



Report to the Legislature

Washington State Kinship Care Oversight Committee

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**Washington State Kinship Care Oversight Committee
Report to the Legislature
December 2009**

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Interspersed throughout this report are the winning poems and essays from the “2009 Voices of Children” event, writings by children who are living the experience of being raised by kinship caregivers.

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Executive Summary

The Kinship Care Oversight Committee (Oversight Committee) was formed in 2003 to provide guidance in identifying, supporting and strengthening kinship care families. Since that time, the Oversight Committee has worked hard to improve life for these families. Achievements include:

- Divisions within DSHS are collaborating more and are better able to respond to the needs of kinship caregivers.
- Area Agencies on Aging are better able to serve kinship caregiving families with available resources.
- DSHS has a direct line to hear from the caregivers themselves.
- A diverse group of stakeholders are planning together and making themselves heard on kinship care issues, both on the local level and in the Oversight Committee itself.
- Legislators have a better understanding of caregiver issues and have passed budget and policy items that have positively impacted caregivers.

Kinship caregivers, most often grandparents, often struggle with the challenges of parenting a second family. The Kinship Care Oversight Committee coordinates programs and works closely with the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to identify and develop parenting, financial, and legal resources. The work of the Oversight Committee supports networking, training, and information sharing among the 13 AAAs and families they serve. With the support of the Oversight Committee and the local AAAs, the local county and regional kinship collaborations are very active and successful in their work with families.

The Kinship Navigators directed by eight Area Agencies on Aging are on the front lines, working one-on-one with kinship care families. The Navigators are the critical link to needed resources for families in need. The Oversight Committee hopes that sufficient funding will eventually be available to staff all 13 AAAs with Navigators.

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (Fostering Connections) is designed to promote permanency through relative guardianship and adoption. This act is having an impact on the DSHS partners on the Oversight Committee. Through this federal legislation, grant applications were submitted and the Family Connection Discretionary Grant was awarded. This grant includes Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Yakima and will be used to expand the Navigator Program. Fostering Connections also supports more complete and immediate relative searches at the beginning of child welfare cases.

The Kinship Care Oversight Committee submits the following recommendations for 2010:

- Maintain funding for Kinship Navigators, Aging and Disability Services Administration's (ADSA) Kinship Caregiver Support Program, Children's Administration's (CA) Relative Support Funds, and other services for kinship caregivers.
- Support efforts to implement the relative guardianship option made available through Fostering Connections federal legislation.
- Continue to advocate for at least one Navigator for every Area Agency on Aging.
- Advocate for Caregiver Timeout, providing necessary breaks for the relatives, focusing specifically on the use of Working Connections Child Care, after school programs, and the development of the Mockingbird Family Model for caregivers. The Mockingbird Family Model is a model of care in which a group of care providers work together for support with an organizational hub for respite and other services. Casey Family Programs has begun to use the Mockingbird model of clusters of caregivers and hubs to support kinship care families.
- Continue to explore ways to provide legal assistance to kinship caregivers by expanding legal kiosks in courthouses and by other means.
- Explore whether the medical consent law is being implemented consistently throughout the state; and if not, address the barriers to full implementation.
- Participate in efforts to explore the passage of an Indian Child Welfare law in Washington State.
- Advocate for the continuation of the Kinship Caregiver Oversight Committee beyond June 30, 2011.

*What My Grandma Means to Me:
I feel good with my grandma because she always feeds me she doesn't just let me starv. And she let's me play with my friend Michael and let's me "spin" a night at his house or he could "spin" a night at my grandma's house. She is like my mom and I don't want her to get hurt. She doesn't yell at me for no reason. She always gives me chances when I do something wrong. My grandma takes me to a lot of un places. I love her from the bottom of my heart.*

Marquise, Burien, WA Age 10

Background

In the November 2002 Kinship Care Report to the legislature, the Kinship Care Workgroup proposed 16 high priority recommendations for improving kinship care in Washington State. In response to that report, the 2003 Legislature enacted SHB 1233, which required the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to create a Kinship Care Oversight Committee. In 2005, the Legislature passed SHB 1280, which continued the Committee through 2010. The 2009 Legislature continued the committee to June 30, 2011.

