

**Policy and Practice Guidance Document #006**  
**Becoming a Foster Caregiver after the Kinship Support Program**  
**February 16, 2021**

If you are a kinship caregiver receiving Kinship Support Program (KSP) payments, you will have at least six months to work toward becoming a certified foster caregiver so that you can begin receiving foster care per diem payments when KSP payments end. If you choose to become a certified foster caregiver for children in your care, the following steps should be taken during the time you receive KSP payments so there is a seamless transition from KSP payments to foster care per diem payments upon completion of foster caregiver certification.

**Steps to Become a Certified Foster Caregiver**

**1. Educate yourself about foster parenting.**

Foster caregivers have several more requirements to undergo than kinship caregivers. Not only will the child's caseworker have regular contact with you, but you will also have your own worker, an assessor, assigned to help you through the process. For more information about the differences between kinship care and foster care, please read the articles found in the links below.

*Helpful Articles:*

- <https://fosterandadopt.jfs.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/ofc/kinship-care/resources-for-kinship-caregivers/kinship-vs-foster-care>
- <https://fosterandadopt.jfs.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/ofc/foster-care/becoming-a-foster-parent/how-to-become-a-foster-parent-in-ohio>

**2. Choose an agency.**

In Ohio, foster parents can choose which agency is best for their family to pursue foster care certification, so it's important to do your research. You can find the full list of agencies for your county here: <https://fosterandadopt.jfs.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/ofc/ohio-childcare-needs/service-provider-directory/service-provider-directory>. Once you have chosen an agency to assist with the foster caregiver certification process, you will need to contact the agency. Once the agency receives your inquiry, it will reach out to you to start the process to become a foster parent.

*Helpful Articles:*

- <https://fosterandadopt.jfs.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/ofc/foster-care/becoming-a-foster-parent/choosing-a-foster-care-agency>
- <https://fosterandadopt.jfs.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/ofc/foster-care/becoming-a-foster-parent/roles-in-the-foster-care-process>

**3. Attend the required preplacement training, if required.**

Typically, pre-placement training is required for anyone who wishes to become a foster parent. The training includes 24 - 36 hours of coursework, which covers basic knowledge about foster care, as well as agency policies. However, for kinship caregivers, all training requirements may be waived. This should be discussed with the chosen agency as an option.

**4. Complete an application.**

Each agency manages the application process differently. Some will want you to apply prior to training, during training, or after training. The application starts the official process to become a foster parent and requests basic demographic information, as well as historical data. The official application to complete is the JFS 01691 “Application for Child Placement”. This form is located at [www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/num/JFS01691/pdf/](http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/num/JFS01691/pdf/).

*Helpful Articles:*

- <https://fosterandadopt.jfs.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/ofc/foster-care/bcoming-a-foster-parent/how-foster-parenting-will-change-your-life>
- <https://fosterandadopt.jfs.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/ofc/foster-care/becoming-a-foster-parent/emotional-preparation-for-foster-parenting>

**5. Complete the homestudy process.**

A homestudy is required as part of the certification process. The basic elements include:

- At least one home visit
- Medical statements for everyone in the home, only the statements for the applicant(s) need to be signed by a medical professional
- Financial information
- Background checks
- Personal references
- Safety audits and walkthrough of the home
- Fire inspections
- Well inspection (if applicable)
- Interview with each member of the home

This process could take several months as you gather all of the required information and documents. Please be patient and ask questions throughout the process. Kinship caregivers may have some non-safety requirements waived during the homestudy process. These waivers are considered on a case by case basis by ODJFS.

*Helpful Articles:*

- <https://fosterandadopt.jfs.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/ofc/foster-care/becoming-a-foster-parent/foster-parent-costs>
- <https://fosterandadopt.jfs.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/ofc/foster-care/becoming-a-foster-parent/foster-parent-requirements>
- <https://fosterandadopt.jfs.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/ofc/foster-care/currently-a-foster-parent/what-to-expect-from-your-foster-care-agency>

**Next Steps After the Homestudy**

After your homestudy is completed and you receive your foster care certificate, the agency will have an assessor meet with you while you have a child placed in your home. This assessor will be a support as you navigate working with the child and the agency as a certified foster parent. While ongoing training is not required for you, it is certainly available as a support to you. To continue being a certified foster parent, the agency will conduct a recertification with you every two years.

