



House Children and Seniors Committee
January 29, 2013

Grandparents as Caregivers

Presented by:

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Testimony of:

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Topeka, Kansas

Presented to:

The Honorable Connie O'Brien and Honorable Members
of the Kansas House Children and Seniors Committee:

DCF testimony on Grandparents as Caregivers

Chairman O'Brien, Vice-Chair Meigs, Ranking Member Wilson and Honored Members:

I am Gina Meier-Hummel, Director of Prevention and Protection Services with the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF). Thank you for the opportunity to discuss Grandparents as Caregivers.

As a result of legislation, the original Grandparents as Caregivers program began January 1, 2007 and ran through June 30, 2009. Effective July 1, 2009, DCF rolled the state funded Grandparents as Caregivers program into the federally funded TANF/Grandparents as Caregivers Program. The Economic and Employment Services (EES) division administers this program. EES data indicates grandparents served in the program, but it is important to note, adult relatives within the fifth degree may be eligible for this program so it does not just serve as a means to support grandparents. Further, relatives may be eligible whether or not a child is in the custody of the Secretary of DCF. An aunt caring for her child niece may be eligible even if the niece is uninvolved with DCF.

To qualify for this support relatives must meet the following requirements:

- The household must include a child; may include an unborn child
- Family must have little to no income and/or resources (for relative caregivers this is based on the child's income)
- Family must comply with Child Support Services (CSS)
- School age children must be enrolled in school

For this most-recent six-month period, DCF averages 2,048 total Relative Caregiver TANF cases each month. Of the 2,048 Relative Caregiver TANF Cases, the Grandparent Caregiver TANF Cases account for 1,514, approximately 74%. The average payment for the months October 2012 through December 2012 for all relatives in this program is \$230.98. In addition, relatives are eligible to apply for and receive daycare assistance.

As of December 31, 2012, 5,493 children were in the custody of the Secretary of DCF with out of home care, and 32% of these children were placed with relatives. Of note, Grandparents as Caregivers represents one means of support for relatives and other options exist to support relatives as caregivers when a child is in the custody of the Secretary of DCF.

The relative may choose to be licensed as a family foster home through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). If a relative becomes licensed, foster care providers pay the relative \$19.98 per day (\$26,638.00 total cost for December 2012). If the child's needs require, the relative may receive \$26.71 per day (\$13,515.76 total cost for December 2012) or \$51.67 per day (\$4,805.00 total cost for December 2012) for a child with specialized needs.

If the relative does not desire to become a licensed family foster home, in addition to the Grandparents as Caregivers and ancillary supports, DCF foster care providers pay an average of \$3.17 per day (\$171,514.62 total cost for December 2012) to the relative.

DCF appreciates relative care and if a child must be removed from their home, relatives serve as the best alternative when a child may be placed safely in the relative home. DCF foster care providers provide support and services to relative caregivers to ensure the child's needs are met. Ancillary support and services may come in the form of specialized training, community supports, transportation assistance, clothing allowances, daycare to name a few.

I thank you for the opportunity to address the important issue of relative placement and I stand for questions.

Thank you.

**Gina Meier-Hummel, Director, Prevention and Protection Services
Kansas Department for Children and Families**