

## 6 Great Things About Kinship/Grandfamilies

When children cannot remain in their parents' care, research shows they do best with grandparents or other kin caring for them. Here are 6 reasons we celebrate grandparents – and other kin caregivers – all year long.



**1**

### Kinship/grandfamilies promote a sense of belonging.

Children placed outside their parents' homes are often leaving everything behind—school, friends, neighborhood, even family pets. Joining the family of someone they already have a relationship or connection with, such as a grandparent, other relative, or family friend, can help ease the trauma of this separation.

**“My grandmother raised me . . . So it was like normal to take care of family. My grandma took care of everybody on the block. My grandmother took care of people in the church. So taking care of people came natural.”**

*Santana, Wisconsin, describing her journey to adopting her three nieces*

**“There is real love there.”**

*Janay, California, speaking about being raised in her grandmother's home*

**2**

### Kinship/grandfamilies preserve cultural connections.

Children living in kinship homes are more likely to stay connected to their extended family and maintain their cultures and customs than children in non-kin foster care. Overall, research shows that family connections are critical to healthy child development and a sense of belonging.

**“If not for being raised by my grandparents, I would not have a cultural identity, I wouldn't know my family lineage and my son would not bear the name TchaLQad—a name that is 17 generations old.”**

*Ray, Skokomish Reservation near Shelton, Washington*

**3**

**Kinship/grandfamilies maintain relationships with siblings.**

Kinship care increases the likelihood of living with or staying connected to siblings. One study showed that more than half of children from large sibling groups (three or more siblings) were placed together in kinship homes as compared with fewer than 2% in traditional foster homes.

**4**

**Kinship/grandfamilies improve behavioral and mental health outcomes.**

One study of more than 1,300 children entering out-of-home care following a maltreatment report showed that children placed into kinship families had fewer behavioral needs three years after placement than children who were placed into non-kin foster care.

**5**

**Kinship/grandfamilies strengthen academic performance.**

Children in kinship families score higher on standardized tests, especially for math, than children in non-relative foster care. One study found that the academic performance of children in kinship foster care is similar to children who are living with their parents.

**“She’s the one who taught me about hard work. She’s the one who put off buying a new car or a new dress for herself so that I could have a better life. She poured everything she had into me.”**

*President Barack Obama, describing the grandmother who helped raise him*

**6**

**Kinship/grandfamilies help reduce harm associated with childhood trauma.**

Children often enter kinship care as the result of traumatic experiences in their parents’ homes, such as domestic violence, drug or alcohol use, and/or abuse and neglect. The negative effects of these adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can be reduced by “protective factors” such as the safe, stable, and nurturing relationships provided by kin caregivers.

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The Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network: A National Technical Assistance Center (Network) helps government agencies and nonprofits in states, tribes, and territories work across jurisdictional and systemic boundaries to improve supports and services for families in which grandparents, other relatives, or close family friends are raising children whose parents are unable to do so. For more information, please visit [www.GKSNetwork.org](http://www.GKSNetwork.org).

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