



## Recognize Close Family Friends as Kinship Caregivers

So That Children Who Are Removed from Their Homes Can Be Placed with Them

Children who are removed from their home for safety reasons should be placed with someone they know and trust. Most often that is a family member, but at times, the person with whom they have a close relationship is not related by blood, like a godparent or a next door neighbor, also known as "fictive kin."

Placement with a close family friend offers a beneficial alternative to foster care and helps to relieve trauma children often face upon removal from their home, but social workers cannot currently recommend placement with those trusted adults. A child's transition from their home could be easier if an adult that already cares for them, whether or not related by birth or marriage, could be considered a kinship caregiver immediately.

### **Reduce the trauma children experience when removed from their homes by allowing them to have a kinship placement with close family friends:**

#### **Remove bureaucratic red tape that inhibits children from being placed with someone they trust**

Currently, children wait in shelters or have to live with strangers because an adult they know and trust is not considered a relative, even when that trusted adult is prepared to welcome the child into their home.

#### **Let close family friends be considered as caregivers from the beginning**

Allow caseworkers to perform the necessary assessments and attempt placement with close family friends prior to a hearing or placement with strangers so that children can more quickly find safe, loving homes.

### **Blueprint for Kentucky's Children Solution:**

Recognize close family friends as kinship caregivers so that children who must be removed from their homes can live with adults they trust.

