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1 ISSUE | 1 VOLUME | 1 YEAR

Kinship quarterly

A RESOURCE NEWSLETTER FOR RELATIVE CAREGIVERS IN LA COUNTY WRITTEN BY RELATIVE CAREGIVERS IN LA COUNTY

Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of the *Kinship Quarterly*. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide specialized information for Kinship families who are raising their relative children. These families are made up of grandparents, aunts, uncles, in-laws, siblings, and other family members who, due to mental illness, addiction, incarceration, domestic abuse, neglect, or even death have become the primary caregivers of children who lose their parents. Relative caregivers often feel that they have nowhere to turn for help. The *Kinship Quarterly* is meant to serve as a compass, and is designed by relative caregivers to provide support and information. This newsletter has been written in the hopes of helping relative caregivers by providing specialized information that will assist them in raising safe, healthy, and productive children.

A group of us came together to form the Navigator Committee which consists of relative caregivers and some of our supporters. This committee has had many years of experience working directly with kinship families and the community. *Kinship Quarterly* is a vehicle that brings their wealth of expertise to you.

Please feel free to share your concerns so that we can address your issues and challenges in upcoming issues. Send your, questions, concerns, and information to: info@kinshipquarterly.org.



Did You Know?

Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act became law October 7, 2008. The law improves outcomes for children and youth in foster care by:

- Providing subsidized guardianship payments for relatives
- Sending notice to relatives when children enter foster care
- Encouraging Kinship Navigator Programs
- Working to keep siblings together

Support Groups for Relative Caregivers

Support Groups Listing

Please contact us to add a group to this list
info@kinshipquarterly.org

.Grandma's House Children's Institute, Inc.

711 S. New Hampshire, Los Angeles
Meetings: Every Tuesday 11:30 am - 2pm
Contact: Frances Crawford, 213.385.5100 ext. 1821

Grandparents as Parents

22048 Sherman Way, Suite 217, Canoga Park
Meetings: Are conducted throughout LA County
Contact: Madelyn Gordon, 818.264.0880

H.E.A.R.T. Foundation

1451 East 100th Street, Los Angeles
Meetings: 9am - 12:30pm every 2nd and 4th Friday
Contact: Hazel Hill, 323.563.3794

Kinship Council of Los Angeles @ Los Angeles Child Guidance

4401 South Crenshaw Boulevard, Los Angeles
Meetings: 9:30am - 11:30am every 2nd Wednesday
Contact: Lizzie Egans, 323.750.9625

Kinship in Action Los Angeles

1000 West 78th Street, Los Angeles
Meetings: Every 3rd Monday 6pm—8pm
Contact: Joseph Devall, 323.750.6787

Kinship Resource Center North

5035-G West Slauson Avenue, Los Angeles
Meetings: 1st Tuesday 10am – 12pm
Contact: Barbara Barabino, 323.298.6016

Advocates 4 Family Caregivers

20715 South Avalon Boulevard, Suite 200, Carson
Contact: Bettye Halle, 310.538.8099

Support Group for Spanish Speakers

Contact: Juanita Cruz, 310.669.9510 ext. 241

Tri-Valley Support Group

704 Palmdale Boulevard, Palmdale
561.951.4716

The support groups in LA County are organized to provide a variety of resources for relative caregivers and are located in convenient areas throughout the county. They exist to provide hands-on information, resources, and support for kinship families.

Relative Caregiver Defined

For foster care purposes, a relative is a person related to the child by birth or adoption in one of the following relationships:

- Aunt and uncle
- First Cousin
- Full and half sibling
- Grandparent
- Niece and Nephew
- Step parents and siblings
- Any person of a preceding generation decorated by the prefixes of great or great-great

- *The spouse of any person named above, even after the marriage has been terminated by death or dissolution, is also a relative.*

Did You Know?

AB298 passed and became law in 2008. This law states that relative caregivers will no longer be “forced” to adopt their relative children, creating dual family relationships, in order to obtain permanency status. Legal-guardianship is now an acceptable solution to establishing legal permanence in kinship care.

Special Education and the Individualized Education Plan (IEP)



An IEP is set up specifically for your child, and is part of the Special Education process at your child's public school. If you or anybody close to your child notices one or more of the following problems and they are interfering with your child's ability to learn, your child may need special education services:

- *Health and development problems, poor vision or hearing, or trouble with speech or language*
- *A lack of academic performance that is difficult to explain such as difficulty with or consistently low grades in reading, spelling, writing, or math*
- *Difficulty with or failure to master basic life skills appropriate for the child's age such as toilet training, dressing, bathing, or eating properly*
- *Coordination, mobility or dexterity problems such as inability to control movements in the same way as children in the same age group*
- *Social or emotional problems such as inability or lack of desire to socialize with other children of the same age or angry outbursts*

Be sure to discuss these conditions with your social worker so that your child can be properly rated in order to receive appropriate services:

B = Regular, D = Emotional and Behavioral Disabilities, F = Medically Fragile

It's The Law

Put your request for special education assessments in writing. Schools have 60 days to comply.

