

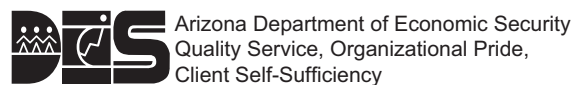


Kinship Foster Care



A Services and Assistance Program
for Relatives Caring for
Children in CPS Custody

Arizona Department of Economic Security
Administration for Children, Youth & Families



ACY-1081A-PD(12-04)



What is Kinship Foster Care?

Kinship Foster Care is a Child Protective Services (CPS) program that seeks relatives as the caregivers for children. Siblings are placed together whenever possible.

Who are the children in Kinship Foster Care?

The children are dependent wards of an Arizona court in the care, custody and control of CPS.

What are the requirements to be a Kinship Foster Care parent?

Kinship Foster Care parents must be at least 18 years of age. Each person 18 years of age and older who lives in the home must be fingerprinted for a criminal history records check. All adults in the home must be cleared by CPS for any history of abuse and neglect.

Do I have to complete any forms to be considered for a Kinship Foster Care placement?

Yes. There are two forms to be completed; they are (1) Information for Kinship Foster Care Placement Consideration, FSC-1016A, and (2) Checklist for Assessment of Kinship Foster Care and Significant Person Placement, FSC-1015A. Each adult living in the home must complete the FSC-1015A. The children's case manager has these forms. You give both of the completed forms to the case manager.

How am I approved as a Kinship Foster Care Parent?

A case manager visits your home at least once, interviews you and your family members, and checks with your references. The case manager writes a "home study" on your family and sends it to the court for approval.

What if I am not selected as the Kinship Foster Care parent for a relative's child?

Before the decision is made, you can meet with or talk with CPS staff and management. If CPS decides

not to place the child in your home, you will receive a Notification letter within 15 days of the decision. The letter will include the reasons you will not be recommended for placement and the process to request a review of the decision by the court.

Is there any financial help I can receive for the children?

Yes, you have several choices. They are:

- ACYF daily Clothing and Personal Allowances and Special Payments, and
- TANF Child Only Cash Assistance, or
- Foster care maintenance payments, if you become or are a licensed foster parent.

How will I get medical care for the child?

Most of the children will be covered under the Comprehensive Medical and Dental Program (CMDP). You can choose a primary medical provider. Children who are not covered under CMDP can be covered by the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS).

What other services will be available?

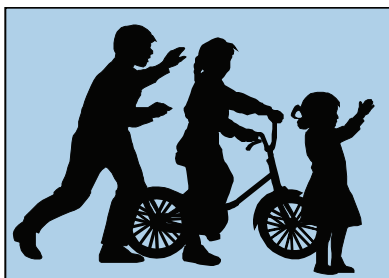
Some of the services that ACYF can provide are subsidized child care if you work or are in school; parent aide, respite care for the child in a licensed foster home, and transportation for the child to scheduled appointments. These services are set up by the child's case manager. Referrals to community agencies for parenting skills training, emergency services and counseling are also available.

Will the case managers share information about the child with me?

Yes, you will receive a copy of the case plan and a Child's Placement Packet with information about each child placed with you. If you don't receive the case plan, the Placement Packet or other information you need, ASK the case manager for them.

What will CPS expect from me?

You will be invited and encouraged to participate in the case plan staffings, and the Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) and court hearings. You will share information about the child with case managers, service providers, the FCRB, the court, and other people working with the child and the child's parents.



What is a case plan?

A case plan is a written document that identifies the permanency goal and target date, desired outcomes, tasks, time frames, and the responsible parties. The case manager develops the case plan in consultation with the family and service providers at a case plan staffing. The case plan includes a contact and visitation plan that spells out who, when and how the parents, siblings, other relatives, and friends will have contact with the child.

For most children placed in kinship foster care the case plan permanency goal is family reunification, meaning return to the child's parents. Services are provided to help the parents achieve this goal. Those services, the tasks, the time frames and the expectations of the parents are what is stated in the case plan.

