

To support successful kinship placements, lawyers must advocate for appropriate services and resources to support the kinship caregivers.

Kinship caregivers often lack the financial benefits and support services needed to help them care for nieces, nephews, cousins, and grandchildren. They also often lack – or lose, after they take legal guardianship or custody – mental health and other resources necessary to help children who were removed from their homes of origin. The child protection agency, as well as other state agencies, by withdrawing, denying, or failing to give access to such supports, in effect sets kinship caregivers up to fail. Accordingly, lawyers for parents and children must zealously advocate for such supports in order to ensure that kinship placements and permanency with kin succeed.

Note that, while kinship caregivers may be grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, adult siblings, or even unrelated persons with a significant connection to the child falling under a broader definition of “kin,” the vast majority of clinical literature about needed support services concerns grandparents.