

Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc. (ACAM)
 Association for Family and Community Integrity, Inc.
 Behavioral Health Alliance of Texas
 Bering Omega Community Services
 Care for Elders
 Career and Recovery Resources, Inc.
 Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston
 CHILDREN AT RISK
 Children's Defense Fund
 Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris Co., Inc.
 Coalition of Behavioral Health Services
 Collaborative for Children
 Communities In Schools
 Community Family Centers
 Community Health Choice, Inc.
 Covenant House of Texas
 DePelchin Children's Center
 Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance Greater Houston (DBSA)
 Easter Seals of Greater Houston, Inc.
 Family Services of Greater Houston
 Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse, Inc.
 Good Neighbor Healthcare Center
 Greater Houston Healthconnect
 Harris County Healthcare Alliance
 Healthcare for the Homeless-Houston
 Houston Area Association for the Education of Young Children
 Houston Area Community Services
 Houston Area Women's Center
 Houston Food Bank
 Houston Methodist Hospital
 IntraCare Behavioral Health
 Jewish Family Service
 League of Women Voters Houston
 Legacy Community Health, Services Inc.
 Lesbian Health Initiative
 March of Dimes
 Memorial Assistance Ministries (MAM)
 Memorial Hermann Healthcare System
 Mental Health America of Greater Houston
 NAMI Greater Houston
 National Association of Social Workers-Houston
 Neighborhood Centers, Inc.
 New Hope Housing, Inc.
 Northwest Assistance Ministries
 Phoenix Houses of Texas, Inc.
 Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast
 Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services
 Santa Maria Hostel, Inc.
 SEARCH Homeless Services
 Spaulding for Children
 Spring Branch Community Health Center
 Springfield College School of Human Services
 St. Joseph House
 Texas Children's Hospital
 Texas Health Institute
 Texas Hunger Initiative
 The Arc of Greater Houston
 The Council on Alcohol & Drugs Houston
 The Immunization Partnership
 The Living Bank
 The Network of Behavioral Health Providers
 The Rose
 The Walk for Mental Health Awareness-Houston
 The Women's Home
 United Way of Greater Houston
 Vita-Living, Inc.
 Wesley Community Center
 Worklife Institute
 YMCA of Greater Houston



Children and Youth
Strengthening the Ability of Kin to Care for Relative Children

Position Statement Approved by One Voice Texas: December 10, 2014

Issue/Concern:

The majority of kin caring for relative children are grandparents with the 2010 US Census reporting over 100,000 Texas grandparents caring for relative children with no parent in the home. These relatives share much in common with those who are serving as a formal kinship placement for Child Protective Services (CPS). Both populations share common challenges including a lack of financial resources. Nationally, 62% of relative caregivers are below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level and 38% below 100%. Kinship caregivers outside of the CPS system also struggle with challenges that can include not having the necessary documentation to enroll in school the children for which they are responsible.

While the state cannot provide the full extent of resources these families need, there are certain policy changes that could strengthen the stability of these placements and ensure children do not end up homeless or in the foster care system.

Specific Policy Recommendations:

- Schools should accept an affidavit from family members who are caring for relative children so that the caregivers can enroll the children in school;
- Eligible kinship caregivers should receive the \$1,000 one-time integration payment within two weeks of a child being placed in their home as opposed to the 90 to 120 day wait that is currently in CPS policy;
- Relatives can receive up to \$500 a year as reimbursement for a child's expenses. Reimbursement currently takes place on the anniversary of child's placement which leaves low-income relatives struggling to meet needs. Expense reimbursements should be made by CPS to caregivers within one month after receiving proof of expense;
- Require that Texas law offers TANF recipients who are currently caring for relative children the ability to receive good cause exemptions from certain TANF requirements if meeting the requirements will make it harder for the caregiver to become financially independent or place the recipient or children at greater risk for homelessness or entry into the foster care system;
- Waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, program requirements including asset tests, time limits (till the child is 18) for individuals receiving assistance, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provisions, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it harder for grandparents and/or other relatives receiving assistance under this part to provide stable and safe housing and care for their relative children.

What Can Be Accomplished?

These policy changes will strengthen the stability and financial security of kinship placements and ensure children do not end up homeless or in the foster care system.

How Will This Impact State Funding?

These policy changes will prevent children from entering the expensive foster care system and ensure better outcomes that result from living with relatives versus out of family placements.

Supporting Facts/Research Resources:

- ✓ AARP. 2010. Grandfacts. Available at: <http://www.aarp.org/relationships/friends-family/grandfacts-sheets/>
- ✓ Pew Research Center. 2013. At Grandmother's House We Stay: One-in-Ten Children are Living with a Grandparent.
- ✓ Redding, R.E., Fried, C., & Britner, P.A. 2000. Predictors of Placement Outcomes in Treatment

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