



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

*Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona*

Janice K. Brewer  
Governor

Clarence H. Carter  
Director

NOV 05 2012

The Honorable Janice K. Brewer  
Governor of Arizona  
1700 West Washington  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Governor Brewer:

Pursuant to A.R.S. § 8-514.03, the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) submits the enclosed biannual report on the Kinship Foster Care Program. This report provides the following information:

- Demographics and number of children placed with relative caregivers;
- Demographics and number of kinship foster caregivers;
- Number of relative children per kinship foster care family;
- The Department's success at maintaining kinship foster care placements;
- Type of services provided to kinship foster care families;
- Cost of services provided to kinship foster care families compared to the cost of out-of-home placements; and
- Recommendations regarding program improvement.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (602) 542-5757.

Sincerely,

Clarence H. Carter  
Director

Enclosure

cc: President Steve Pierce, Arizona State Senate  
Speaker Andy Tobin, Arizona State House of Representatives  
Secretary of State Ken Bennett  
Joan Clark, State Librarian and Director, Arizona State Library, Archives, and Public Records



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Arizona State House of Representatives  
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Ms. Joan Clark  
State Librarian and Director, Arizona State Library, Archives, and Public Records  
1700 West Washington  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Ms. Clark:

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Secretary of State Ken Bennett

# Arizona Kinship Foster Care Program 2012 Report



The Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Children, Youth and Families

## **Kinship Foster Care**

Arizona Revised Statute § 8-514.03(H) requires the Department of Economic Security (DES) to submit a report regarding the Kinship Foster Care Program every two years. It includes demographic information, the type of services provided to kinship caregivers, and recommendations for program improvement. This report is submitted in satisfaction of this requirement.

For generations, extended families have played significant roles in the rearing of children when parents otherwise cannot. Kinship caregivers provide love and nurturance in a familiar setting as children remain connected to their families. These children live with people they know and trust, reinforcing the child's sense of cultural identity and positive self-esteem. Children living with kinship caregivers make and sustain extended family connections and continue lifelong family traditions and memories. The extended family is provided opportunities to support the child in building healthy relationships within the family, provide for the child's safety and well-being, create a sense of stability in the life of a child and reduce the financial impact to the State.

### **Arizona Kinship Foster Care Program Description<sup>1</sup>**

Arizona's Kinship Foster Care Program prioritizes relatives as the first placement preference for children in Child Protective Services (CPS) custody who require out-of-home care. In general, kinship placement is the least costly option for a child that is in the custody of the State.

There are two forms of Kinship Foster Care:

***Licensed Kinship Foster Care*** is when a child is placed with a relative who becomes licensed as a foster care provider. As of June 30, 2012, there were 287 kinship foster caregivers licensed as foster parents. This is a 57 percent increase as compared to the 183 licensed kinship foster caregivers reported in the previous biannual report (SFY 2010). The 287 licensed kinship caregivers provide out-of-home care for 503 related foster children.

***Unlicensed Kinship Foster Care*** is when a child is placed with a relative with court approval and the relative does not become licensed as a foster care provider. As of June 30, 2012, there were 2,664 unlicensed kinship caregivers providing homes for 4,323 related foster children. This is a 39 percent increase in unlicensed kinship caregivers as compared to the 1,913 unlicensed kinship caregivers reported in the previous biannual report (SFY 2010).

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<sup>1</sup> Data was extracted on 07/24/12 from the CPS case management system based upon an Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS) data run for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012.

## Services Available to Kinship Foster Caregivers

A variety of services are available to kinship foster caregivers and the children for whom they provide care, including:

- *Case management services* - regular contact with the kinship caregiver to assess and identify needs of the child and family and assist in developing solutions.
- *Health care coverage* - children are provided health care coverage through Title XIX (Medicaid) and/or the Division of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) Comprehensive Medical and Dental Program (CMDP)
- *Parent aide services* - contracted and state employed parent aides offer training in family life skills, provide transportation, and supervise visitation with birth parents and their children.
- *Parent skills training* - training is provided for kinship foster caregivers to enhance their parenting knowledge and skills.
- *Mental health and other supportive intervention services* - referrals are available for kinship foster caregivers and children.
- *Transportation services* - transportation for children to and from medical appointments and other necessary services.
- *Child care subsidy* - child care provided for children.
- *Respite care* - six days or up to 144 hours annually of respite care is available for licensed kinship foster caregivers.
- *Referrals to interdepartmental programs* - programs such as the Division of Developmental Disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation, Job Service, and community resources for children and kinship foster caregivers are available through DES.
- *Arizona Statewide newsletter* - provides ongoing information, educational opportunities and services that support kinship foster caregivers.

## Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Kinship foster caregivers are encouraged to apply for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Cash Assistance (CA) in order to increase their financial capacity to provide for the well-being of the child and reduce the possibility that the child will need to be placed in a more costly foster care setting. Of the 4,826 children in kinship foster care on June 30, 2012, 884 or 18 percent<sup>2</sup> were CA recipients in 558 households, averaging 1.58 eligible children per household.

In fiscal year 2012, the average monthly *household* TANF cash assistance payment was \$208.89, which is a \$4.32 decrease over the SFY 2010's average monthly household CA payment of \$213.21. An additional 220 children were members of TANF-eligible households but the children were determined *not eligible* for benefits. Of those children, 150 children or 68 percent

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<sup>2</sup> Data sources are Arizona Technical Eligibility Computer System (AZTECS) and Children's Information Library and Data Source (CHILDS).



were benefit-capped<sup>3</sup>. Benefit-capped children are not eligible for TANF cash assistance regardless of the household in which they reside. An additional eight children or 3.6 percent were denied benefits due to their receipt of Social Security benefits. The remaining children were denied benefits for other reasons.

For fiscal year 2012, approximately 55 percent of TANF cash assistance households in the kinship foster care program were headed by grandparents, 27 percent by aunts or uncles, and 18 percent by other relatives. This compares to approximately 60 percent of TANF cash assistance households headed by grandparents, 29 percent by aunts or uncles, and 11 percent headed by other relatives in SFY 2010.

### **Costs of Care Provided by the Division of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF)**

Financial assistance provided to kinship foster caregivers for the children in their care include foster care maintenance payments (for licensed kinship foster caregivers) and personal and clothing allowances (for both licensed and unlicensed relative caregivers).

For the 4,323 children placed in kinship foster care (unlicensed), the average monthly cost of foster care per child is \$65.57. This compares to an average monthly cost of family foster care (licensed kinship and licensed non-kinship) of \$719.47 per child. The average monthly cost of foster care for a child placed in a congregate care setting, such as a group home, is \$3,836.69 per child. These average monthly costs do not include expenditures related to CPS case management, child care, or other services provided to support the care of children in out-of-home placement.

### **Demographic Data about Children in Kinship Foster Care**

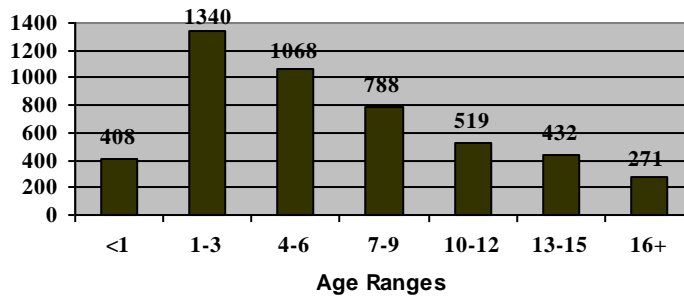
As of June 30, 2012, there were 4,826 children in kinship foster care, which is 36 percent of the total out-of-home care population of 13,385 children. In SFY 2010, there were 3,467 children in kinship foster care, which was 34 percent of the total out-of-home population of 10,258 children.

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<sup>3</sup> Benefit-capped children (Family Benefit Cap): There is no increase in cash assistance for the birth of additional children after the family begins to receive cash assistance, with some limited exceptions.

The average age for children in kinship foster care was 6.8 years, a slight increase from the SFY 2010 average of 6.6 years. The number of children by age ranges is presented in Chart 1:

