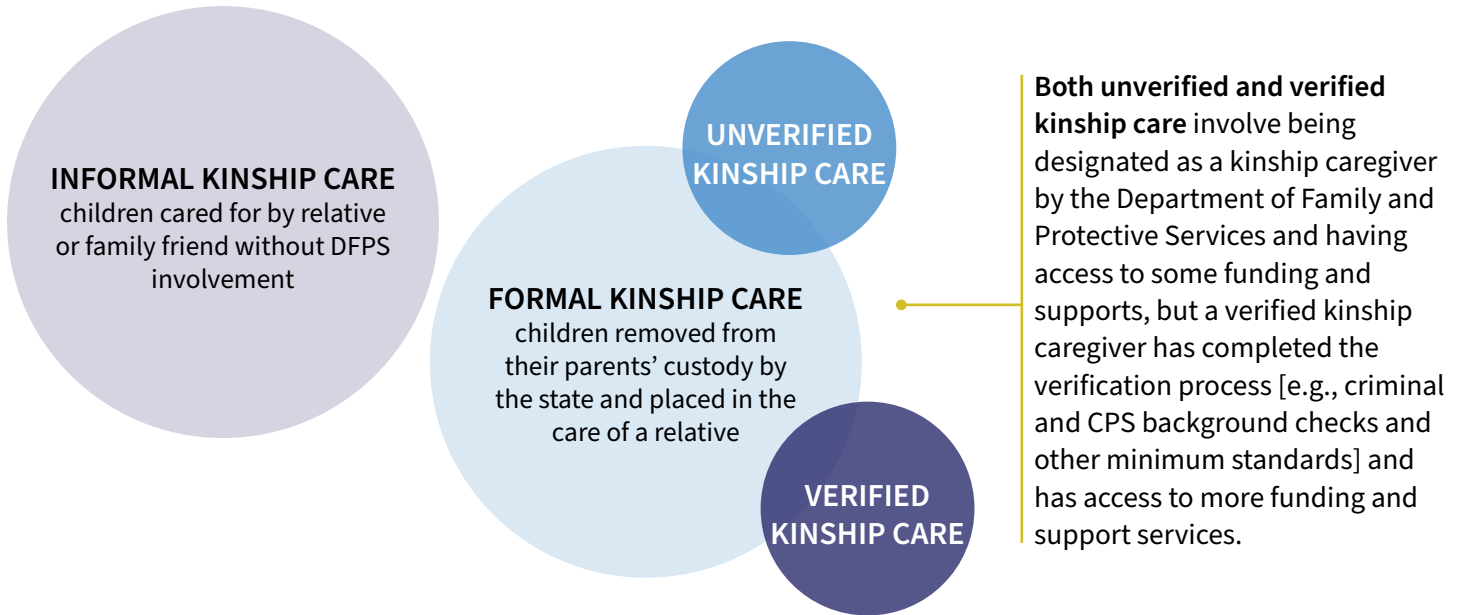


# The Importance of Removing Barriers to Verification for Kinship Caregivers

What is kinship care? When children cannot be with parents because of safety concerns, family members or close family friends often step up to help with their care, which is often referred to as kinship care. There are different types of kinship care.



## Kinship Caregiving in Texas

U.S. Census estimates suggest that **302,000 (4%) children** in Texas are living with formal or informal kinship caregivers.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of FY 2021, there were **26,826 children in substitute care**, 44% of whom were in kinship care. 12% of these kinship homes were verified.<sup>2</sup>

## Benefits of Kinship Care

Research suggests that children placed with kinship caregivers may experience reduced trauma after removal from birth parent,<sup>3</sup> improved mental health outcomes,<sup>4</sup> fewer behavioral and social problems<sup>4,5</sup> and experience fewer placement changes/greater placement stability and higher rates of permanency<sup>6,7</sup> than their peers in non-relative placements.

