



April 8, 2010

To: Ohio's Area Agencies on Aging
88 County Public Children Services Agencies
88 County Job and Family Services Agencies
88 County Family and Children First Coordinators

From: Barbara Riley, Director, Ohio Department of Aging
Larke Recchie, Executive Director, Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging
Doug Lumpkin, Director, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
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Crystal Ward Allen, Executive Director, Public Children Services Association of Ohio
Angela Sausser Short, Director, Ohio Family and Children First

Re: Local Partnerships to support Grandparents and other Kin Caregivers

As we all know, today's society has **more and more grandparents and other kin caregivers with sole responsibility to raise the children in their home.** The 2000 Census showed 86,000 grandparent caregiver homes shouldering this responsibility, many with sibling groups of children, and of course many more aunts, uncles and other kin raising their extended family's children. We fully expect a higher number in grandparent homes in the 2010 Census. **Children fortunate enough to be cared for by safe, familiar kin caregivers have far better outcomes than children placed in unrelated foster care** – better school attendance and academic performance, fewer community behavior problems, and much greater long term stability. Kinship reduces child trauma and governmental costs – both desired outcomes in today's world.

So – thanks to all of you that have partnered locally to support kin caregiver homes! We are dedicated at the State level to support your efforts. We want to bring attention to new tools and opportunities to support your families locally, and encourage you to:

- **Promote the new www.KinshipOhio.org website** with local families and community partners. This was developed specifically for kinship caregivers, with simple discussion about kinship and how to navigate existing supports and resources (compliments of Ohio's Enhanced Kinship Navigator Grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services).
- **Send specific local/county info on the clickable state map, www.kinshipohio.org/countyResources.htm.** Local address, phone, contact, website? Send to PCSAO at Jeed@pcsao.org, she will load your local info.
- Work together to identify, advocate for and secure local, state, federal and foundation funding to support services for kinship caregivers, including, but not limited to, the AAAs local allocation of Older Americans Act National Family Caregivers Support Program (NFCSP) funds. If available, AAAs may use up to 10% of their NFCSP allocation to provide support services to grandparents and older individuals who are relative caregivers of a child who is not more than 18 years of age.
- **Consider a partnership (formal or informal) between the county Family and Children First Council and the Area Agency of Aging.**
- Look to your peers for best practices locally; an excellent example is in Lucas County, where the Area Office on Aging, Job & Family Services and Children Services have come together to develop a comprehensive kinship care program that in 2009, served 3,011 adults and 3,905 children.

We thank you for your good work, we know local partnerships are the key to serving Ohio's citizens throughout their life continuum.

For more information, please contact:

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