*Helpful Articles:*

- <https://fosterandadopt.jfs.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/ofc/foster-care/currently-a-foster-parent/support-for-foster-parents>
- <https://fosterandadopt.jfs.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/ofc/foster-care/currently-a-foster-parent/foster-parent-rights-and-responsibilities>
- <https://fosterandadopt.jfs.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/ofc/foster-care/currently-a-foster-parent/normalcy-in-foster-care>

**Additional Resources and Information**

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services maintains a website with all information related to foster care, kinship care and adoption; including additional guidance and resources on the subjects outlined above:

<https://fosterandadopt.jfs.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/ofc/foster-care>.

## Kinship Support Program (KSP) Frequently Asked Questions

Updated 2/11/2021

### 1. What is the Kinship Support Program?

The kinship support program (KSP) is an ODJFS program that provides financial payments to eligible kinship caregivers for the placement of children in their homes.

### 2. Who is eligible for the kinship support program?

A kinship caregiver who is **not** certified as a foster caregiver in accordance with Chapters 5101:2-5 and 5101:2-7 of the Administrative Code is eligible to receive KSP payments for a child placed in the kinship caregiver's home when:

- a. The child is in the temporary, permanent, or legal custody of a public children services agency (PCSA); or
- b. The child is under the care of a Title IV-E agency with legal responsibility for care and placement of the child and which has a Title IV-E subgrant agreement in effect.

### 3. How long will eligible kinship caregivers receive KSP payments?

Eligible kinship caregivers will receive KSP payments in accordance with the following timeframes:

- a. For not more than nine months after December 29, 2020 (the date of enactment of Senate Bill 310 of the 133<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly) when the child was already placed in the kinship home;
- b. For not more than nine months from the date of placement when the child is placed in the kinship home during the nine-month period that begins with December 29, 2020 and ends September 29, 2021; or
- c. For not more than six months from the date of placement when the child is placed in the kinship home on or after September 30, 2021.

### 4. How much is the KSP payment?

The kinship caregivers will receive \$10.20 per day for each kinship child placed in their home. The kinship caregiver is to receive KSP payments until the earliest of the following:

- a. The kinship caregiver obtains foster home certification in accordance with Chapters 5101:2-5 and 5101:2-7 of the Administrative Code; or

- b. The applicable timeframe specified in Question 3 above is exhausted; or
- c. The child is no longer placed in the kinship caregiver's home.

**5. Do kinship caregivers need to apply for this payment?**

No, kinship caregivers do not need to apply for KSP payments. Eligible kinship caregivers will be identified and paid based on the information entered into the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS). There is no application for this program.

**6. When will kinship caregivers receive KSP payments?**

The first payments for this program will be issued in April 2021. Payments will be made retroactively back to the date of December 29, 2020 for all eligible kinship placements. Payments will be sent directly to kinship caregivers on the 10th of every month thereafter.

**7. Can a nonrelative caregiver be eligible for KSP?**

Yes. The definition of “kinship caregiver” which is in Ohio Revised Code (ORC) section 5101.85 includes nonrelative adults that have a familiar and long-standing relationship or bond with the child or the family.

**8. If a youth enrolled in Bridges is living with a relative, is that caregiver eligible to receive KSP?**

No, youth enrolled in Bridges are not in the custody of the PCSA and are not placements in the caregiver’s home. They are considered household members of the host home.

**9. What training requirements can be waived for kinship caregivers who are working towards foster care certification?**

Any training hours and topic requirements may be waived. Assessors must request waiver approval via SACWIS in accordance with rule 5101:2-5-18 of the Administrative Code.

**10. Is there a process for the kinship caregiver to waive KSP for any reason?**

No, the statutory requirements do not provide an option for a kinship provider to opt out of KSP. Kinship caregivers will receive the full amount of the KSP in accordance with the timeframes prescribed in the statute and in the rule.

**11. If a kinship caregiver has a child placed who is in PPLA, is that kinship caregiver eligible for KSP?**

PPLA is a legal custody status and is covered under the term "legal custody". Therefore, a kinship caregiver who has a child who is PPLA placed in the home is eligible for KSP.

**12. Are kinship caregivers required to go through the certification process to become certified foster caregivers?**

Kinship caregivers have the option to be certified as foster caregivers. They will not be required to be certified. However, the only way they will receive payments (foster care maintenance) for the child after KSP ends is if they choose to become certified.

**13. Will the PCSA be the pass through entity for KSP payments, or will they be issued directly to the kinship caregiver?**

ODJFS will make KSP payments directly to the kinship caregiver.

