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## Kinship Licensed Resource Parenting vs. The Kinship Navigator Program

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Kinship care has been on the rise over the years, and different avenues have been developed so relatives can care for their family members who need them. We hope this FAQ addresses some of your questions regarding the different ways relatives care for children and options that are available.

### **I was told by the court about kinship options. What are they exactly, and how do I apply?**

Individuals caring for family members, or for children or youth with whom they have a connection, are also known as kinship caregivers. There are two paths for kinship caregivers in New Jersey:

1. You can become a Licensed Resource Parent if the child is in foster care
2. If the child is not in care, you can petition the court to become their kinship caregiver.

If permanency needs to be addressed, you can also consider Kinship Legal Guardianship (KLG) or adoption. Adoption can only occur after parental rights have been terminated. [Click here for more information on KLG.](#)

### **What is the difference between being a Licensed Resource Parent and being granted custody through the court?**

A child who has been separated from their home by the Division of Child Protection & Permanency (CP&P) is in custody of the state. A Licensed Resource Parent (commonly known as a foster parent) is a person licensed by the state to provide care to a child until they can be reunified with their parent(s).

Kinship caregivers must go through a similar process as foster parents to become licensed. To assist in caring for their relative, monthly funds will be given by the state as well as access to a variety of resources that will be

beneficial to the child. These funds are provided in the form of a debit card but can also be distributed via direct deposit if requested.

If a kinship caregiver has been granted custody through the court, they are physically and financially responsible for providing for the child.

Some of these responsibilities include supplying additional resources if necessary (e.g., therapy, health insurance and counseling).

If a child has not been separated from home and you would like to seek custody, contact your local family court for more information.

### **How do I find out more information about becoming a Licensed Resource Parent?**

To learn more about becoming a Licensed Resource Parent, you can visit us at [www.embrella.org](http://www.embrella.org) or call our Information Line at 800.222.0047.

### **I have custody through the court. Can I go back and become a Licensed Resource Parent of my relative?**

No. If you already have custody of your relative through court, it is not a CP&P case and therefore does not follow the same policies and procedures. You may, however, be eligible for the Kinship Navigator Program.

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## What is the Kinship Navigator Program?

The Kinship Navigator program was designed to help any kinship caregiver who does not have an open case with CP&P (as well as those kinship caregivers who now have closed CP&P cases) navigate through programs provided by the government to obtain local support.

## Here are the kinship agencies and the counties they serve in New Jersey:

**CarePlus, NJ:**  
201.398.9110 ext. 5645  
(Bergen, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex and Warren)

**The Salvation Army:**  
973.623.5959  
(Essex)

**Children's Home Society:**  
800.396.4518  
(Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, Somerset, Hunterdon and Union)

**Center for Family Services:**  
877.569.0350  
(Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem)

The kind of support available to eligible kinship families includes: educational services, legal services, housing assistance, family support groups, child care resources and respite services.

Kinship caregivers may be eligible to receive financial assistance through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The child may also be eligible for Medicaid and health insurance.

Wrap around services provide kinship caregivers with vouchers that pay for other needs not covered through current programs. These include but are not limited to: clothing and furniture for the child, summer camp costs and tutoring.

## How do I find out more information about the Kinship Navigator Program?

You can contact a Navigator representative 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by dialing 211. You will speak to a professional who will take all of your information and refer you to the proper agency. Information can also be accessed online at: <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/families/support/kinship/> or by contacting one of the county-based agencies previously listed - according to the county in which you reside.

## I have adopted my relative. Are there any services available to assist me?

If you have adopted your relative, assistance is not available from the Kinship Navigator program. However, there are services available to you throughout the state. When you dial 211, you will be connected to a professional who will be able to refer you to a local agency. Additionally, NJ ARCH is a great resource that gives you access to post-adoption services.

You can visit them online at [www.njarch.org](http://www.njarch.org) or call 877.427.2465.

