



Bridge Kinship Care

Strengthening Families

**Helping Children
Stay Connected**



Children and Family Services Division

Bridge Kinship Family

When a child can no longer remain safely in his or her own home due to abuse or neglect, the Oklahoma Department of Human Services seeks to place the child with someone whom the child or the parents know. These placements are with people who are related to the child by blood, marriage, adoption or by an emotional tie or bond. These caregivers may be grandparents, siblings, aunts or uncles, nieces or nephews, cousins, godparents or neighbors. Since you have taken a child you know and have a relationship with into your home, you are now providing Kinship Care, which makes you a Bridge Kinship Resource Home/Family.

A “Bridge resource family” is a family who may be asked to:

(A) provide temporary care, love and nurturance to the child and serve as a mentor actively helping the parent improve their ability to safely care for their children while staying connected and assisting in the transition to reunification, legal guardianship or adoption to another family; and/or

(B) serve as the legal guardian for the child while maintaining a child’s connection to kin, culture and community; and/or

(C) adopt the child while maintaining a child’s connection to kin, culture and community.

Guiding Principles

These Guiding Principles were developed to assist in providing care for the child placed in your home:

- We continually examine our personal values and biases, ensuring they do not interfere with our ability to partner with families.
- We respect the children and families we serve.
- We listen to the voice of children and youth.
- We continuously seek to learn who families are and what they need.
- We effectively communicate through teamwork, which yields the best results for children and families.

- We maintain a child’s permanent connection to kin, culture and community.
- We create a standard of excellence and cooperation in the work we do.

What You Need to Know About Becoming a Bridge Kinship Resource Before you are approved:

- A Child Welfare Specialist will visit you in your home to complete an initial assessment;
- A child may be placed in your home, but you will not receive a monthly reimbursement until you are approved as a Bridge Kinship Resource with the following requirements being met:
 - A contract has been signed
 - Pre-service training has been completed (twenty-seven hours)
 - Fingerprint results have been received
 - The Family Assessment has been approved
- If you are related by blood to the child placed in your home, you may apply for financial assistance at your local OKDHS office;
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)—Child Only
- Food Benefits (based on household income)
- Paid child care is available if both adults are employed outside the home at least twenty hours per week;
- A child placed in your home may be eligible for a start-up clothing voucher;
- Once a child is placed in the custody of the State of Oklahoma, they are eligible to receive Medicaid benefits;
- The Child Welfare Specialist will provide the Medicaid information to you at the time of placement.

During the approval process:

- You may be eligible for a kinship start-up stipend. Please talk to your resource specialist for more information.
- An OKDHS Resource Specialist or contractor will complete an in-depth assessment with you and your family that will include at least two (possibly more) home visits;
- You are encouraged to become the child’s payee if the child placed in your home is receiving Social Security benefits;
- State and federal laws, as well as OKDHS, require all adult household members providing care for children to complete twenty-seven hours pre-service training;
- A \$375.00 initial training stipend is available when you are enrolled in training if a child is residing in your home;
- A \$375.00 final training stipend is available when you complete training if the child continues to reside in your home;
- Paid child care continues to be available if both adults are employed outside the home at least twenty hours per week;
- A Child Welfare Specialist will visit the child placed in your home at least once a month.
- It is the right of the child placed in your home to visit their parents and other family members.

After you are approved:

- A monthly financial reimbursement, based upon the age of the child, will begin when your home has been approved which means the following has occurred:
 - A contract has been signed
 - Pre-service training has been completed (twenty-seven hours)
 - Fingerprint results have been received
 - The Family Assessment has been approved

- If you are receiving Child Only TANF benefits, you must notify your TANF worker immediately when you become an approved Bridge Kinship Resource in order that the benefits can be canceled;
- You are not eligible to receive TANF and the monthly reimbursement at the same time;
- Your monthly reimbursement should be received around the 15th of each month and no later than the 20th;
- You may choose not to accept the monthly reimbursement, but all requirements necessary to approve your home must still be met;
- Paid child care continues to be available;
- All health care (medical, dental and vision) and counseling services for children in OKDHS custody continues to be available;
- Over-the-counter and non-prescription items are your responsibility;
- Bridge Kinship Resource families must complete twelve hours of in-service training each calendar year and provide verification of the training received to their Resource Specialist;
- Contact your Resource Specialist if you have questions regarding your resource home or have additional questions and cannot reach the child's Child Welfare Specialist;
- Contact your child's Child Welfare Specialist if you have questions regarding the child placed in your home.





**For more information
about how you can help children
and families
in your community:**

1-866-612-2565

www.okdhs.org/fostercare

www.okdhs.org/adopt



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