When family reunification is not possible, another permanency goal is chosen. Adoption by a relative is the next preferred permanent placement for a child. For some children, legal guardianship with a relative may be chosen as the permanent placement for a child.

What is TANF Child Only Cash Assistance?

TANF is the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program of the Department of Economic Security. It is a cash assistance program for eligible children in Arizona.

Should I apply for TANF Child Only Cash Assistance?

Yes, if you are caring for a relative's child.

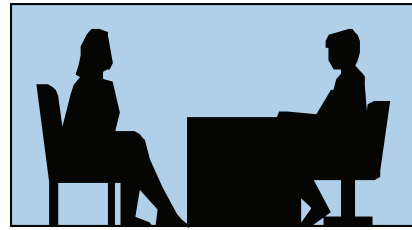
If you are a kinship foster care parent caring for a child placed with you by CPS, the following process describes how you can apply.

How can I apply?

- The CPS case manager for the relative's child or another CPS employee can give you the application forms.
- You can go to the nearest DES Family Assistance Administration Office to pick up the forms.

What forms do I need?

There are two (2) forms to complete. They are the **Application for Assistance, FA-001** and the **TANF/CA Contact, FAA-1091A**.



Do I have to complete the entire application? Yes!!

1. Complete the first section with your name, home address, city, telephone number, etc. List everyone that lives in your home and the information about each person. Only income information for your relative's child is needed. A case manager or CPS employee can help you complete the application. You will need to include the information about the child's parents.
2. Mark that you are applying for Cash Assistance/TANF by the child's name. If the child is not on CMDP, you should also mark Medical Assistance for the child.
3. The TANF/CA Contact Form tells the FAA office how you wish to be contacted to complete the process. You can do it by telephone. No visit to the FAA office is necessary.
4. Give the completed forms to the child's case manager. The case manager will send them to the FAA office that covers the zip code of your home. The case manager must mark it as a Kinship Foster Care Application for rapid processing. A copy of the court order or minute entry must be attached to the application. You do not have to provide birth certificates or other proofs of relationship to apply.
5. The assigned FAA worker will contact you by telephone or visit you according to your preference as listed on your TANF/CA Contact Form. The FAA worker must ask for information about the child's parents to collect child support.

How much cash assistance will I receive for the child if the child is eligible and the application is approved?

Cash assistance is approximately \$204.00 per month for one child and \$73.00 per month for each additional child.

When do I start receiving the payment?

The processing time is about 20 days. If the child's parent was receiving cash benefits, you can start receiving the payments as soon as the child is removed from the parent's case. In this case, your receipt of payment may take a little longer.

Can I apply for food stamps for my entire family on the same application?

Yes. The FAA worker can assist you in applying for other benefits you may be eligible to receive, such as food stamps. You must apply as a family and provide complete financial information for everyone living in the home, including everyone's income, property, vehicles, etc. Even if you are not eligible for a dollar amount of food stamps, the application for food stamps may provide eligibility for additional programs such as Women, Infants & Children (WIC) and the Child Car Seat Program.

How much are the ACYF daily clothing and personal allowances?

The rate is based on the age of the child.

<u>Age</u>	<u>Daily Clothing</u>		<u>Daily Personal</u>
0-12 months	\$0.53	+	\$2.10
1-2 years	\$0.53	+	\$0.95
3-5 years	\$0.53	+	\$0.10
6-11 years	\$0.79	+	\$0.33
12-17 years	\$1.02	+	\$0.72

For information about special payments, ask for a copy of the special payments rates schedule.

What is required to be a licensed foster parent?