**Chart 1**  
**Age Ranges of Children in Kinship Care**

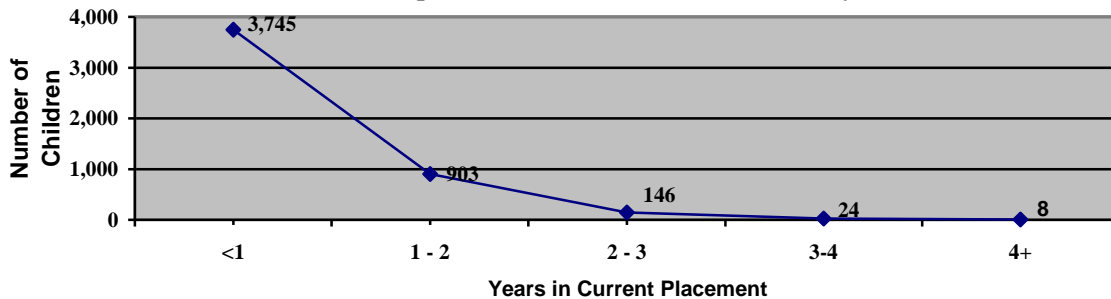


**N=4,826**

The largest percentage of children in kinship foster care, 1,340 or 28 percent, are between ages one to three. This percentage is consistent with SFY 2010 data. Most children in kinship foster care, 78 percent, lived with their kinship foster caregiver for less than one year. This represents a five percent increase over SFY 2010 data for this category.

Chart 2 displays time in placement by years:

**Chart 2**  
**Kinship Care: Time in Current Placement by Years**

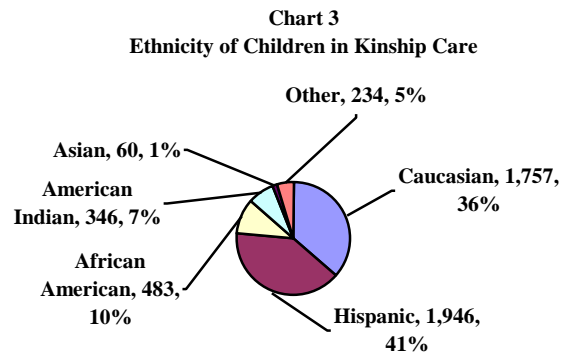


**N = 4,826**

Children placed in kinship foster care spend 81 percent of their total time in out-of-home placement with their kinship foster care providers. This is a seven percent increase over SFY 2010 data. The average number of children residing in the same kinship caretaker home is 1.6 children.

The ethnicity of children in kinship foster care is displayed in Chart 3. The percentage of Hispanic children in kinship foster care decreased by two percent over SFY 2010 and the percentage of Caucasian children in kinship foster care increased by one percent as compared to

SFY 2010. There were no significant changes in the percentages in any of the categories from the last reporting period.



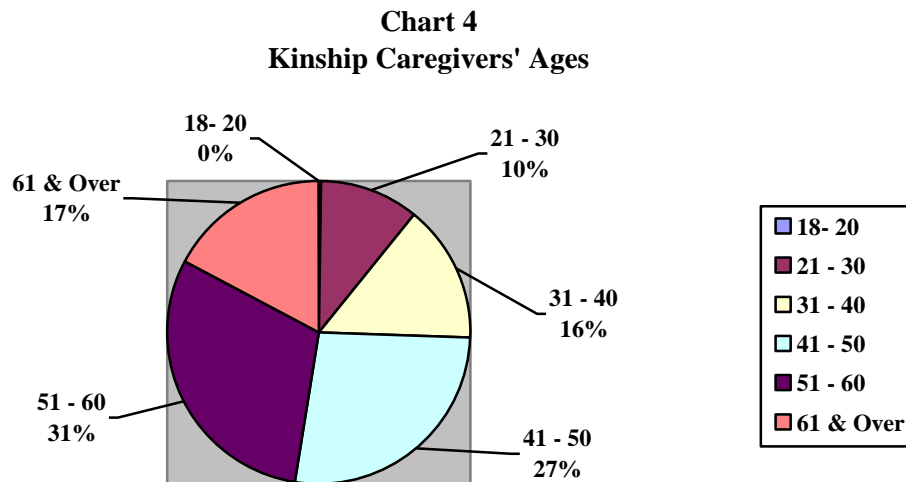
N = 4,826

Fifty-one percent of children in kinship foster care are female (2,440 children) and 49 percent are male (2,386 children).

