

## Long-term Options

### Public Adoption

**What is it:** The judicial act of creating the relationship of parent and child where it did not exist previously.

**Parental Involvement:** The parents' rights are terminated or surrendered. You assume all rights and responsibilities relating to the child.

**Financial Help:** You may qualify for adoption subsidy and other supports.

**Future Options:** This is a permanent legal arrangement.

### Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGAP)

#### Subsidized Legal Guardianship

**What is it:** You agree to support the child through adulthood. This option only becomes available after adoption and reunification have been ruled out. Furthermore, your license must be a standard foster home license and the child must have resided a minimum of six consecutive months under the standard foster home license.

**Parental Involvement:** The parents could maintain their rights and may have visitation. They could petition the court to get the child back.

**Financial Help:** Monthly subsidy payments and other supports may be available.

**Future Options:** With this option, adoption from foster care is ruled out.



#### Unsubsidized Legal Guardianship

**What is it:** Judicially created relationship between the child and responsible adult (kin or fictive kin) that is intended to be permanent after reunification and adoption have been ruled out.

**Parental Involvement:** The parents could maintain their rights and may have visitation. They could petition the court to get the child back.

**Financial Help:** There are no monthly payments, but you could be eligible for some other social service programs, i.e. SNAP, Child Care Vouchers, etc.

**Future Options:** With this option, adoption or other supports offered by SCDSS from foster care are ruled out.



This pamphlet is an introduction to ways to support a family during a difficult time. Discuss these options with the caseworker, your family, and anyone else who may help you make a decision regarding caring for a child.

If you have questions about kinship care, visit: [dss.sc.gov/child-well-being/kinship-care/](https://dss.sc.gov/child-well-being/kinship-care/)



DSS Form 37141 (JAN 24)

## KNOW YOUR OPTIONS:

# KINSHIP PERMANENCY



*Kin can be family members like grandparents, aunts or uncles, or someone who is not related but has a significant relationship with the child or the child's family.*







## What Is Kinship Care?

Sometimes a child cannot live safely with their parents. Relatives or fictive kin may then provide full-time care to the child in the relative or fictive kin's home. This is known as kinship care.

This can be done informally by the family, or formally by Family Court when the local child welfare agency is involved in a child protective case.

There are several different kinds of kinship care, with varying levels of obligation and financial help.

It is important that you fully understand your options before making a decision.

Above all, you must carefully consider the needs of the child when deciding what is best for you and your family.

## Benefits of Kinship Care

The benefits of kinship care are well established.

- Reduces the stigma and trauma of separation from parents and family
- Results in placement with, and connections to, siblings and parents
- Respects family cultural traditions
- Provides stability
- Reduces behavioral, educational, and mental health problems

Kinship caregivers often know the child's history and unique needs, which can help lessen the effects of trauma experienced by a child being separated from the child's parents.

## Informal Care

**What is it:** You are caring for a child on a temporary basis. The child welfare agency could be involved but the child is not in foster care.

**Parental Involvement:** The child may return to his or her parents at any time.

**Financial Help:** You may be eligible for a number of social service programs and supports.

**Future Options:** You may seek legal custody or guardianship in court. If you later seek to adopt the child, you will not be eligible for subsidy payments.

## Kinship Foster Care

### Licensed Kinship Placement

**What is it:** After the child is removed from his/her home, and the local child welfare agency takes legal custody, the child is placed with you in a foster care arrangement.

You must undergo foster parent training, background checks, and approval or certification.

**Parental Involvement:** The parents may be allowed to visit the child, but they cannot regain custody without a court order.

**Financial Help:** You are eligible for a foster care stipend and other support.

**Future Options:** If it is determined that the reunification is not an option, the child welfare program has other long-term options that include adoption or guardianship.

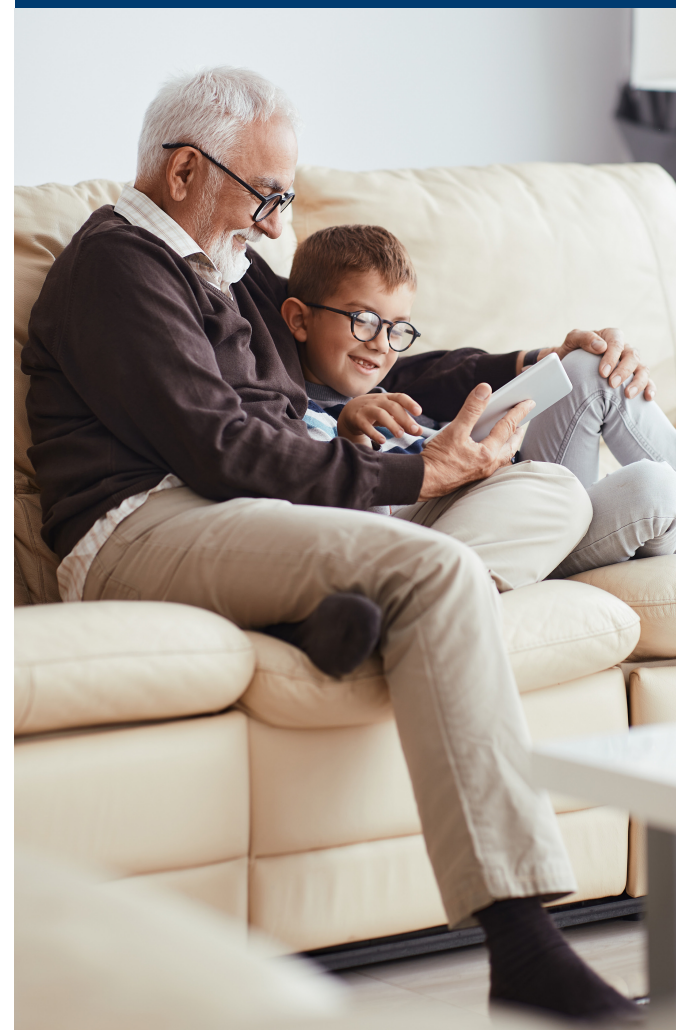
## Unlicensed Kinship Placement

**What is it:** Occurs after the child is removed from his/her home, and the court grants the kinship caregiver physical custody while the child welfare maintains legal custody. This may occur if the kinship caregiver has chosen not to be licensed or is unable to meet the licensing requirements.

**Parental Involvement:** The parents may be allowed to visit the child, but they can not regain custody without a court order.

**Financial Help:** You may be eligible for a number of social services programs and supports.

**Future Options:** If you later seek to adopt the child, you will not be eligible for subsidy payments.



## Questions

Now that you have read the options available to you, there are several important questions to consider before making your decision:

1. Are you prepared to take the child into your home right now?
2. Do you have enough money and space to care for the child?
3. How long can you care for the child?
4. Will caring for the child affect your relationship with the child's parents?
5. Which of the kinship care options is best for you and the child?
6. How well can you work with the local Department of Social Services and other agencies?
7. How much support do you need?

