

Improvements to Relative Caregivers' Service Array-

DCBS plans to create a menu of benefit and service options available to relative caregivers from which the relative caregiver can choose based upon the child's needs and their preferences. DCBS is still very much engaged in the development of this menu, but the following evidences DCBS' commitment to improving the benefit and service options available to relative caregivers and the children in their care.

- **Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)-** Child care is frequently mentioned by relatives as the primary expense that cannot be managed and often times leads the relative to decide against taking a child into the relative's care or to return a child from the relative's care. DCBS is offering child care subsidy through a child protective and preventive services authorization under the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) to relative caregivers for a child placed with the relative by the cabinet. Relative caregivers are not required to pay a co-pay for childcare, regardless of income.
- **Relative Placement Support Benefit-** DCBS has filed a regulatory amendment (922 KAR 1:400, Supportive services) to allow the issuance of a relative placement support benefit directly to the relative caregiver for the full amount, rather than a retail vendor for an amount authorized. This will ensure that the relative caregiver who accepts a child from DCBS for placement has readier access to the maximum benefit to help stabilize the placement for the child. The administrative regulation will be adopted by early June.
- **Training, Peer Support, and Mentorship-** Through a partnership with the Kentucky Youth Advocates, DCBS is developing and distributing information about benefit programs, including the array of public assistance and medical assistance programs available through CHFS; caregiver training available without charge to relatives; and peer support groups and mentors.
- **Fictive Kin-** House Bill 180, enacted during the 2017 Regular Session, will allow DCBS to place with fictive kin. "Fictive kin" refers to individuals who are not related by birth, adoption, or marriage to a child, but who have an emotionally significant relationship with the child. These individuals take on the characteristics of a family relationship and/or an alternate caregiver. Fictive kin would be one placement option available in addition to a relative caregiver, foster home, residential care, or treatment setting.

Kinship Care hotline (877-565-5608) and email: DCBSChildProtection@ky.gov.

Overview of Kentucky's Kinship Care Program-

- Kentucky's Kinship Care Program began in September 1999. The Kinship Care Program was designed to offer financial and social service supports to facilitate the placement of maltreated children, or children dependent due to the death of both parents, with qualified relatives as an alternative to foster care. The program was funded then, and remains funded now, through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF) Block Grant.
- On April 1, 2013, due to a projected shortfall of approximately \$86 million, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS)-Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) implemented a moratorium on new kinship care approvals. Those already in the program continue to receive the benefits as long as they continue to meet the

eligibility requirements. As of March 31, 2017, there were 5,698 children in 3,364 families receiving kinship care benefits.

- After the moratorium, families have been referred to other public assistance programs, including the Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program (KTAP), Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), and Medicaid. In addition, a Kinship Care hotline (877-565-5608) was launched on March 23, 2015, to provide kinship caregivers the opportunity to seek assistance from departmental staff in navigating the system to access resources. Over 2,000 individuals have used the hotline. Individuals can also email: DCBSChildProtection@ky.gov.
 - Child-only KTAP and Medicaid are based upon the income of the child, if any. KTAP offers monetary support for the child whereas Medicaid offers health insurance coverage for the child.
- DCBS is promoting the public assistance benefit options and other support services available to relative caregivers through conference participation and engagement of community partners and faith-based organizations at state, regional, and local levels.