

General recommendations for creating a kin-first culture

- Mary Bissell, *Recruiting and Supporting Kinship Foster Families*, 36 ABA CHILD LAW PRACTICE 4 (July 1, 2017), https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_interest/child_law/resources/child_law_practice_online/child_law_practice/vol-36/july-aug-2017/recruiting-and-supporting-kinship-foster-families/.

According to the author, child welfare reform must be grounded in children's needs; thus, kinship care should be better supported and accessible. Bissell's recommendations include early engagement with kin when a child is involved in child welfare services, full disclosure of options available to kin caregivers, adequate financial resources, and foster care licensing programs that consider the needs of kin caregivers.

- Megan L. Dolbin-MacNab, *Critical Self-Reflection Questions for Professionals who Work with Grandfamilies*, 2(1) GRANDFAMILIES: THE CONTEMP. J. OF RES., PRAC. & POL. 139, 142 (Mar. 2015), <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1010&context=grandfamilies>.

This article poses a series of reflective questions and exercises for social workers and other professionals in child welfare to reduce the negative stereotypes and stigmas held against grandparent caregivers. For example, Dolbin-MacNab discusses the incorrect assumption that grandparents are not well-suited to raise their grandchildren because they did not raise their grandchildren's parent well. To address bias stemming from incorrect assumptions like this, professionals should go through reflective practice to consider how their own biases impact their ability to support grandparent caregivers.

- Ching-Hsuan Lin, *Evaluating Services for Kinship Care Families: A Systematic Review*, 36 CHILD. & YOUTH SERVS. REV. 32 (2014), <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0190740913003393?via%3Dihub>

This literature review relies on 13 carefully selected peer-reviewed articles evaluating services/interventions for kinship care families or caregivers. Studies generally show positive outcomes for children, caregivers, and families. The review concluded that kinship care families do not receive the same amount of financial support as their non-kin peers, often because of obstacles to foster care licensure and payments. It also noted that kinship caregivers receive lower levels of support from child welfare agencies. Lin concludes that child welfare agencies can support kinship families by ensuring access to resources and support. Both informal and formal supports – including support groups, tutoring for the child, healthcare, and legal assistance – can help achieve permanency outcomes, improve the child's self-esteem, and boost the child's mental health and academic performance.

- Jennifer Miller, *Creating a Kin-First Culture in Child Welfare*, 36 ABA CHILD L. PRAC. 4 (July 1, 2017), https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_interest/child_law/resources/child_law_practice_online/child_law_practice/vol-36/july-aug-2017/creating-a-kin-first-culture/

In this article, Miller proposes a multi-step approach to creating a kin-first culture in child welfare. The first step is a message through court and child welfare systems that children belong with their family. The next step is to develop a series of written policies that allow a kin-first culture to flourish. Kin-first policies must include notifying kin of child welfare services' involvement, emergency placement protocols that emphasize kin placements, flexible licensing policies to ensure kin caregivers have access to needed resources, parenting training, and general financial support.

- Sally Raphael, *Kinship Care and the Situation for Grandparents*, 21(2) J. CHILD ADOLESC. PSYCHIATR. NURS. 118 (May 2008), <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/18429842/>

Raphael discusses the implications of key studies regarding kinship foster care, including a 2000 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services report stating that kinship caregivers receive less financial assistance than non-kinship caregivers despite rising costs associated with kinship care and increased demand for kin caregivers. Another report by the U.S. General Accounting Office concludes that children benefit from kinship care in terms of stability. As a result of these reports, Raphael states that kinship caregivers need education on resources they are eligible for, and states should become more involved in kinship policies and resources. For example, “many service providers are unaware of grandparent or relative caregivers and have no system for identifying them or helping them access appropriate services.” Creating a system that connects service providers to caregivers is one way the state can become more involved in supporting kinship families.