

I CAN!

4 Steps Kinship Caregivers Can Take to Successfully Advocate for Their Families

I

Identify Your Needs

- Now
- Next
- Later



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Claim What's Yours

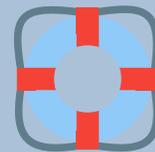
- Financial
- Legal
- Educational
- Health/Dental



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Ask for Help

- Explain the situation
- Be Specific
- Be collaborative
- Stay engaged
- Say thank you
- Share the results



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Next Steps for Success

- Stay focused on your end goal
- Adopt a positive mindset
- Treat people with courtesy and kindness
- Embrace openness and flexibility
- Be persistent



**Got Questions?
We can help!**

**Call KinConnector @ 866-546-2111
or visit us online at KinConnector.org**



Identify Your Needs



As a kinship caregiver, you will need many goods and services in order to raise the children in your care. Below is a checklist of the most common goods and services kinship caregivers need immediately, next, and then a bit later. Use this list as a starting point for identifying what you need for you and your family.

Common Kinship Family Needs

Now

- Bedding/Pillow
- Car Seat
- Childproof Home
- Clothes
- Conditions/Diagnosis (medical and mental health)
- Crib
- Court/Custody Order
- Diapers
- Favorite Toys/Books
- Food
- Formula
- Highchair
- Immediate Financial Assistance
- Insurance Card
- Medications
- Pacifier
- Parent's contact information
- School Information
- School Supplies
- Stroller

Next

- Birth Certificate
- Childcare Information
- Decide whether to be formal or informal kinship caregiver
- Dr/Dentist Contact Information
- Housing
- Legal Assistance
- Medical Records
- On-going Financial Assistance
- Psychologists/Therapist Information
- Social Security Card

Later

- Access to Community Resources
- Develop a Long-term Plan for the Children's Care
- Training

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Claim What's Yours



Kinship families are entitled to certain benefits to assist in caring for children. Below are the most popular and helpful benefits that kinship families should access.

Top Kinship Family Resources

Cash Assistance – Child Only TANF (apply through COMPASS or the county assistance office)

- Child Only TANF provides monthly cash assistance to caregivers of children who qualify
- Aid is not eligible to children who get survivor's benefits, disability, or preexisting child support
- Aid ranges between \$100-200 per child, and as part of the application the state will file for child support
- Visit compass.state.pa.us to apply today or call our KinConnector team to learn more!

Health Insurance – CHIP (apply online through COMPASS or by calling the CHIP helpline)

- Children's Health Insurance Program offers free or low-cost medical insurance to youth ages 0-18
- The aid is income-based, and current income guidelines can be referenced online ([click here](#)).
- For more information or to apply by phone call 800-986-5437 or [visit the CHIP webpage to apply online](#)

Financial Reimbursement – Caregiver Support Program (apply with the Area Agency on Aging)

- Available for older relatives or adults ages 55+ caring for non-biological children ages 0-17
- Income limits are higher (up to 380% of the poverty level) so more families can access the benefits
- Provides monthly reimbursement for eligible expenses related to caregiving expenses for the children
- Call your local Area Agency on Aging to apply or [click here to go online](#) and find the agency nearest you

Subsidized Child Care – Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) Programs (apply at nearest ELRC)

- Early Learning Resource Centers are one-stop hubs for all of your childcare needs, including Head Start programs, Keystone Star center referrals, and subsidized childcare for low-income working families
- Contact your local ELRC to request a childcare referral or apply for their income-based subsidized care
- [Go online \(click here\)](#) to access the phone number and email for the ELRC center nearest you
- For more info on income and eligibility guidelines, [visit the ELRC website to apply or learn more](#)

Legal Aid for Custody or Guardianship – Justice for Grandparents by SeniorLaw & PA Bar

- SeniorLaw 877-727-7529 offers free legal aid to persons 60 and older, [visit their webpage](#) to learn more
- PA Bar's [Find a Lawyer](#) legal referral service, fill out a contact form to get help finding a lawyer near you
- PA KinConnector 866-546-2111 has guardianship paperwork available at no cost for families as needed

Local support from providers in your community – United Way's 2-1-1 resource database

- For many more resources, community organizations, and aid near you [visit 2-1-1 online](#).
- Local, State, and Federal support is just a call away by dialing 2-1-1 or texting your zip code to 898-211

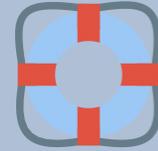
For more information and help with resource applications, the KinConnector team is here to assist you too!

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Ask for Help



As a kinship caregiver, asking for and receiving help will play a crucial role in your ability to support and nurture the children in your care. It is important to understand that you are not alone. We all need help from time to time and it shows great strength and character for someone to let go and ask for help. Below are tips to help you become more effective in asking for and receiving the help you need.

How to Ask for Help

1

Explain the situation

Explain the situation and how you have tried to address it on your own or what other resources or support you have tried. People are more inclined to help those who have tried to help themselves first.

4

Stay Engaged

In some cases, getting the help you need may require more than one call, email, or visit. So, it is also important to follow up and provide any information needed to assist you.

2

Be specific

Tell the person you are contacting exactly what kind of help you need, why, and who will be impacted by this help and what will happen if you do not get the help you need. Telling them these things will make sure the assistance you get is what you actually need and they will understand the importance and relevancy of your need and propose the best solutions for you and your family.

5

Say Thank You

Many people long for appreciation for what they do. A sincere thank you makes it more fulfilling for them to keep doing what they do.

3

Be Collaborative

Ask people how or what they need from you that can help them in supporting your requests or needs.

6

Share the Results of the Assistance

In addition to expressing your gratitude, you should follow up with the helper to share the tangible results of their aid. People do feel a sense of satisfaction in knowing how the impact their assistance has on families.

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Next Steps for Success



As a kinship caregiver, it is important to remember that you are going to be the most engaged and concerned advocate for the children in your care. As a result, your dedication will be essential for your children's well-being. Below are some suggestions to help you sustain your resilience.

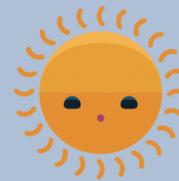
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Stay focused on your end goal

Throughout your journey, remember that your end goal is to make certain that your kinship children have everything they need to be safe, nurtured, and loved.

2



Adopt a positive mindset

While getting what you need can feel challenging, remember that most people truly do want to help you and the children in your care. So, interacting with people with a positive mindset can make it a little easier to get what you need.

3



Treat people with courtesy and kindness

In addition to a positive mindset, treating people with respect and kindness will make them more eager to do whatever they can to assist you.

4



Embrace openness and flexibility

You may have in your mind what the outcome should be, but be prepared to be open to the possibility that a solution you never considered might be the best one for ensuring the well-being of your kinship children.

5



Be persistent

As a kinship caregiver, you may not receive what you need on the first or even second try. So, try a new approach or ask for help or consider a different solution.

Keep trying until you secure what your kinship children need to be safe, nurtured, and loved.

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