The Kinship Care Oversight Committee was established to provide guidance in identifying, supporting and strengthening kinship care families. Membership includes kinship caregivers, child advocates, legislative staff, representatives of state agencies, non-profit service providers, tribes, and the legal community. Since the Oversight Committee was established, improvements have occurred in several areas:

- Divisions within DSHS are collaborating more and are better able to respond to the needs of kinship caregivers.
- Area Agencies on Aging are better able to serve kinship caregiving families with available resources.
- DSHS has a direct line to hear from the caregivers themselves.
- A diverse group of stakeholders are planning together and making themselves heard on kinship care issues, both on the local level and in the Oversight Committee itself.
- Legislators have a better understanding of caregiver issues and have passed budget and policy items that have positively impacted caregivers.

What Do We Know About Our Kinship Caregivers?

The 2000 U.S. census revealed that one in twelve children under age 18 lives in a home headed by a grandparent. Another startling figure is, in the United States, 6 million children are being raised in households headed by grandparents or other relatives. Of these children, 2.5 million are in households with neither parent present. Approximately 150,000 children or one-third of all children placed in out-of-home care through Child Protective Services in the U.S. are being cared for by their relatives. In Washington State, placement with relatives accounts for about 38 percent of children in out-of-home care.

The number of children being raised by grandparents and other relatives continues to rise. In some cases, the parents are also part of the household. However, in many of these homes, over 35,000 in Washington State, grandparents and other relatives have become the primary caregivers for children whose parents are unable to care for them due to substance abuse, illness, child abuse and neglect, economic hardship, incarceration, divorce, domestic violence or other serious problems.¹ Only about ten percent of these children are in the

¹ State Fact Sheets for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children
www.grandfactsheets.org/state_fact_sheets.cfm

custody of the child welfare system. In all cases, however, these relatives provide a safety net to their family's children.

Some kinship caregivers are retired and on a fixed income and must work to stretch the resources that they have. In addition, caregiving can be stressful and may contribute to serious illness, depression, and many other medically related issues. These caregivers need extra support as they struggle to give the children in their homes the best possible care.

In providing a vital safety net for children, grandparents and other relative caregivers often face serious challenges in locating services to address the basic needs of the children they are raising. Health care, child care, public assistance, and school are often difficult systems to navigate.

A statewide survey done for the Department of Health (DOH) was described in detail in last year's Oversight Committee report. The following information gained from this survey continues to apply. Compared to non-caregivers:

- Kinship caregivers are much less likely to be college-educated.
- Almost 30% have a disability.
- Kinship caregivers are more likely to have problems with their physical health. The children they are caring for are most likely to be males between the ages of 6 and 17 years of age.
- Almost half of kinship caregivers need additional financial help to care for the children in their homes. Thirteen percent live in poverty. They also report a need for services such as counseling, respite care, and education about caregiving.
- Kinship caregivers report increased stress and disruption in their daily lives.

With the steady increase of kinship care nationally and in Washington State, the Kinship Care Oversight Committee continues to be committed and guided by the 2002 recommendations. An update on the progress on each recommendation is included in Attachment 1.

Love. The most valuable thing in my world. The most beautiful. The hardest... Love means affection and gratitude and hope. Love means faith. In the past I had no hope. I didn't know what faith was. I was alone in this world. After my father's death I was brought into an odd state of mind where love didn't exist. I was abused, beat, tortured, neglected and starved. Through all the bruises no one seemed to hear my soul screaming for love... No one but my Aunt and Uncle..... three thousand miles away. They welcomed me into their home. Their hearts... Love no longer meant pain. Hope no longer meant a possible meal. Faith was no longer praying to get through the day unharmed. Love had new meaning. Love meant laughter; love meant success. Love brought me more than I ever would have hoped for. A family, an aspiration to help others, and best of all the knowledge of the bright future ahead of me. Living with my Aunt and Uncle means the world to me. Living with my Aunt and Uncle means love in its truest -purest form.

