

Licensed Kinship Placements

2023-25 Biennium Decision Package

Placing children with kin when they cannot safely stay in their home has many important benefits:

- Minimizes the trauma associated with removal while increasing connections to family and overall child well-being.
- Improves placement stability.
- Higher levels of permanency.
- Higher levels of school stability.
- Greater preservation of culture and community connection.
- Lower rates of tobacco, alcohol, and drug use than youth living in foster care.
- Lower suicide rates.

For these reasons, placements with licensed kin are increasing and will continue to increase. DCYF is working to reframe its approach to placing children with kin and supporting those kin families through the life of the placement. Licensure is a health and safety prevention tool that helps protect children in care, enables families to receive the needed financial support through foster care reimbursements, and strengthens families so they may flourish. This package lays out a strategy to support more kin providers to become licensed.

OVERVIEW:

✓ Increasing Licensed Kin:

- DCYF seeks to maintain an effective ratio of licensing staff to licensed placements. Because DCYF is working to make licensing more achievable for kin families, more licensing staff will be needed to support an increased number of licensed families.
- DCYF is making licensing more achievable by simplifying its initial health and safety assessment, its home study process, and its initial license process; and by undertaking concurrent homestudies and continuity of care plans.

✓ Kinship Caregiver Engagement Unit:

- In the 2022 Legislative Session, DCYF requested and received funding to build up its Kinship Caregiver Engagement Unit, and DCYF is proposing to complete the staffing of this unit by adding an additional 7 FTE.
- This unit offers targeted, individualized support for kin that increases the timeliness of home studies, improves the ease with which kin move through the home study and licensing process, and improves the outcomes of their licensing experience.

DCYF Strategic Priority Alignment

- Eliminate racial disproportionalities and advance racial equity
- Create successful transitions to adulthood for youth and young adults in our care
- Safely reduce the number/rate of children in out-of-home care.

TOTAL COST:

23-25 BIENNIUM: \$10,952,000

Contact:

DCYF Office of Public Affairs,
genevieve.stokes@dcyf.wa.gov

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