

Idaho KinCare Project



Idaho KinCare Project Statewide Newsletter

April 2015

KinCare in the United States

by Courtney Keith

Nationally, nearly 3 million children live with no parent in the home. This is approximately 3.9% of the population of children under the age of 18 years. The majority of these children live with a relative, primarily a grandparent. The minority, less than 300,000, live in formal foster care (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, 2012). This is an 18 percent increase over the past decade (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2012).

Relative caregivers tend to be older than other caregivers, and they frequently experience socio-economic disadvantages. Despite their potential challenges in providing care for children, relative caregivers are often not eligible for the supports received by non-relative caregivers, including foster care stipends, access to low-cost child care, access to medical services, ease in enrolling children in school, legal guardianship, and access to vouchers for clothing, bedding and personal

items. This can make it difficult for kinship caregivers to provide long-term care for children (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, 2012). The majority of kinship caregivers are not receiving help for the children who they are providing care for, and many of them are unaware that such help even exists. Nationally, only 12 percent of kinship families receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) support, even though nearly 100 percent of the children qualify; less than 42 percent of low-income kinship care households receive food assistance; fewer than half of the eligible children being raised by KinCare providers receive medical assistance; only 17 percent of kinship care relatives are receiving assistance with day care; and less than 20 percent of low-income KinCare households are on housing assistance (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2012).



The number of children in the US who live with grandparents grew steadily over a decade before rising sharply from 2007 to 2008.



Despite the challenges, with help, KinCare families have proven they can ensure that children are kept safe and healthy and are able to achieve their full potential.

Common challenges for kinship care providers include stress associated with caring for children with a history of trauma, financial pressures, increased health problems, social challenges due to generalization differences, and navigating government and community supports. Often kinship care providers face legal barriers, which prevent them from accessing educational and medical support for the children in their care. Statistics show the current cost of raising one child is approximately \$990 per month; the national cost of foster care benefits for one child equals \$511 per month; and the national monthly support rate for the TANF-relative care grant equates to \$249 per month. The financial burdens and lack of resources kin face can be even more severe when they are caring for multiple children and/or large sibling groups (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2012).

Despite the challenges, with help, KinCare families have proven they can ensure that children are kept safe and healthy and are able to achieve their full potential. Smart investments in these caring families also save money. Their loving support enhances children's development, preventing the need for more intrusive and expensive government interventions down the line. The notion that children do better in families is a fundamental value that cuts across all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic boundaries. Kinship care helps children maintain familial and community bonds and provides them with a sense of stability, identity, and belonging, especially during times of crisis. Kinship care also helps to minimize the trauma and loss that accompany parental separation. Kin can provide safe, stable, and nurturing care temporarily when children are removed from their homes, and they can provide care permanently when parents are unable to resume full time care of their children. A growing body of research confirms that, in

most circumstance, kinship care is the best option when children cannot live with their own parents. Children in kinship care experience fewer school disruptions, are less likely to experience behavioral and mental health problems, and are better able to adjust to their environments (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2012).



KinCare in Idaho

In Idaho, there are 29,287 children under age 18 living in homes where the head of household are grandparents or other non-parent relatives. This equates to 6.8% of Idaho's children and youth. This is nearly 3 percent higher than the national average. Of these, 22,962 live with grandparents who are the householders and 6,325 live with other non-parent relatives. 10,161 children live in homes with grandparent householders where grandparents are responsible for them. Of these children, 4,592 have no parents present

in the home (AARP, The Brookdale Foundation, Casey Family Programs, Child Welfare League of American, Children's Defense Fund, and Generations United, 2010).

10,679 grandparents are the householders and are responsible for their grandchildren living with them. Of these:

- 80% of the grandparents are white; 1% are Asian; 5% are American Indian and Alaska Native; and 15% are Hispanic/Latino
- 44% have no parents of the children present in the home
- 66% are under age 60
- 14% live below 100% of poverty (AARP, The Brookdale Foundation, Casey Family Programs, Child Welfare League of American, Children's Defense Fund, and Generations United, 2010)

In 1980, the Adoption and Child Welfare Act was passed, which formalized the federal foster care law. At this time it was very rare for a relative to act as foster parent to a child. The national rate of foster care in 1996 equaled \$6,000 annually per child. Due to this high cost, policymakers pushed the idea of kinship care as an alternative (Boots, 1999). In addition, the need for kinship care has been on the rise since the mid-1990s. The reasons for kinship care are as varied and diverse as families are, but some of the reasons that children may live with relatives include:

- Deployment of parents in the military
- Parental mental/physical illness
- Substance abuse
- Death of a parent
- Poverty
- Incarceration
- Family violence putting the children at risk of abuse, neglect, or decreasing their well-being

(Michigan State University, School of Social Work, 2013)

In Idaho, we have also seen an increase in relative placement through formal foster care; however, without initiatives like the Idaho KinCare Project, this number could be much higher. Assuming that each child living with a grandparent (as of the 2011 Census estimate) was in formal foster care for the entire year at an average rate of \$329 each month, it would cost the state of Idaho an additional \$89 million each year to support these children at an average annual rate of \$3,948 per/child, in addition to the \$3 million spent solely on room and board (Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, 2013).