Peggy Rose, Everett, WA Age 17

Kinship Care Oversight Committee Activities

The Kinship Care Oversight Committee and its subcommittees provide advocacy, education, and awareness to the community and legislators about the needs of kinship caregivers. The committee is focused on the areas identified in the 2002 Kinship Care report: financial needs; service delivery and practice; legal issues; and social services.

Advocacy, Education and Awareness

Members of the Kinship Care Oversight Committee are instrumental in planning and organizing various recognition events, conferences, and other efforts highlighting the important role of kinship care providers. The Oversight Committee works to increase awareness of kinship care issues. Some of the events which honor and support our relative caregivers include:

- Washington State Kinship Care Children's Poetry, Drawing and Essay Contest, *Voices of Children-Raised by Grandparents and Other Relatives*. **Read some of the entries scattered throughout this report.**
- Regional Kinship Care conferences and trainings in all six DSHS regions.
- Local celebrations and recognition events honoring the contributions of kinship caregivers.
- Foster Parent and Caregiver Annual Conference scheduled to occur in Fall 2010.
- Annual *Parenting the Second Time Around*, Facilitator Training workshops.
- Proclamations by the Governor honoring relatives raising children.
- Presentations at national and state conferences.

The Oversight Committee is also involved in the following activities:

- Implementation, oversight, and expansion of the Kinship Navigator program;
- Identification and development of financial resources for kinship care families;
- Exploration of legal issues and development of legal resources for relative caregivers;
- Provision of training opportunities for caregivers;
- Implementation of a subsidized relative guardianship program in the state of Washington;
- Exploration and development of respite care service options and models;
- Representing kinship care in other DSHS related efforts and partnerships, such as Children and Families of Incarcerated Parents (with the Department of Corrections);
- Expansion and diversification of its membership; and
- Local collaborations to support kinship care families.

Kinship Navigator Program

Promoting and supporting the Kinship Navigator Program across the state has been a very high priority for the Oversight Committee.

Grandparents and relatives who are raising children are often unaware of available supports. Kinship Navigators connect families with a multitude of community resources, such as health, financial, and legal services, support groups, and emergency funds. For example, Kinship Navigators help kinship caregivers locate appropriate housing to fit their expanded family size, explain how to apply for various benefits, advocate on their behalf, and help acquire beds, clothes, and food for their children.

Kinship Navigators provide a crucial link between relatives and these services. These links create more stable environments to help keep children out of the child welfare system and better support the relatives.

The Kinship Navigator Program is administered through the DSHS Aging and Disability Services Administration (ADSA) which contracts with local Area Agencies on Aging (AAA). AAAs provide the services directly or contract out the service(s) to a local community service organization. ADSA facilitates a monthly conference call with the Kinship Navigators to provide access to information, subject experts and create networking opportunities. Currently, 7.9 Kinship Navigator FTEs represent 30 counties in Washington State. The long-term goal is to have Kinship Navigators available to serve caregivers in all 13 AAA service areas in the state. Areas which do not yet have Kinship Navigators include Kitsap, Snohomish, Island, San Juan and Skagit Counties; and the Yakama Indian Nation and the Colville Indian Reservation.

See Attachment 2 for a complete listing of the Kinship Navigators and their sponsoring agencies.

Exploring Legal Issues and Options for Kinship Caregivers

The Oversight Committee continues its advocacy for expanding legal services, currently available in King County and growing throughout other counties across the state. Increasing legal services information available on the Internet along with printed and DVD resources remain a priority. The Oversight Committee will continue to explore funding options for legal services.

In Thurston County, legal information can be found through a self-help legal education kiosk located at the Thurston County Courthouse, along with monthly workshops to assist relatives with completing legal paperwork. Other court systems have expressed an interest in the kiosk model.

In Clark County, the YWCA hosts a monthly seminar, facilitated by Family Court lawyers to educate kinship care providers on the third party custody process and inform them of available resources.

Collaboration to Support Kinship Care Families

The *King County Kinship Collaboration*, the Yakima area's *KINdred Spirits Coalition*, and the *Clark County Kinship Care Coalition* have been in existence for several years and each continue to expand. The Kinship Care Oversight Committee is actively working with these and the other newer coalitions (Lewis-Mason-Thurston, Pierce, Cowlitz and Whatcom counties) to share information, resources, and events. Following are examples of specific activities.