How many times have you felt bullied in an IEP meeting? How often have you been confused about what your rights are for your child? How often have you wondered whether the special education program your child is receiving is truly benefiting their needs?

Parents of special needs children don't always understand the intricacies of special education law. At IEPs you are told that your child has a certain need, based on a test, where certain percentiles lead to your child qualifying for a confusing three or four letter acronym. You put your trust in the school district (often times with no other option) even though it may not always feel right.

You go home and start questioning the school district's decisions. You think to yourself, "I know my child best. I should be receiving more services!"

Where do you turn? Whom do you ask?

Special education has come a long way since the first major law protecting our special needs children in 1975. Today, students eligible for services under the IDEA are entitled to special education and related services that consist of individualized instruction at public expense. This concept is commonly referred to as a Free and Appropriate Public Education or FAPE. The key to providing a FAPE is for school personnel to develop and implement programs that are based on a full assessment of a student that consists of lesson plans tailored to meet the unique needs of a child. School districts have

the best intentions, but for one reason or another frequently do not provide parent requested special education services.

In 1980, the US Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in the case *Stemple v. Board of Education* held that the IDEA contains a bill of rights – the due process hearing – for parents wishing to contest a school's special education decision regarding their child. The purpose of this hearing is to allow an impartial third party, the Administrative Law

Judge, to hear both sides present their arguments, examine the issues, and settle the contest. In a society based on litigation, even special education cannot escape the threat of a lawsuit. Parents were afforded this right and should exercise that right when needed.

If you are in need of an attorney, feel free to call the Law Offices Of Liu & Naime. The special education advocates, paralegals and attorneys at our unique law firm are always willing to speak to you about your case. We provide free consultations and have a sliding fee scale making it affordable for your child to be represented. Remember that you are your child's voice, so continue to advocate for your child, speak up for your rights and, most importantly, always ensure your child is being properly educated.

Craig Liu, Esq.
Law Offices Of Liu & Naime

In 1975 Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. It is now called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA.

The Los Angeles Unified School District

foster care unit

Assembly Bill 490 requires that all school districts in the State of California appoint a person to serve as the Foster Care Liaison for the district. The Los Angeles Unified School District Foster Care Unit is dedicated to enhancing educational results and academic achievement for students living in out-of-home care (e.g. with relative caregivers, foster care, and group homes.)

Staff members:

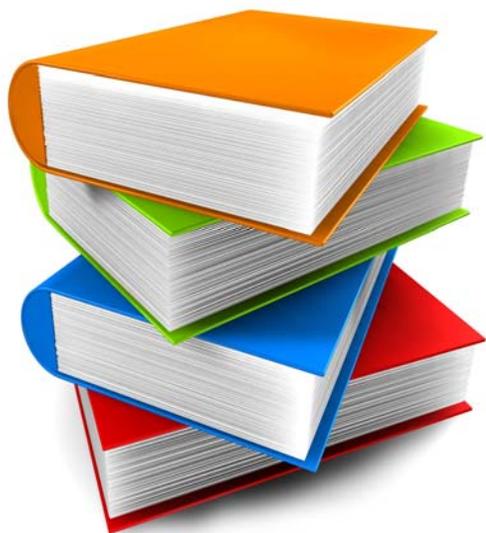
- Advocate for dependent youth and/or youth in probation.

PSA Foster Care Counselors:

- Provide case management and counseling services to students and their families
- Work with children's social workers to ensure school stability
- Assist in prompt school enrollment and student record transfer
- Participate in case-conference, IEP meetings, Student Study Teams (SST), and other educational meetings
- Consult and train district and school staff and local agencies

DCFS Social Workers:

- Assist in locating district services and community resources available to at-risk students
- Engage in research and data collection to improve educational policies
- Identify best practices for students living in out-of-home care



Foster Care Counselors are located in local District offices. If you are experiencing difficulties with enrollment, transfer of records, or need assistance with locating school resources for your foster or probation youth, please contact:

Norma Sturgis

213.241.3848

norma.sturgis@lausd.net

It's The Law

AB490

Students have the right to remain in their school of origin if it is in best interest of the child. Children are eligible for immediate enrollment in new schools without school records, immunization records, or uniforms.

free tutoring

The No Child Left Behind Act provides selected students with the opportunity to receive more than \$1,500 worth of educational services paid for by the federal government. Known as FREE Tutoring/ Supplemental Education Services, this program can significantly help your child improve his or her academic skills.

