



Practice Empowered Policy
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Fundamental Rights of Children Living in Kinship Care



At Foster Kinship, we recognize the unique circumstances and challenges faced by children in kinship care. It is our collective responsibility to ensure their rights, well-being, and development. This manifesto affirms the fundamental rights of children in kinship care to promote equitable access to support to optimize their safety, stability, and well-being.

Watch the Webinar



Right to Safety & Protection

Protection from Harm

Every child has the right to live in an environment free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Neglect Prevention

Every child has the right to proactive measures ensuring they are not subject to neglect.

Right to Permanency & Reunification

Caregiver with Legal Capacity

Every child has the right to a legal guardian who can advocate for their needs and welfare. Caregivers should be empowered to file for legal guardianship on behalf of the child without requiring expensive legal representation. The filing process to obtain guardianship should not be burdensome in terms of costly filing fees and difficult service processes.

Access to an Attorney

Children in kinship care should have the right to an attorney during the permanency planning process.

Permanency Planning & Reunification Support

Every child has the right to permanency planning, regardless of Child Welfare Agency involvement. Minor Guardianship Courts should support reunification planning, clearly outlining the contingencies for parents to regain legal capacity, ensuring stability and continuity for the child.

Right to Health Care

Access to Health Care

Every child has the right to necessary medical, dental, and emergency mental health care.

Access to Medicaid

Every child in non-parental care has the right to access Medicaid regardless of the income of their parents or caregivers or their involvement with the foster care system.

Emergency Mental Health Care

Every child has the right to access emergency mental health care regardless of the status of guardianship to mitigate the trauma caused by parental separation.



Right to Education **Immediate School Enrollment**

Every child has the right to immediate registration and enrollment in school without delay.

Educational Support

Every child has the right to necessary educational support and resources to ensure their academic success.

Right to Financial Support **Financial Assistance**

Every child has the right to financial support to meet their basic needs. Caregivers of children living in kinship care should not need to prove their income and benefit amounts should be adequate to support the children. Furthermore, child support requirements should be removed.

Child-Only SNAP

Every child in nonparental care has a right to nutritious food, which is essential for their growth, health, and development. SNAP benefits supports the caregivers by alleviating financial strain, thereby helping to create a stable and supportive environment for the child. their academic success.

Child Care Subsidy

Children in nonparental care should have access to child care subsidies to ensure they receive safe, reliable, and developmentally appropriate care.

Right to Kinship Support Services **Enhanced Kinship Navigator Programs**

Every child has the right to access enhanced kinship navigator programs that provide resources, support, and information to kinship caregivers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, our manifesto champions the fundamental rights of every child to safety, stability, health, education, financial security, and kinship support. By ensuring protection from harm and neglect, we lay the foundation for a nurturing environment where every child can thrive. Simplifying access to legal guardianship and permanency planning promotes family unity and long-term stability, while comprehensive healthcare access guarantees that medical and mental health needs are met without barriers.

Immediate school enrollment and robust educational support are crucial for academic success and future opportunities. Financial assistance and food security ensure that no child is deprived of basic needs, and accessible childcare subsidies alleviate the burden on caregivers. Finally, enhanced kinship navigator programs provide essential resources and support to those caring for children, fostering a network of care that strengthens communities.

Together, these principles form a cohesive framework aimed at uplifting every child and supporting those who care for them. We call upon policymakers, communities, and individuals to embrace and implement these rights, ensuring a brighter, more equitable future for all children. Let us join forces to make these commitments a reality, securing a safe, healthy, and prosperous future for every child.