The *King County Kinship Collaboration* reports the following activities in the past year:

- Held monthly networking meetings with an average attendance of 23 people.
- Piloted kinship programming at a South Seattle Family Center.
- Held quarterly social events (a mini-conference, a holiday gathering, a kinship caregiver day celebration, and a barbecue) attended by more than 400 people, which provided county-wide networking opportunities for kinship families and service providers.
- Published a quarterly newsletter, maintained the collaboration's website, and produced a video.
- Held two trainings and helped eight support group leaders form a team to produce the kinship resource specialist training.
- Held a day-long retreat with the steering committee partners.
- Made two federal legislative visits in 2008 and 29 state and local visits in 2009.

This year, the Yakima area's *KINdred Spirits Coalition* has been involved in the following:

- Held monthly networking meetings.
- Managed their regional Kinship Navigator Program.
- Facilitated the One Heart support group.
- In September, began a new support group in Sunnyside.
- Published a bi-monthly newsletter, in English and Spanish.
- Received an endowment grant through Yakima Valley Community Foundation to help children with enrichment activities.
- Received a grant through Payless Shoe Source, which distributed 75 gift cards for a pair of brand new shoes.
- Worked with Pacific Power and Catholic Family and Child Services, through their Festival of Flowers fund raiser, to provide assistance to kinship families unable to receive Kinship Care Support Program funds.
- Provided Legal Options trainings in Yakima.

The *Clark County Kinship Caregiver Coalition* was formed in 2005 to provide a forum for information sharing and networking around kinship caregiver services. The goal is to encourage "no wrong door" referrals, identify gaps in kinship care services, and to assure that those who work with families in a wide variety of settings are aware of the various resources and support available for families who take kin into their care. Partners include Southwest Washington Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities, Children's Administration

Region 6, Educational Opportunities for Children and Families (EOCF), Clark County Volunteer Lawyers Program, Children's Center, and Children's Home Society of Washington. The Coalition has been involved in the following:

- Held monthly networking meetings.
- Supported and partnered with the Kinship Navigator's work in six southwest Washington counties.
- Received a Community Foundation of Southwest Washington grant (with Clark County Volunteer Lawyers program as lead) for a Kinship Caregiver Resource Fair.
- Coordinated the successful Clark County Kinship Caregiver Resource Fair that included nine workshops, resource bags, and free massage therapy.
- Participated in various community resource fairs and outreach events to increase awareness of Kinship Navigator, Kinship Caregiver Support Program, Parenting Again and other partner resources that help relatives taking on the awesome challenge of parenting a second time around.
- Publicized special activities and events for Relatives Raising Relatives in the Parent Education Consortium monthly e-newsletter distributed to over 3,000 agencies, organizations, and individuals.
- Created links between Kinship Caregiver Support Program, Family Caregiver Support programs, Kinship Navigator program and local services including support, education, and counseling resources.

The *Lewis-Mason-Thurston County Kinship Advisory Committee* organized the following activities in the past year:

- Sponsored the Kinship Connections Conference at Centralia College in October 2008.
- Organized a Kinship Family Recreation event at Great Wolf Lodge on May 20, 2009 - Washington State Kinship Care Day.
- Coordinated the statewide Voices of Children contest for Kinship Children which includes the annual Award and Recognition Ceremony with Governor Gregoire.
- Supported four Kinship Family Support Groups in the three-county area. Educational trainings were also provided.
- Organized Kinship Advocacy Day at the Legislature. Arranged for kinship caregivers to meet and discuss their concerns with two legislators. Encouraged caregivers to advocate for kinship programs with all of their elected representatives.
- Increased community awareness of kinship programs through coordination with Children's Administration and other community resources. This has resulted in an increase of referrals to the Kinship Navigator program.

The *Cowlitz County Kinship Care Coalition* was formed two years ago by local agencies to provide a forum for information sharing and networking, identifying gaps in kinship care services, advocating for new services and resources, maintaining a "support group connection" for families, and promoting acceptance for kinship caregivers among the

general public. This year a Wahkiakum County Kinship Coalition will begin, using the same model.

