

**County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department, Family and Children's Services  
Kinship Care Program Fact Sheet**

Questions	Answers
<p><b>What is Kinship Care?</b></p>	<p>Kinship Care is the temporary placement of children in a safe, nurturing family environment with relatives or extended family members, when their parents cannot care for them.</p>
<p><b>Am I eligible to become a Kinship Caregiver?</b></p>	<p>Relatives or non-relative extended family members may become Kinship caregivers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Relative</i> means an adult related to a child by blood, adoption, or affinity within the 5th degree of Kinship. Includes step-parents and siblings; relative status is <i>great, great-great</i> or <i>grand</i>, or their spouse, even if the marriage was terminated by death or dissolution.</li> <li>• <i>Non-Relative extended family members</i>, is any adult caregiver who has an established familial or mentoring relationship with the child.</li> </ul> <p>If you are 21 years or older, in good health, and demonstrate an ability and interest in caring for children could become an approved, licensed caregiver by Family and Children's Services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single, married, divorced, and same sex couples are encouraged to apply.</li> <li>• Home ownership is not required - you may rent a house, condominium, or apartment.</li> </ul> <p>The important thing is that you have room for a child in a safe living environment and that you can meet the child's needs.</p>
<p><b>How do I become a Kinship Caregiver?</b></p>	<p>The first step is to attend an orientation meeting. The orientations provide you with an overview of the child welfare system and a chance to have your questions answered. If you decide you would like to become a licensed foster parent, you will need to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attend an Orientation</li> <li>2. Complete the Application</li> <li>3. Attend P.R.I.D.E classes</li> <li>4. Attend Options for Recovery*</li> </ol>
<p><b>Do I need any special training?</b></p>	<p>PRIDE training is provided free of cost and all perspective foster parents and adoptive parents must complete the 27 hours of training. If you want to care for children under the age of 5 years who have been exposed to either drugs or alcohol, you must also attend Options For Recovery* classes. These are also free and total 20 hours.</p>

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<b>After approval, how soon will I have a foster child?</b>	That depends on the age and gender of child you want to care for. The wider the age range the sooner a child will be placed with you. Foster children are entering or being moved in the foster care system on almost, a daily basis. However, if you only want a girl between the ages of two and five, it may take some time for her to be placed in your home.
<b>Will I meet and be able to choose a child?</b>	As a planned move occurs there may be time for foster parents to meet children before they are moved. In some cases, there is little time, and an immediate home is needed for a child. When you are contacted about a child you always have the right to accept or decline.
<b>How long will a foster child need Kinship Foster Care?</b>	They may need kinship foster care for a few hours or a few months. Some children may need care until they are returned to their families, adopted, or until they turn 18.
<b>What support will I receive?</b>	A social worker will make visits to assess how the child is adjusting to the foster home and to give the foster child and kinship caregivers an opportunity to discuss any problems. Kinship caregivers will be expected to share information with the social worker concerning the child's health, school, and response to contact with birth parents, unmet needs, and any behavior or adjustment problems the child may have. Within the first month of a child's placement, kinship caregivers will be invited to attend Coffee Connections, an informational meeting to help kinship caregivers adjust to having a new child in the home.
<b>What about the child's food and clothing costs?</b>	When children are placed by the Human Services Department, a monthly stipend is issued to reimburse the foster parents for food, shelter, clothing, recreation and incidental costs. The stipend is a fixed rate based on the child's age. Typically, checks are mailed out the first of each month following the month of care. A Medi-Cal card is also provided to cover the medical, dental and prescription expenses related to the care of the foster child.
<b>Who do I call?</b>	<p>The first step in becoming a kinship caregiver is to attend an orientation meeting. The orientation provides you with an overview of the child welfare system and gives you a chance to have your questions answered by child welfare staff. Active foster and adoptive parents will also be available to respond to questions. Application packets are distributed at the orientation meetings.</p> <p><i>For more information about meeting dates and location: Call (831) 345-2700</i></p>
<b>Contact Us</b>	<p align="center"><b>County of Santa Cruz, Human Services Dept., Family and Children's Services 1400 Emeline Avenue, Building K, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 (831) 345-2700</b></p>