they agree to care for non-related as well as related children. To be licensed they must complete 30 hours of preservice training (MAPP) and a minimum of 8 hours of inservice training annually.

Note: Relative caregivers who opt not to become licensed foster parents can negotiate a board rate with the state that may be lower than the monthly foster care rate. To be eligible, they must complete an approval process that

includes a home inspection and a check of the child abuse and criminal records registries.

Kentucky

All foster parents must complete 30 hours of preservice training (MAPP) and six hours of ongoing training annually.

Louisiana

Non-related foster parents must complete a 30 hour preservice (MAPP) and 20 hours of inservice training annually. Related foster parents must complete 12 hours of preservice, and 15 hours of inservice annually.

Massachusetts

The Department of Child and Family Services provides training for non-kin foster parents, adoptive parents, and kinship foster parents through a contract with a local private social service agency.

Kin are strongly encouraged to participate in the same training as other foster parents.

All foster parents must complete MAPP preservice training, and 10 hours of ongoing training annually.

Maryland

All foster parents must complete PRIDE preservice and participate in inservice training annually.

Maine

Does not require kinship providers to become licensed, although it is strongly encouraged.

For those that do become licensed, they go through the same training and have the same training requirements as all foster parents.

Training is provided by the Child Welfare Training Institute at the Muskie Center, University of Maine.

The state has a curriculum of pre-service foster parent training

geared to kin, but it is not available as a general training. Whether the kin have the kin training or the regular training depends on where the kin are located and the cycle of the trainings.

Michigan

All foster parents must complete PRIDE preservice training and 6 hours of inservice training annually.

Minnesota (county administered)

If a county places a child with relatives, the relatives must become licensed foster parents. Within 30 days of placement, all foster parents must participate in an orientation that includes: emergency procedures; information about laws and rules; cultural sensitivity; and information about the responsibilities of foster parent. Relative caregivers are exempt from participating in the cultural sensitivity requirement.

All foster parents must complete 12 hours of inservice annually. This requirement is not limited to classroom training and educational materials. Foster parents may also fill this requirement through consultations with professional about the individual needs of the child.

Missouri

Requires the relative or kinship caregiver to attend 8 hours of pre-service training and 15 hours of in-service training annually (30 hours per licensing period).

The family cannot be licensed until they complete the pre-service training and thus can not receive maintenance past the initial 90 days of placement (this time allows them to complete the required paperwork and training).

HIPAA, CPR and First Aid training is required.

The State uses STARS for the Caregiver Who Knows the Child pre-service training and STARS in-service training modules with kinship and relative caregivers. STARS is the state's name for the PRIDE program.

Mississippi

All foster parents must complete the PATH preservice program and fifteen hours of inservice annually.

Montana

All foster parents must complete an 18 hour preservice program called Keeping Children Safe, which was developed by the state agency.

Nebraska

Related and non-related foster parents must complete 21 hours of preservice training and 12 hours of inservice. However, the agency may waive training requirements for relative foster parents, or approve child-specific training topics, on a case by case basis.

New Hampshire

State law does not require a relative to be licensed, although they are encouraged to do so. Training is tied to licensing.

Foster parent and adoptive parent on-going training is available to relative caregivers. They can access any of the training offered by the Education and Training Partnership of Granite State College (<http://www.granite.edu/etp/>)

New Jersey

Relatives who become foster parents must meet the same licensing standards as non-relative foster parents. This includes 27 hours of preservice training.

Both relative and non-relative foster parents must complete 15 hours of inservice training annually. Successful completion of inservice training is required by the Office of Licensing in order to maintain a resource family license.

New Mexico

Requires that all foster parents, whether related or non-related, attend the 27 hour PRIDE training and become licensed.

Nevada

Related and non-related foster parents must complete preservice training and 4 hours of ongoing training annually to maintain their license

New York (county administered)

All foster parents must participate in preservice. Training must include topics identified by the state. Counties vary in the curriculum they use. Many use MAPP.a

North Carolina (county administered)

All foster parents must complete 30 hours of MAPP preservice training and 10 hours of inservice training annually.

North Dakota

If a Kinship family decides that they want to be licensed to provide foster care for the relative children, they would be required to go through a foster care licensing study and complete the PRIDE Foster Parent training, which is provided through a contract with the University of North Dakota Children and Family Services Training Center.

Ohio(county administered)

Some counties allow kinship families to become licensed foster parents; other counties do not. Counties that license both related and non-related foster families must provide preservice and inservice training to both groups, according to guidelines for topic areas set by the state.

Pennsylvania (county administered)

By state law relative and non-relative foster parents must complete an orientation. The state agency specifies the topics which must be included, but does not specify number of hours for the orientation.

All relative and non-relative foster parents must complete six hours of inservice training annually to maintain their license.

Rhode Island

All foster parents must complete a 27-hour preservice training

Oklahoma

Requires all resource families including kinship (paid or non-paid) to attend 27 hours of Oklahoma PRIDE training (tailored to meet the needs of Oklahoma through a joint effort between OKDHS and the National Resource Center for Youth Services, NRCYS). Training is contracted out to NRCYS.

South Carolina

All foster parents must complete 14 hours of initial training.

South Dakota

All foster parents must complete 30 hours of preservice training on specified topics. The state uses PRIDE preservice to meet this requirement. All foster parents must complete 6 hours of inservice training annually.

Tennessee

Anyone interested in becoming a foster parent, including a kinship caregiver, must complete a 30-hour preservice program called PATH (Parents as Tender Healers).

Texas

Department of Family and Protective Services has developed the Kinship Caregiver Support Training Curriculum model, an authorized revision to the PRIDE Foster Parent Training program. The curriculum was designed to educate kinship caregivers on issues and topics related to the process of providing for the safety and well being of children in the conservatorship of DFPS.

Utah

Relative and non-relative foster parents are required to participate in 32 hours of preservice training and 12 hours of inservice training annually

Vermont

Relative and non-relative foster parents must complete 27 hours of preservice training (PRIDE).

Virginia (county administered)

Related and non-related foster parents must complete preservice training that meets the competencies in the PRIDE preservice training. Beginning in September, 2009, all foster parents will be required to participate in annual inservice training.

Washington

Related and non-related foster parents are required to complete a 30 hour preservice and a First Aid/CPR and Blood Born Pathogens course. All are required to complete 36 hours of inservice training in a 3 year licensing Period.

Wisconsin (county administered)

The state does not currently require foster parents to have any training. Beginning in 2011, the state will implement a level of care system, which will require related and non-related foster parents to participate in preservice training. Licensed relative foster parents who are caring only for related children will not be required to complete annual inservice training.

West Virgin

All foster parents must complete PRIDE preservice training and twelve hours of inservice training annually.

Wyoming

Training is required if relative caregivers want to become certified foster homes, which allows them to be reimbursed. This is PRIDE training, plus approved ongoing training.