The *Whatcom County Family and Community Network* participates in monthly “Family 2 Family” meetings, which also include the Children’s Administration, community organizations, and support groups. This group also works with Fostering Together to organize support groups and hold recognition events. Brigid Collins Family Support Center and Catholic Community Services collaborate to provide training specifically targeted to kinship caregiver needs. The network includes Law Advocates, DSHS, Brigid Collins, Readiness to Learn, Opportunity Council, Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center, and Northwest Regional Council staff.

The *Pierce County Kinship Care Group* meets bi-monthly to provide networking and information sharing opportunities. Guest speakers are frequently invited to talk on subjects of interest to the caregivers. This past year, a local resource guide was completed to assist caregivers in accessing community resources.

I am Papa's best buddy- we go fishing
Jenna Rebecca-Leigh, Roy, WA Age 6

Activities to Support Kinship Care Families within Department of Social and Health Services

DSHS Kinship Care Website Link

The Department of Social and Health Services provides a link and manages the Kinship Care Website, www.dshs.wa.gov/kinshipcare. This website was established in spring 2006, through the efforts of Aging and Disability Services Administration (ADSA), Economic Services Administration (ESA), and Children's Administration (CA), with feedback from the Kinship Care Oversight Committee. The website has become increasingly important in providing information for caregivers and professionals who can access information on financial assistance, health care, drug/alcohol and mental health services, child care, foster care, support programs, and information on caring for children with disabilities. The number of people accessing the website has grown every year since its development.

Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act - (H.R. 6893)

The Federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (H.R. 6893) was passed in October of 2008. The focus of this legislation is to help children and youth in foster care by promoting permanent families for them through relative guardianship and adoption and improving education and health care. One important emphasis for the Children's Administration is that an extensive search for all adult relatives of a child will take place within the first thirty days of placement. Identifying a supportive group of relatives early in the case will increase the information and resources needed to best serve children and families.

This federal legislation provided grant opportunities for the states and local communities. The Oversight Committee was instrumental in facilitating communication among agencies regarding these grants. The Oversight Committee worked with the Children's Administration and Children's Home Society to facilitate the most effective process in achieving the goals of the grants. Three proposals were submitted in Washington State for Fostering Connections Grants. Children's Administration submitted one; Children's Home Society took the lead in submitting another, which partnered with Aging and Disability Services Administration and the Kinship Navigators. The third proposal was submitted in Region 2, with Catholic Charities and the Diocese of Yakima in the lead and the local CA office and Yakama Tribe in partnership. The Region 2 proposal was the only one awarded a grant. They now have added three Navigators.

Recent implementation activities in CA that may impact kinship placements include:

- Development and implementation of a letter to be sent to all adult relatives within 30 days of a child's placement, informing them of the placement of related children and soliciting their help and support.

- Continuation of the Foster Care to 21 program, which allows youth to stay in care after age 18 if they are in a post-high school education or training program.
- Clarified policy around placement with relatives and elevating “other suitable persons”, who have a family-like relationship with a child, to be considered as placement resources equal to blood relatives.
- Development and implementation of a subsidized relative guardianship program (R-GAP).
- Development and implementation of agreements with school districts to ensure coordination between CA and the schools.
- Stronger CA processes and resources for keeping siblings together and documenting reasons when siblings are separated.
- Outreach to inform all potential adoptive families of tax credit.

Training

Kinship caregivers are able to access all training available through the CA Resource Family Training Institute (RFTI). This includes self-directed online workshops, online video trainings, and classroom trainings. Some training is developed specific to kinship caregivers.

In collaboration with the Oregon child welfare agency, an exciting addition this fall will be access to an extensive lending library of materials on many topics of interest to caregivers of all kinds.

