



Kinship Quarterly

Strengthening Families

July 2017

IN THIS ISSUE: THE KINSHIP COLLABORATION GROUP & GREAT SUMMER TIPS

Welcome to the third issue for 2017. In this issue, we are excited to tell you about the Kinship Collaboration Group. This project is still in its development phase, but will be up and running around September 1!

The Kinship Caregiver Collaboration Group allows kinship caregivers who have received services from Child Protective Services to work with Child Protective Services in the design, implementation and evaluation of CPS programs, policies and services. The goal of the Kinship Caregiver Collaboration Project is to:

- Identify service gaps to kinship caregivers and children.
- Identify the services that are working and should continue;
- Identify areas of policy that need improvement.
- Provide an avenue for kinship caregivers to recommend policy changes.
- Identify ways kinship caregivers can be instrumental in improving a caseworker's skills in relating to kinship caregivers.
- Provide resources, direction and guidance to the regional

meetings to effectively expand and sustain regional Kinship Support Groups.

- Support the disproportionality efforts at the regional and state level.
- Improve policy and practices related to engagement of kinship caregivers.

The objectives of the Kinship Collaboration Group include:

- Provide feedback to CPS to enhance child welfare services.
- Develop structure for CPS/kinship caregiver partnerships in policy and practice components that will become a vital element of local, state and regional operations.
- Distribute the message to the staff and kinship caregivers regarding the value of a family voice.
- Improve the skills, qualifications, and availability of individuals providing services to children and kinship families.
- Increase kinship caregiver involvement.

- Institute the Kinship Collaboration Group Model throughout the state.
- Provide a link between CPS and kinship caregivers.

In addition, the Kinship Caregiver Collaboration Group will help to establish Regional Kinship Caregiver Support Groups (KSG). These groups will provide regional/local opportunities for kinship caregivers with open CPS cases to obtain greater insight of the CPS system. The KSG is a venue where kinship caregivers who have successfully exited the CPS system share their experiences, knowledge of the system, procedures, etc. with kinship caregivers involved with CPS.

The Kinship Collaboration Group Project is still in its development phase. However, we are looking for people interested in becoming members. If you are interested in advocating for kinship caregivers in Texas and would like to be considered for membership, please contact Kinship Development Specialist Debbie Bouldin at (512) 438-4937 or debbie.bouldin@dfps.state.tx.us

Beyond ECI: Next Steps for Your Child

Does your child receive services from the Early Childhood Intervention program (ECI)? If so, you and your ECI team have developed outcomes and activities to help your child grow and learn, addressed your child's health needs, and addressed the needs of your family. Now that your child is getting older, it is time to start planning for when he or she leaves ECI.

All children must exit ECI by their third birthday. We call the process of exiting out of ECI "transition." Successful transitions require planning ahead with your ECI team and other partners, such as community service providers. Your ECI team will work with you to develop steps and services for transition that are specific to your child and family when your child is between 27 months old and no later than 90 days before your child's third birthday. Your ECI team will assist you in finding resources for your child and family for when your child is no longer enrolled in ECI.

Choices for your child after ECI

There are many options for your child after he or she exits from ECI. You and your ECI team can determine what choices will be best. Your service coordinator will help you determine what might be needed for your child to participate in any of the following:

- Child care settings
- Private therapy
- Charter schools
- Head Start*
- Parent's Day Out programs
- Community recreation programs
- Neighborhood play groups
- Library story hours
- Classes for children, such as art, music, gymnastics or swimming
- School district Preschool Programs for Children with Disabilities (PPCD)

*Head Start is a federal program that promotes the school readiness of young children through agencies in their local community. Head Start and Early Head Start programs support the comprehensive development of

children from birth to age five, in centers, child care partner locations, and in the children's homes. Parent involvement is a large component of the Head Start program. Children are eligible for Head Start based on income requirements. Head Start also has slots specifically reserved for children with disabilities. The [Program Locator](#) can help you find the program nearest you.

Questions to help you decide:

- What does my child like to do?
- How do I want my child to interact with others?
- What are my goals for my child in the next year?

Choices for Your Child in Your Community

Your service coordinator will help you explore options and schedule transition meetings with the organizations or programs in your community that you might like your child to attend after he or she exits from ECI. Your service coordinator and other team members can also provide strategies to help your child fully participate in these programs and activities.

Attending a transition meeting does not mean your child has to enroll in the program you are considering. These meetings will give you a chance to learn more about the services offered, find out about next steps and ask questions. Remember, transition is a time to look at all of your child's options. Your child can enroll in both community programs and activities, and enroll in the school district PPCD. If you are considering several options, you may have more than one meeting. If you are considering a group program for your child, the meeting may include visits to the program sites.

Things you may want to ask about include:

- Eligibility requirements
- Scheduling
- Costs/Insurance
- Transportation
- Documents needed to enroll
- Any special diet needs for your child

- Giving and/or storing your child's medication
 - Special accommodations such as wheel chair ramps.
- Things you may want to share include:
- Important information about your child and family
 - Your hopes and dreams for your child
 - Your child's favorite toys and activities.

