

Kinship Navigator Services Overview

Kinship Navigator Services assist kinship caregivers in learning about, finding, and using programs and services to meet their needs. Kinship Navigator Services are structured to meet the needs of kinship caregivers while supporting placement stability, reunification, and child safety. Kinship caregivers are encouraged to vocalize their own needs and goals allowing them to play an integral role in the direction of service provision. Kinship Navigator Services support standards and goals established by the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Eligibility

Kinship Navigator Services are available in addition to ongoing HHS case management for kin or fictive kin caregivers with children placed in their care or temporarily residing with them as arranged by the child's parent. These services and supports may be provided to kinship caregivers during an open HHS service case. The Kinship Navigator Services case may remain open as long as the caregiver has ongoing needs.



Kinship specialists will make initial phone contact with the kinship caregivers within **two business days** of the HHS referral.

If the kinship caregivers accept services, the kinship specialist will make in-person contact with the kinship caregivers within **five business days** of the HHS referral.

Within the first **30 calendar days**, a Social Network Map will be completed with kinship caregivers. The Social Network Map is used to identify other family members, neighbors, friends, or persons known to the kinship caregivers who may serve as potential supports during placement of the children.

The kinship specialist will provide, at a minimum, two (2) hours of services and/or supports to kinship caregivers per month. If a child moves from one kinship placement to another, the new kinship caregivers are eligible for services/supports.

Kinship Navigator Services focus on providing support to the kinship caregiver, tailored to be responsive and supportive to individuals regardless of race, religion, age, sex, social economic status and/or physical or mental health status.

Services

Activities include, but are not limited to, the following:



Assessment of kinship caregiver needs related to identifying the best way to support them and the children in their care.



Opportunities for parent education, including SafeCare.



Support groups providing an outlet for shared communication and emotional support.



Development of a kinship support plan with action steps specific to identified outcomes. This could include such things as:

- Support with identifying affordable child care;
- Assisting the caregiver with access to medical, dental, and mental health services;
- Ensuring basic needs are met including clothing, beds/cribs/furniture, food, and gas cards.



Connecting kinship caregivers with supplemental resources such as food assistance, child care assistance, Family Investment Program (FIP), medical insurance, and/or legal aid.

Service delivery is targeted toward increasing placement in kinship care, reducing placement in stranger foster care, supporting placement stability and reducing re-abuse.