Parenting a Second Time Around (PASTA) is a dynamic two-day facilitators' training to better help meet the parenting needs of relatives raising children. This training was developed by Cornell University Cooperative Extension and is presented annually. Over the past six years Aging and Disability Services Administration has co-sponsored the training with Washington State University Extension and various community organizations. After attending the workshop, participants present two workshops on one or more of the curriculum topics in their local communities over the next year. Among the various topics, the training includes: rebuilding a family; grief and loss; relatives and teens living together; addressing high-risk behaviors, effective discipline; protecting and planning for child's future and locating resources and support.

Annual Foster Parent and Caregiver Conference

The DSHS Children's Administration sponsored the 26th annual Foster Parent and Caregiver Conference September 21-23, 2008. Several state agencies, community groups, and members of the Kinship Care Oversight Committee partnered to make the conference a huge success. The conference was attended by foster parents and kinship caregivers.

Budget constraints caused the conference to be suspended in 2009, however, some regions held mini-conferences in the fall and kinship caregivers were invited to attend these local one-day workshops. The conference is expected to resume in Fall, 2010.

*My Mema is now my Momma.
She Defends me and my sister
forever and I love her.*

Nathan, Seattle WA Age 6

Kinship Care Oversight Committee 2010 Recommendations

The Kinship Care Oversight Committee comprised of kinship caregivers, child advocates, legislative staff, state agency representatives, non-profit services providers, tribes and legal community representatives made the following recommendations for 2010:

- Maintain funding for Kinship Navigators, ADSA's Kinship Caregiver Support Program, CA Relative Support Funds, and other services for Kinship caregivers.
- Support efforts to implement the relative guardianship option made available through Fostering Connections federal legislation.
- Continue to advocate for at least one Navigator for every Area Agency on Aging.
- Advocate for Caregiver Timeout to give kinship caregivers needed breaks, focusing specifically on the use of Working Connections Child Care, after school programs, and the development of the Mockingbird Family Model* for caregivers. Casey Family Programs has begun to use the Mockingbird model of clusters of caregivers and hubs to support kinship families.
- Continue to explore ways to provide legal assistance to kinship caregivers by expanding legal kiosks in courthouses and by other means.
- Explore whether the medical consent law is being implemented consistently throughout the state; and if not, address the barriers to full implementation.
- Participate in efforts to explore the passage of an Indian Child Welfare law in Washington State.
- Advocate for the continuation of the Kinship Caregiver Oversight Committee beyond June 30, 2011.

*I feel happy because Aunty
Becky said yes. She has enough
room in her heart and home
for me and now I am adopted.*

Dominic, Seattle, WA Age 8

**The Mockingbird Family Model is a model of care in which a group of care providers work together for support, with an organizational hub for respite and other services.*

ATTACHMENT 1

2002 Kinship Care Report Recommendations and Status Report

2002 Recommendations High Priority Short-Term	2009 Status
Provide full TANF payment for second child in kinship family	TANF grant was increased by 3 percent in 2008. There was no increase in 2009. We have not yet achieved full payment for a second child in a kinship family. Further increases are unlikely for the foreseeable future due to budget constraints. The Oversight Committee is researching ways other states have addressed this issue.
Strengthen relative search process	Emphasis on relative search continues to increase, due in part to the Fostering Connections federal legislation. 2009 state legislation also supported placement with relatives. New policies include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social workers must ask parents about relative resources by the 72 hour shelter care hearing.• Letters must be sent to all identified adult relatives within 30 days of placement.• When making placement changes, social workers must always consider relatives or suitable persons before using foster care.• Social workers must identify as many relatives as possible instead of finding just one.• Regional relative search specialists have access to the information systems in partner agencies, such as ACES and SEMS. In addition, they have access to a purchased online program that searches other databases for information.
Create Kinship Navigator positions	Currently 7.9 FTE Navigators are funded by the State and operate in eight AAAs. The goal is one Navigator per AAA, or 13 Navigators statewide. The recently-passed federal legislation, HR 6893 (Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoption Act) included a section funding competitive grants for kinship navigator services. Three proposals were submitted in Washington State for Fostering Connections Grants. Children’s Administration submitted one; Children’s Home Society took the lead in submitting another, which partnered with Aging and Disability Services Administration and the Kinship Navigators. The third proposal was submitted in Region 2, with Catholic Charities and the Diocese of Yakima in the lead and the local CA office and Yakama Tribe in partnership. The Region 2 proposal was the only one awarded a grant. They now have added three Navigators.