**14. Are KSP payments allowed for multiple placement episodes of a child?**

Payment timeframes are specific to the kinship caregiver and the custody episode. A kinship caregiver will not be able to receive more than six or nine payments in the same custody episode. However, a new kinship caregiver will be eligible to receive KSP for the child in the same custody episode.

**15. How does this program operate in counties that already pay a stipend to kinship caregivers?**

KSP will be implemented the same way across all counties. It will be at the discretion of the local PCSA who has a local program to determine how they will proceed with their program.

**16. If a child in PCSA custody is placed with a kinship caregiver out of state, will that caregiver receive KSP payments?**

Yes, as long as the child is in the custody of the Ohio PCSA or other Title IV-E agency and is placed with a caregiver that meets the definition of "kinship caregiver" in ORC 5101.85, that caregiver will receive KSP payments. If that caregiver is a licensed foster caregiver in the other state, then it is the expectation that the caregiver will receive foster care maintenance payments.

**17. If a kinship placement is entered into SACWIS, but there is no approved home assessment in SACWIS, will the kinship caregiver receive KSP payments?**

Yes, a kinship caregiver who receives the placement of a child in the custody of a PCSA or other Title IV-E Agency will receive KSP payments retroactive to the date

of placement in SACWIS (or December 29, 2020 if the child was already placed in the home).

**18. Should an individual become approved as a FC provider with a "waived" requirement status, will that provider be limited to only fostering children placed in kinship -OR- will that individual be able to foster other children under a "waived" requirement status?**

If the home is approved via a waiver, then the home will only be available for the kin placed in that home. However, through an amendment the home can be approved to accept non-kin if all licensing requirements are met. This clarification is being added to 5101:2-42-18.2.

**19. Are kinship providers who receive KSP payments still eligible for the Kinship Permanency Incentive Program (KPIP) after granted legal custody?**

A kinship caregiver who meets the requirements of KPIP will be eligible for that program upon obtaining legal custody or guardianship of the child. The receipt of KSP payments will have no bearing on KPIP eligibility.

**20. Is there any consideration of providing additional payments or services for children with higher needs?**

Ohio Revised Code does not provide for additional KSP amounts for children who have special needs. Kinship caregivers are encouraged to work with the custodial agency and Ohio Kinship and Adoption Navigator (OhioKAN) Program to determine what additional resources are available and accessible for kinship families.

**21. When the kinship caregiver becomes certified, will the private agency who recommends certification begin getting per diem payments for administrative costs as well?**

Once the kinship caregiver becomes a certified foster parent, they are to be treated as any other foster family. This will involve negotiation between the PCSA and the private agency on the per diem rate and how much administrative funds the private agency will receive.

### ***Office of Family Assistance Questions***

**1. Can kinship caregivers receive both KSP and Ohio Works First-child only benefits?**

No, kinship caregivers cannot receive both KSP and Ohio Works First (OWF)-child only benefits for the same child at the same time. The Office of Family Assistance is in the process of revising rules to reflect this requirement with an effective date of

April 2021. Eligible caregivers may apply for OWF-child only benefits once the KSP payments have ended

**2. How do we identify kinship caregivers who have received OWF since December 29, 2020 (the date of enactment of Senate Bill 310 of the 133rd General Assembly) so they do not get duplicate payments for OWF and KSP?**

Caregiver can receive both OWF and KSP payments for a child from December 29, 2020 until the effective date of the revised OWF rule, which is slated to be effective April 1, 2021.

**3. If a kinship caregiver has custody of a child, can the kinship caregiver choose to receive KSP instead of child-only OWF?**

A kinship caregiver who has custody of a child is not eligible to receive KSP, since the child must be in the custody of the PCSA or Title IV-E agency.

**4. Will the kinship support payments be included in SNAP/Medicaid eligibility?**

For SNAP, the KSP payment is to be treated the same as a foster care payment; meaning, the assistance group has the option to include or exclude the children for whom the KSP is being received in the assistance group. If the children are included in the SNAP assistance group, then the KSP payments for those children are included as well. Conversely, if the children are excluded, then the KSP payments are excluded.

**5. Can a caregiver choose to get child-only OWF instead of KSP payments?**

Pursuant to the executive order, ODJFS must make KSP payments to eligible kinship caregivers and there is no application process or avenue to deny the payment. Therefore, the caregiver is not able to choose to receive child-only OWF instead of KSP. The caregiver is able to apply for child-only OWF when KSP payments end.