Choices for your child in your local school district

Public schools have services called the Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) that begin for eligible children on their third birthday. If you want to explore PPCD services, and you give your approval, you will participate in a transition conference with representatives of your school district and ECI. The transition conference usually occurs three to nine months before your child's third birthday. The meeting will be conducted in your native language using words and terms you can understand. To get the most from this conference, let your service coordinator know if you need translation or interpreter services, including sign language.

At the conference, the school district or ECI staff will:

- Explain eligibility requirements for PPCD services
- Explain the evaluation procedures for determining eligibility
- Explain the steps and timelines
- Explain your parental rights
- Explain the different types of information that may be needed from you
- Answer your questions and consider your concerns
- Discuss extended year services and locations where services may be provided
- Explain that children may receive PPCD services in pre-kindergarten classes, and community settings such as preschool or Head Start.

To help school district staff understand your family, you can:

- Share ideas for goals and objectives that are important to your family

- Invite friends, relatives, and child care staff who may have useful information to the conference
- Describe your child's current activities and routines
- Describe what you want for your child in terms of future activities and routines

Note: The school district program will address your child's educational needs, but unlike ECI, it does not address family needs. Before you transition out of ECI, your service coordinator will help you access services to meet your family's other needs.

For additional information on your child's transition, please contact your ECI service coordinator.

Summer Tips

Students "lose" 2-3 months of learning during the summer. Here are a few suggestions to keep kids engaged:

- Build a house, elephant or a giraffe with cards
- Memory Game- Object: Match 2 "like" cards
- Play a card game - War, Solitaire, Crazy 8's, Go Fish
- Math Challenge-Place 5 numbered cards in a horizontal line, face up. ADD or MULTIPLY the 6th card against the other 5 cards.
- Make a photo journal from old magazines of all things beginning with the letter B or T or S.



- Dress up Day - Be a pirate, princess, or a cat for the day
- Plan a treasure hunt
- Paint a rock
- Public libraries are a wonderful and free resource

for children and teen activities.

- Check out the "Free Admission Day" for local museums
- Free Summer Movies in the park
- Make popsicles in Dixie cups with fruit juices



- Apply for scholarships for the YMCA, art class, sport clinics, church camps.
- Sign up for kids' workshops at Michaels, Lowe's, Home Depot, Joanne Fabrics, and Hobby Lobby.
- Look into your local community centers for children and teen activities.
- Build a Slip and Slide. Ask a contractor for a piece of heavy duty commercial white plastic. Drizzle baby shampoo on plastic for no-tears fun and turn on the hose.
- Make a bird feeder with peanut butter and pine cones and yarn.
- Plant a garden

- Learn a new hobby by using the community clubs and resources, fishing, gardening, knitting, running.
- Make an indoor hopscotch grid with masking tape or chalk.
- Make your own bingo cards.
- Make a Dreamcatcher out of string and a twig
- Take turns reading a book chapter out loud.
- Make fanciful necklace with yarn, buttons, noodles, paper flowers or glitter.
- Plan and shop for a family meal.
- Show me how you can...
 - Plan a budget for you
 - Make a doctor's appointment
 - Ask a teacher for help
 - Introduce yourself
 - Fill out an application
 - Write a note to a friend
 - Sew a button on a shirt
 - Fold your clothes
 - Tie your shoes



TIPS FOR A SAFE SUMMER

FIREWORKS SAFETY

- Fireworks can result in severe burns, blindness, scars and even death.
- Fireworks that are often thought to be safe, such as sparklers, can reach temperatures above 1,000 degrees and can burn users and bystanders.
- Families should attend community fireworks displays run by professionals rather than using fireworks at home.

BUG SAFETY

- Don't use scented soaps, perfumes or hair sprays on your child.
- Avoid areas where insects nest or congregate, such as stagnant pools of water, uncovered foods and gardens where flowers are in bloom.
- Combination sunscreen/insect repellent products should be avoided because sunscreen needs to be reapplied every two hours, but the insect repellent should not be reapplied.
- Use insect repellents containing deet when needed to prevent insect-related diseases. Ticks can transmit Lyme disease, and mosquitoes can transmit west nile, zika, chikungunya and other viruses.

TRAVELING BY CAR

- Make sure each passenger is buckled and that children use the appropriate car seat.
- All infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing car seat until 2 years of age or until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by the car seat manufacturer.
- Never place a rear-facing car seat in the front seat of a vehicle that has an airbag.
- Plan to stop driving and give yourself and your child a break about every two hours.
- Never leave your child alone in a car, even for a minute. Temperatures inside the car can reach deadly levels in minutes, and the child can die of heat stroke.

LINKS TO RESOURCES

- [**SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM SITE LOCATER**](#)
- [**LOOKING FOR CHILDCARE. BEFORE ENTRUSTING YOUR CHILD TO A DAY CARE, CHECK ITS STATE RECORD.**](#)
- [**SUMMER CAMP LOCATOR**](#)
- [**FUN SUMMER TRIPS TO TAKE THE KIDS**](#)
- [**25 ACTIVITIES TO KEEP KIDS' BRAINS ACTIVE IN SUMMER**](#)
- [**SCHOLASTICS SUMMER READING CHALLENGE 2016**](#)
- [**FUN AND FREE SUMMER LEARNING RESOURCES**](#)

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