**2002 Recommendations
High Priority Short-Term**

2009 Status

Implement aggressive public education and awareness campaign on kinship care issues

The annual *Voices of Children* award ceremony with the Governor recognizes art, poetry, and essays created by children being raised by grandparents and other relatives. The ceremony provides a great opportunity to bring attention to kinship care. Various local and regional trainings and conferences also take place around the State. There are no dedicated funds for public education and awareness, so most efforts are generally local.

Improve the delivery of TANF benefits to relative caregivers

The DSHS Kinship Care webpage provides a wealth of information about various state resources available to kinship caregivers, including TANF and Medicaid. The Committee will request the development of guideline instructions. These can be used by relatives for completing the TANF application for a Child Only Grant. The instructions will assist relatives in filling out the form appropriately. The Oversight Committee is recommending to the Secretary of DSHS that the intra-agency group focusing on kinship issues be restarted.

Create an education/medical consent waiver

The creation of the medical/mental health waiver has been helpful, but there continues to be some confusion about what services a relative caregiver can consent to. The Oversight Committee is continuing to discuss what is needed to improve access to care. There is also no education waiver in statute. The Oversight Committee continues to assess whether a statute related to education is warranted.

The need for training for health care providers on consent law will be examined in the next year. In the meantime, the committee will address the issues with specific health care providers to problem-solve and improve understanding of the issues on both sides.

Establish a legal services pilot project

In addition to the King County Legal Services project, a subcommittee of the Oversight Committee has begun to bring legal services people to the table to discuss what is available to caregivers in various parts of the state and to develop recommendations regarding improving the availability of legal resources.

The Oversight Committee is also exploring ways to replicate the Thurston County Kinship Legal Kiosk model in other counties.

Create a statewide respite care inventory

A survey was completed by the Respite and Crisis Care Coalition. Information gained through this survey will be used for future planning

Establish a support services fund for relative caregivers

The Kinship Care Support Program continues to receive \$2 million per biennium (DSHS/ADSA). These funds support relative caregivers who are not involved with the formal child welfare system who are have an emergent need or crisis.

The Children's Administration budget allocated \$1 million in Relative Support Funds for SFY 09, for families involved with the child welfare system. The FY 10 budget allotment is \$900,000.

**2002 Recommendations
High Priority Short-Term**

2009 Status

Support Lifespan Respite Act and position state to receive funding

The federal Lifespan Respite Care Act became law in 2006. For FFY 09 \$2.5 million was authorized. No additional funds have been allocated at this time. We continue to support the full funding of this Act.

**2002 Recommendations
High Priority /Long Term**

2009 Status

Provide full TANF payment for all multiple-child kinship families

This recommendation has not been implemented, in great part due to budget constraints. This is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. The Oversight Committee is exploring ways other states are addressing financial assistance to kinship caregivers. The implementation of the relative guardianship option is seen as one way to increase support.

Promote systems collaboration

Collaborative efforts have been developed in various parts of the state. ESA, with the support and assistance of CA, has implemented the new child temporary absence policy. Parents are now able to continue to receive TANF for up to 180 days after children have been removed, in support of family reunification. Relative caregivers may receive TANF benefits for these children concurrently.

Provide GAL/CASA services

In spite of an increase in CASA funding in 2007, no formal action steps have been taken to address this issue specifically for kinship families. The Oversight Committee will continue to advocate for provision of CASA services to kinship families.

Provide respite care services for relative caregivers

Respite care continues to be a critical need for kinship caregivers. The Kinship Care Oversight Committee continues to advocate for the provision of respite dollars. For other respite related goals see High Priority Short-Term Recommendations.

Provide training opportunities for all caregivers

CA offers training sessions to foster parents and relative caregivers each month. The training catalog is distributed through the Kinship Navigator network and is available online on the CA kinship webpage. A lending library will be an added information resource in the coming year.

