

Kinship Care in Connecticut

In Favor of HB 5290

An act increasing financial assistance for grandparents and other nonparent relatives who are raising children

Do children have better care with grandparents and other kinship families?

Research has found that children in kinship care have significantly better outcomes than those who are placed in non-relative foster care.

*Quote from Joette Katz, Commissioner of DCF
"Experience and research indicate that the quality of family participation is the single most important factor in the success of our work."*

What unique needs do kinship families commonly have?

Grandparents and other relatives are consistently facing more difficult situations than standard foster care families. They tend to be older, in poorer health, and are struggling financially. They are often on fixed incomes and most likely have not planned for the financial responsibilities of raising a child. Yet even with these obstacles, children are found to have more successful outcomes.

Is there a link between DCF involvement and poverty?

59% of children are maltreated because of neglect as opposed to 10% percent for abuse. This is important to consider because the definition for neglect and the definition for poverty are closely related. Connecticut defines neglect as "the failure, whether intentional or not, of the person responsible for the child's care to provide and maintain adequate food, clothing, medical care, supervision and/or education". We need to enact HB 5290 giving grandparents and relative caregivers the support they need.

Benefits of Kinship Care versus non-relative foster care

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- Better success rates
- More stability
- Less switching of homes
- More siblings stay together
- Found to be just as safe as nonrelative foster care
- Family more likely to act as permanent guardians if needed

What will HB 5290 do to help children?

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This bill will help support grandparents and other nonparent relatives who are raising children as legal guardians by allotting them 75% of the applicable monthly foster care rate.

What can you do?

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Contact your state representative and urge them to support HB 5290.

References

Katz, Joette, Memo: “Transforming the response to reports of abuse and neglect”, 2012.

Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF). *We all need somebody: Supporting children, families and the workforce in Connecticut’s family foster care system report*. 2011.

Casey Family Services, *Connecticut Department of Children and Families Differential Response*. 2010.