To qualify, you:

- Must be at least 21 years of age
- Can be single or married (if married your spouse must also apply)
- Must be fingerprinted for a criminal history record check, including everyone 18 and older living in the home
- Must have a CPS clearance for any history of abuse and neglect, including everyone 18 and older living in your home
- Can work full time
- Can own, lease or rent your home

- Comply with health and safety requirements and correction of problems found during an inspection of your home by the Department of Health Services
- Have transportation available and a phone in your home
- Have a bed and storage space for each foster child
- Must be in good general health (a statement from a medical provider is required)
- Have adequate income to meet your own family's needs
- Give the names of at least five references
- Complete the pre-service foster parent education program
- Work with a foster home licensing worker to complete a study of your family and home
- Sign and abide by the ACYF Discipline Policy

The licensing rules are the same for relatives and non-relatives.

What type of criminal history would prevent me from being approved or licensed as a kinship foster parent?

If you, or any adult living in your home has been convicted of, are awaiting trial on, or ever committed any of the following offenses you can not be approved or licensed:

- A dangerous crime against children
- Aggravated assault
- Arson
- Child abuse or abuse of a vulnerable adult
- Commercial sexual exploitation of a minor or vulnerable adult
- Felony offenses involving drugs within the previous 10 years
- First or second degree murder
- Incest
- Kidnapping
- Molestation of a child or vulnerable adult
- Robbery

- Sexual abuse of a minor
- Sexual assault
- Sexual conduct with a minor
- Sexual exploitation of a minor or vulnerable adult
- Voluntary manslaughter

You and all adults living in your home will be asked if you have ever be convicted of, or committed any of the following offenses: a sex, drug related (including alcohol), theft related, violence related (including domestic violence), child or vulnerable adult neglect or contributing to the delinquency of a minor. Depending on the circumstances, you may or may not be approved or licensed.

The information on any criminal history of an adult family member comes from the Checklist form, **FSC-1015A**. (See page 1)

If I become a licensed foster parent for the child, what is the foster care reimbursement rate?

The rate is based on the age and special needs of each child.

Level of Care	Age of Child	Daily Rate
Basic Rate	0 to 11 years	\$19.44
Basic Rate	12 to 18+ years	\$21.45
Special 2	0 to 18+ years	\$23.23
Special 3	0 to 18+ years	\$29.56
Parent Therapist	0 to 18+ years	\$35.31

Licensed foster parents also receive the daily clothing and personal allowances listed on page 4 of this booklet.

Are there other non-financial benefits available to licensed foster parents?

Licensed foster parents can participate in free educational sessions to learn about the foster care system and better methods of meeting the needs of the child in their care. Access to respite foster care services is generally easier to arrange through a foster home agency or licensing worker. Support groups sponsored by the licensing agencies and mentoring by experienced licensed foster parents are more easily accessed.

What if the permanency goal for the child is adoption or legal guardianship?

If you are the court approved or licensed kinship caregiver of the child, you will be considered first to adopt or become the legal guardian of the child.

What is the difference between adoption and guardianship?

Adoption requires the complete termination of the birth parents’ rights. Adoptive parents have all the legal rights and responsibilities of birth parents. Guardianship generally allows birth parents to maintain reasonable visitation and contact with the child (unless the court will not allow it). Guardianship is an alternative when returning to the birth parents or adoption are not in the best interests of the child.

If I adopt or become the legal guardian, is there any financial assistance for the child?

Yes! Adoption subsidy can include a monthly maintenance payment and/or for special services for the child. The monthly maintenance payment is based on the needs of the child. The monthly payment can not exceed the foster care reimbursement rate. The child is enrolled in the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) for Title XIX Medicaid medical coverage.

Guardianship subsidy is also a monthly maintenance payment. However, the guardian must first apply for all other state and federal program benefits on behalf of the child, including but not limited to TANF, SSA and SSI. The guardian is responsible for medical coverage for the child through private insurance, AHCCCS, or KidsCare.

Both adoption and guardianship subsidy remain in effect if the family moves out-of-state. However, the guardianship subsidy requires the guardian to apply for the other benefits in the new state of residence within 90 days of the move.