## What are the benefits of kin caregivers becoming verified foster homes?

Benefit	Unverified	Verified
Monetary Compensation	Capped at 50% of licensed basic rate, or \$12.67/day (stops at 12 mos., with possible 6-mo. extension)	Basic: \$27.07/day
Permanency Care Assistance*	N/A	Monthly financial assistance, ranging from \$400-\$545 once child has been in home 6 months and relative obtains permanent custody, continues until child is age 18 or 21.
Expense Reimbursement	Up to \$500 per yr. per child for child-related expenses for up to 3 yrs. or until child turns 18.	May receive some reimbursements through CPA while licensed.
Access to additional resources through Child Placing Agency (CPA)	N/A	CPA case management, training, respite, childcare (when eligibility requirements are met)

\*DFPS reports that reentry into care for children who exit to permanent custody to verified relatives with the support of PCA are essentially non-existent.<sup>8</sup>

## What barriers may kinship caregivers face in becoming verified?

- Lengthy licensing process
- Inadequate information about the process and benefits
- CPS/Criminal history
- Home-safety inspections
- Few financial and material resources
- Ability to complete training requirements
- Relevance of training to kinship-specific issues
- Frontline practice barriers

## Support Kinship Caregiving in Texas<sup>9</sup>

Continuing to address and resolve barriers for kinship caregivers will allow them to access benefits and supports that can help them and the children they care for be successful.

- 1 The U.S. Census identifies children in kinship care using the relationship to householder items on the Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement. Children are identified as being in kinship care when a parent is not present in the household and the child is either related to at least one other person in the household (e.g., sibling, grandchild, niece/nephew) or is listed as a nonrelative of the householder (e.g., a family friend). The estimate provided is a 3-year average. <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/10455-children-in-kinship-care?loc=45&loct=2#detailed/2/45/false/2479,2097,1985,1757/any/20160,20161>
- 2 Texas Open Data Portal, Children in Substitute Care by Placement Type, <https://data.texas.gov/dataset/CPS-3-2-Children-in-Substitute-Care-by-Placement-T/kgpb-mxxd>
- 3 Heidi Redlich Epstein, Kinship Care is Better for Children and Families, 36 ABA CHILD L. PRAC. TODAY 77 (2017), [https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public\\_interest/child\\_law/resources/child\\_law\\_practice\\_online/child\\_law\\_practice/vol-36/july-aug-2017/kinship-care-is-better-for-children-andfamilies/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_interest/child_law/resources/child_law_practice_online/child_law_practice/vol-36/july-aug-2017/kinship-care-is-better-for-children-andfamilies/)
- 4 Marc A. Winokur, et al., Systematic Review of Kinship Care Effects on Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being Outcomes, 28 RES. ON SOC. WORK PRAC. 19 (2018), 7 [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288888726\\_Systematic\\_Review\\_of\\_Kinship\\_Care\\_Effects\\_on\\_Safety\\_Permanency\\_and\\_Well-Being\\_Outcomes](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288888726_Systematic_Review_of_Kinship_Care_Effects_on_Safety_Permanency_and_Well-Being_Outcomes)
- 5 Christina Sakai, et al., Health Outcomes and Family Services in Kinship Care, Analysis of a National Sample of Children in the Child Welfare System, 165 ARCH. PEDIATR. & ADOLESC. MED. 159 (Feb.7, 2011), <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/384260>.
- 6 Marc A. Winokur, et al., Matched Comparison of Children in Kinship Care and Foster Care on Child Welfare Outcomes, 89 FAMILIES IN SOC'Y: J. CONTEMP. SOC. SERVS. 338 (2018), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1606/1044-3894.3759>
- 7 Eun Koh & Mark F. Testa, Propensity Score Matching of Children in Kinship and NonKinship Foster Care: Do Permanency Outcomes Still Differ?, 32(2) SOC. WORK RES. 105 (2008), <https://academic.oup.com/swr/article-abstract/32/2/105/1620753?redirectedFrom=fulltext>
- 8 Source: DFPS data provided to Kinship Symposium December 2021.
- 9 To learn more about kinship caregiving in Texas, see [https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Protection/Kinship\\_Care/default.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Kinship_Care/default.asp), [https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/I\\_Am/kinship.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/I_Am/kinship.asp), [https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Protection/Kinship\\_Care/pca.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Kinship_Care/pca.asp)