**2002 Recommendations
Medium Priority/Short-
Term**

2009 Status

Increase oversight and accountability for non-parent caregivers on TANF

This recommendation was tied to the recommendation to increase the multiple-child grant level which has not occurred.

Incorporate kinship families in Special Children Health Care Needs pilot

No formal action steps have been developed to address this.

Fund legal information packet and website

The legal resources guide, developed by Legal Voices of Seattle, continues to be published and distributed. Additionally, a DVD and other materials are available on legal options for caregivers. The Oversight Committee continues to work on ways to identify and improve ways to improve access to legal resources. Thurston County has established a Kinship Legal Kiosk for legal resources for kinship families at the County Courthouse. This kiosk might be a model for other counties and states as a mechanism for information sharing.

Educate judges and attorneys about kinship care issues

This is an ongoing effort and is happening around the state in various ways. The local collaborations have partnered with many legal professional in their communities, including judges, attorneys, and other service providers. Judges and attorneys sit on task forces, advisory committees and such with kinship caregivers, which provide opportunities for education and collaboration.

Support statewide Unified Family Court (UFC)

No formal action steps have been developed to address this; however, many members of the Oversight Committee supported recent legislation that moved in the UFC direction.

**2002 Recommendations
Federal Recommendation**

2009 Status

Amend National Family
Caregiver Support
Program/Older Americans Act

The Older Americans Act was amended in 2006, allowing for relatives, age 55 years or older who are raising their grandchildren to receive services. Only ten percent of the available funding is permitted to serve relatives raising children.

Subsidized Guardianships

The Oversight Committee will be involved with implementation efforts as appropriate.

ATTACHMENT 2

Kinship Navigator Programs and their Sponsoring AAA

- Region 1 Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Lincoln and Okanogan, AAA: Aging and Adult Care of Central WA
- Kinship Navigator: Nancy Thorn: thornn@dshs.wa.gov (877) 380-5787
- Spokane and Whitman Counties: Elder Services - Spokane Mental Health
AAA: Aging and Long Term Care of Eastern WA
- Kinship Navigator: Angela Andreas aandreas@smhca.org (509) 458-7450 ext 3007
- Ferry, Pend Oreille and Stevens Counties: Rural Resources
- Kinship Navigator: Vicki Pontecorvo vpontecorvo@ruralresources.org (509) 684-3932 (part-time)
- Region 2 Asotin, Benton, Columbia, Franklin, Garfield, Kittitas, Yakima, and Walla Walla Counties: Catholic Family and Child Services - Yakima AAA: Southeast Aging and Long Term Care.
- Kinship Navigator: Mary Pleger, mpleger@cfcisyakima.org, (509) 965-7100 or 1-800-246-2962
 - Spanish Speaking Kinship Navigator: Terri Aguilera-Flemming taguileraflemming@cfcisyakima.org (509) 965-7100 or 1-800-246-2962 (part-time)
- Region 3 Whatcom County: Northwest Regional Council (AAA)
- Kinship Navigator: Laina Berry, BerryLS@dshs.wa.gov; (360) 676-6749
- Region 4 King County: Senior Services of Seattle - AAA: Aging and Disability Services-Seattle/King County.
- King County Kinship Navigator: Helen Sawyer, helens@seniorservices.org (206) 727-6264
- Region 5 Pierce County: Child and Family Guidance Center, AAA: Pierce County Aging and Long Term Care
- Kinship Navigator: Roslyn Alber ralber@cfgcpc.org, (253) 565-4484 ext 104
- Region 6 Lewis, Mason and Thurston Counties: Family Education and Support Service, AAA: Lewis-Mason and Thurston Area Agency on Aging
- Kinship Navigator: Lynn Urvina, KinNavigator@qwestoffice.net, (360) 754-7629
- Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Skamania, Wahkiakum Counties, Children's Home Society, Southwest Washington region. AAA: Southwest Washington Agency on Aging and Disabilities
- Kinship Navigator: Lauren Head, laurenh@chs-wa.org; (360) 695-1325 ext 4224

The following counties are not yet funded: Kitsap, Snohomish, Island, San Juan, Skagit, Yakama Indian Nation, and Colville Indian Reservation.