Your child may qualify. The final deadline for turning in a sign-up form is October 16, 2009, 5pm, however exceptions will be made to that deadline for students with late enrollment as well as other circumstances.

To be eligible for the free tutoring program your child must be signed up for the free/reduced lunch program at his or her school. For more information feel free to contact:

Norma Sturgis

213.241.3848

norma.sturgis@lausd.net

For help completing the enrollment forms, you can call Families in School: 1.866.747.2275

Independent Living Programs (ILP)

what is it?

ILP is the Independent Living Program. These are operated in every county. The LA County ILP Program is run by the Department of Children and Family Services, which is set up to help youth match their goals for success and independence as a young adult. ILP is funded by the federal government and provides foster youth with a myriad of resource including, but not limited to:

- Advisors
- Car insurance
- College preparation
- Driver's Training
- Financial literacy
- Food stamps
- Healthcare
- Housing and transitional housing
- Job training and placement
- Medi-cal
- Mentors
- Money
- Skills
- Tuition
- Tutoring
- Workshops



who is eligible?

Your youth is eligible for ILP if he or she is in any of the following circumstances on or after his or her 16th birthday, even if it was only for (1) day:

- In foster care up through his or her 19th birthday
- In foster care and adopted
- In foster care re-united with his or her parents
- In a group home as a result of an order by the Delinquency/Dependency Court or Probation
- Placed in a home that is away from his or her parent or guardian pursuant to a court order
- Receives Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payments (Kin-Gap) regardless of his or her age upon entering foster care

For more information on ILP please check with your social worker

Financial Assistance for Relative Caregivers

As a relative caregiver, if you are ineligible for Youkum or other kinship foster care subsidy, you may be eligible to receive financial assistance through the CalWORKS Program. This program is administered by the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS).

You will need to make an appointment at the DPSS office. The liaisons listed below will assist you in this application process, if necessary. The CalWORKS Program requires the completion of an eleven page Statement of Facts, plus additional forms concerning yourself and the child in your care. Be prepared to spend several hours completing these forms. You may have to make more than one visit to the DPSS office in order to do this.

You will be requested to provide the following evidence and/or documents for yourself and the child in your care:

1. Age and identification (birth certificate, baptismal record, or DMV identification)
2. Social security number (social security card)
3. Relationship (birth certificate identifying the birth parent of the child)
4. Income and or property
5. The DCFS Notice of Action explaining ineligibility of foster care)*
6. The DCFS Application for Public Assistance (SAWSI) indicating the date that the child was placed in your home*
7. DCFS document photocopies that may be useful in the DPSS application process*

*Note: Forms/documents sent to you from the DCFS office

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has designed four district office locations to assist you in the application process. Please contact the DCFS eligibility supervisor in your area if you need assistance with the Department of Public Social Services.

-County of Los Angeles
Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)
Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)



Resources

Alliance For Children's Rights

213.368.6010

Legal representations for children on various issues including education, custody, out-of-home placement, delinquency, etc.

California Youth Crisis Line

800.843.5200

Crisis counseling available 24 hours with information and referrals to youth and families

Children Having Attention Deficit Disorder (CHADD)

626.334.8991

Information support and resources for families with children with Attention Deficit Disorder.

Independent Living Program

<http://www.ilponline.org>

Kinship In Action (KIA)

323.200.2441

Kinship In Action (KIA) is a neighborhood-based kinship center that helps keep families healthy, strong, and together. KIA organizes, trains, and supports caregivers caring for their relatives' children in South Los Angeles.

Kinship Resource Center North

323.298.3515

5035-G West Slauson Avenue, Los Angeles

The Kinship Resource Center refers kinship caregivers to resources and provides needed support.

Kinship Resource Center South

562.777.1750

9834 Norwalk Boulevard, Santa Fe Springs

The Kinship Resource Center refers kinship caregivers to resources and provides needed support.

Los Angeles Universal Pre-School

213.416.1200

High quality preschool available to 4 year old in LA County. Free enrollment for children in foster or relative care.

Learning Disabilities Association for California

626.355.0240

Providing information support and resources to families with children with learning disabilities

Protection and Advocacy, Inc.

800.776.5746

Information regarding the protection of the legal, civil and service rights of developmentally ill persons and their families.

Services Center For Independent Living

909.445.0726

TASK (Team of special Advocates for Special Kids)

714.5.33.8275

Assist parents with due process rights, IEP and transition

Did You Know?

That the foster youth of relative caregivers are eligible for a variety of assistance in many areas including but not limited to:

- Education
- Subsidy
- Work readiness
- Mental health

To learn more, read this edition of *Kinship Quarterly*.

To view this newsletter online:
www.kinshipquarterly.org

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