### Demographic Data of Kinship Foster Caregivers

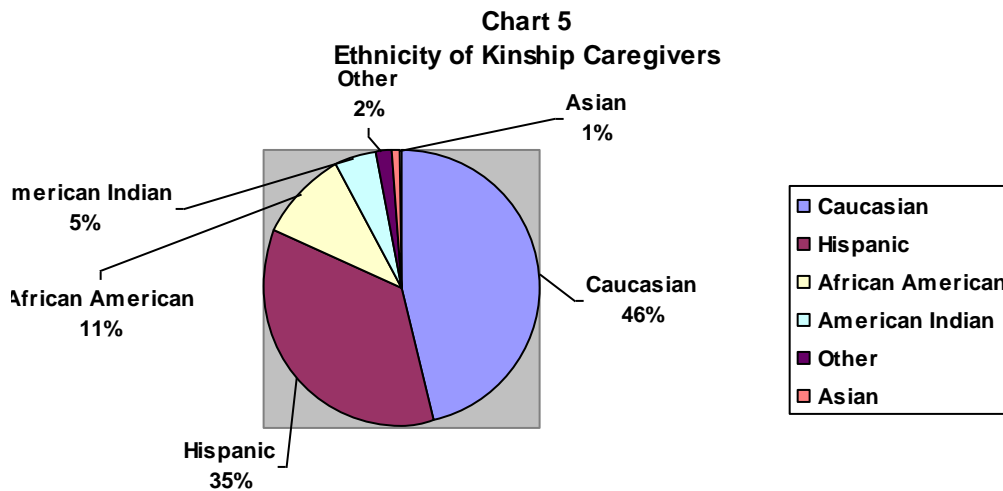
As of June 30, 2012, there were 2,951 kinship foster caregivers. This represents a 41 percent increase over the 2,096 kinship foster caregivers in SFY 2010. Kinship foster caregivers age 41 and older comprise 75 percent of all the kinship foster caregivers.

Chart 4 displays the percentages of kinship foster caregivers by age brackets:



Forty-six percent of the kinship foster caregivers are Caucasian and 35 percent of the kinship caregivers are Hispanic.

Chart 5 displays the ethnicity of kinship foster caregivers.



## Recommendations for Program Improvement

The Division of Children, Youth and Families continues to value and support kinship foster caregivers. The Department is working to expand licensing among kinship foster care families in order to increase their financial capacity to provide for the well-being of the child and reduce the possibility that the child will need to be placed in a more costly foster care or congregate setting.

The Division is:

- Exploring the development and provision of a training curriculum more targeted to the specific needs of kinship foster caregivers.
- Providing kinship foster care families with appropriate and available resources in order to ensure that the child can be cared for in the kinship foster home and avoid more costly placements.
  - CPS Specialists will discuss the importance of foster home licensure with relative caregivers at the time of placement and subsequent to placement. On a case-by-case basis, the DCYF and the Office of Licensure, Certification and Regulation (OLCR) will continue to review any non-safety foster home licensing standard that a kinship foster caregiver cannot meet and assess if waiving this non-safety licensing standard will enable the kinship foster caregiver to become licensed to provide foster care to a related child.
  - Kinship foster caregivers are now included in the distribution of the *Arizona Statewide*, a newsletter to foster, adoptive, and now kinship parents. Since the issuance of the SFY 2010 Kinship Report, kinship foster caregivers have received the *Arizona Statewide* in the Fall 2011, Winter 2012, and Summer 2012.

- DCYF and the Department's Division of Benefits and Medical Eligibility will continue to provide a streamlined eligibility process for kinship caregivers applying for cash assistance for related children in their care.
  - DCYF's Central Office will continue to visit a number of kinship homes to assess kinship caregiver needs. This is in addition to the monthly visits from CPS case managers.
- Continuing to provide resources to increase the knowledge of direct service staff regarding the importance of kinship foster care and the issues and support needs of kinship foster caregivers through various modes of training (e.g. computer-based training, unit trainings, case manager and supervisor classroom core training, e-mail bulletins and etc.).
  - Continuing its relationship with and involvement in the Central Arizona Kinship Coalition to gain access to resources and inform community agencies about the needs of kinship foster caregivers.
  - Continuing to identify, locate and engage family members by conducting relative searches. This includes the identification of maternal and paternal relatives through communication with the parents, guardians, the child, the child's tribe, relatives, previous foster parents, guardian ad litem and other professionals that have past or current experience with the family.
  - Continuing to make diligent efforts to identify and notify all adult relatives of the child of the option to become a placement resource for the child within 30 days of the child's removal.
  - Continuing to conduct searches for relatives prior to key decision points of case and no less than once every six months.
  - Utilizing Team Decision Making (TDM) meetings as a mechanism to identify prospective relative placements.
-