



Kinship Care Services

significant and caring adults raising children

Colleen Vogel, MSW
Senior Program Director
Foster Care Services
518.857.8027
Colleen.Vogel@nrfs.org

Star Gregory, MS
Director of Foster Care Recruitment &
Retention
518.337.3789
Star-Lynne.Gregory@nrfs.org

HOMEFINDERS

**Capital Region
Albany & Rensselaer Counties**
Stephanie Klein
518.223.3828
Stephanie.Klein@nrfs.org

Schenectady County
Jenny McMillen, MS
518.257.2919
Jenny.McMillen@nrfs.org

**Hudson Valley Region
Columbia, Dutchess, Greene &
Ulster Counties**
Alexandra Edwards
518.281-0760
Alexandra.Edwards@nrfs.org

**Mohawk Valley Region
Fulton, Montgomery & Schoharie
Counties**
Jolene Olsen
518.545.6345
Jolene.Olsen@nrfs.org

**For Herkimer, Madison &
Oneida Counties**
Kari Judd
315.414.9855
Kari.Judd@nrfs.org

**North Country Region
Essex, Saratoga, Warren &
Washington Counties**
Lauren O'Connor
518.769.0404
Lauren.OConnor@nrfs.org

**Southern Tier Region
Broome, Chenango, Cortland,
Otsego & Tompkins Counties**
Mary Lobdell
607.201.3588
Mary.Lobdell@nrfs.org

The Family First Prevention Services Act, signed into law on February 9, 2018, is bringing focus to the need and importance of having children live with families. Northern Rivers Family of Services offers a continuum of services that help counties identify, certify, and support family and kinship families for youth who are not able to stay with their parents.

Emergency Certification

Prospective kinship homes and families are identified at the time of removal as resources for youth. These families sometimes require more levels of support than traditional foster families because emergency kinship resources are often not prepared for this new responsibility. They require guidance and support to navigate the rules and regulations regarding the youth placed in their care. Northern Rivers is able to provide emergency certifications to ensure families are certified in a timely fashion, thereby securing the necessary Title IV-E funding.

Kinship Certification and Support

Once families who are interested in caring for their kin are located, Northern Rivers is able to provide high levels of support and guidance as they work through the certification process. After certification, Northern Rivers continues its support on their journey through kinship care, whether reunification with family members, KinGap, or adoption. Children placed with Northern Rivers through kinship certification receive the same supports as any child placed with a Northern Rivers home.

In order for Northern Rivers to certify the kinship foster parent(s) and for the kinship foster parent to receive the aforementioned services, certain requirements must be met:

1. The child must be in the custody of the Department of Social Services.
2. The identified kinship parent(s) must be referred to Northern Rivers by the appropriate Department of Social Services.
3. To become an Approved Relative Home, the identified kinship parent(s) must agree to certain requirements, including the successful completion of background checks, kinship care training, a physical exam by a medical professional, and a home study

For questions regarding kinship care and becoming a kinship foster parent, please email KinshipCare@northernrivers.org or call 844.855.CARE (2273).

*These are services provided by
Northern Rivers Family of Services
member agencies.*

**NORTHERN
RIVERS**

The Northern Rivers Difference

As a Northern Rivers foster parent, you're never alone. We believe that foster parents deserve the best support, including:

- A team of clinicians, nurses, and case workers are available 24/7/365, both on call and in home
- Full- and part-time fostering opportunities to make sure you have the right fit
- Monthly stipends for the care and support of foster children
- Extensive online resources including discussion groups, training materials, feedback to and from program staff, and connections with other foster families
- Services delivered through a trauma-informed care model that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of trauma on foster children
- A network of more than 250 foster homes in upstate New York with the ability to serve more than 20 counties

Kinship Care FAQs

What is kinship care?

Kinship care includes the full-time care of a child by relatives or other adults who have a bond with the child. Kinship care refers to the care, nurture, and protection of children by relatives or significant adults when children cannot stay in their own home because of child protection or safety concerns.

What are some other names for kinship care?

Families and individuals who are raising their relative's children are called "grandfamilies," "second-time parents," and "relatives as parents." "Kin care," "kinship foster care," and "kinship care" are some terms for the arrangement.

What is "fictive kin"?

"Fictive kin" refers to an individual who is not related by birth, adoption, or marriage to a child, but who has an emotionally significant relationship with the child.

Why is kinship care important?

By maintaining family, cultural, or community ties, kinship care helps the child through the experience of being out of the parental home. It is the oldest form of family preservation and an important safety net for children whose parents are either unable or unwilling to care for them.

Why would a child be in kinship care?

Reasons for kinship care can include parental incarceration, death, mental or physical illness, substance abuse, and neglect and abuse of children by parents. In addition, recent increases in kinship care may be attributed to the recession as parents turn to grandparents' homes because of losing a job and/or financial resources.

What are some benefits of children living in kinship foster care as compared to kids living with non-kinship families?

- There is a greater likelihood that kids achieve permanency. In a recent study, 78% of teens living in a relative's foster home achieved permanency.
- Children experience fewer school changes.
- Children in kinship care typically have better behavioral and mental health outcomes.
- Children are more likely to keep connections to sibling groups, extended family, and other loved ones.
- Children in kinship care are less likely to re-enter foster care after returning to the birth parent(s).

Ready to become a Northern Rivers foster parent?

Or do you still have doubts, concerns, or questions? We're always here to talk with you. Our job is to make sure you've got the answers. Our homefinders are ready to listen and answer your specific questions. Their contact info is on the left side of the front page. Reach out and let's talk!