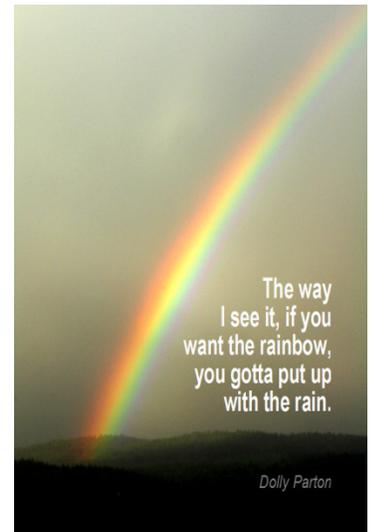
FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the 2-1-1 Idaho CareLine by dialing 2-1-1 or 1-800-926-2588 or visit our website at:

www.211.idaho.gov

What is happening around the State?

- ◆ **Coeur d'Alene** – Relatives As Parents meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of each month from 12:00 to 2:00 pm at the Jewett House (1501 E Lakeshore Drive, Coeur d'Alene).
- ◆ **Ada County** – Grandparents as Parents meetings are held on the 1st Monday of each month starting @ 6:30 pm at The Boise First Nazarene Community Center (3852 N Eagle Rd, Meridian).
- ◆ **Twin Falls** – Shawna Wasko (Area Agency on Aging) facilitates a KinCare group each month. The group meets at the CSI Campus from 10:30 to 11:30 am on the 2nd Monday of each month to discuss kinship issues.
- ◆ **Idaho Falls** – Brian Payton (Eastern Idaho Community Action Partnership) facilitates a meeting for KinCare providers each month. The group meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at the Community Action Partnership Office. Also, there is an Advisory Board which meets each quarter.





Being Good Enough....

By Elaine K. Williams

There seems to be an epidemic of people self-describing themselves as *not being good enough!* Almost everywhere I have traveled in the past year, I have had this conversation with people. So, I have really been thinking about this a lot and I have begun to wonder, who are we not good enough for? Our partner, our parents, friends, colleagues, or are we simply not good enough for ourselves?

Atelphobia;
the fear of not being good enough.

Holding this belief puts a person in a victim position, a kind of *poor me* frame of mind, that leaves one feeling powerless. It also chips away at how we feel about ourselves and for the most part subtracts from our unique beauty.

When we don't feel good enough and are aware of that, we can at least make a decision to shift to a place of self-love; but, when we are unaware of how this internal self-view influences our very being, that is a very slippery slope. Because unconsciously on a daily basis we are subtracting from our potential. I encourage

you to do some self-reflection and discover your true relationship to yourself.

Leave out the old messages, leave out the expectations of others, let go of your old story and any negative messages from your ego. Instead drop into your heart and view yourself with love and compassion. Not for who you want to be, or who you were, but who you truly are. The only affirmation you need to be your true self is your own. Approval from others is nice, but self-approval is better.

When I embrace my true self, I embrace my strengths and vulnerabilities which makes me whole. Being vulnerable is not a weakness, it is actually a strength because I love the part of myself that needs the most loving. I don't hide it, I don't pretend it does not exist, I don't fix it, I simply embrace it.



The cost of picking out and loving only the rose bloom, means we ignore or judge the stem of thorns. Yet, the stem of thorns is the vessel for nutrients to nourish the blooms' growth. Every time I prick my finger on a thorn I am actually grateful, because it reminds me it is a part of the beauty of the rose; and so it is within each of us.

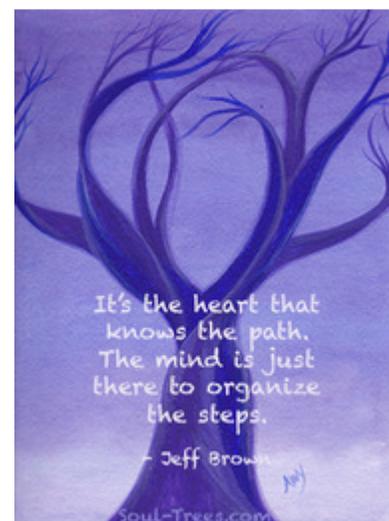
I leave you with this question:

What if, we believe, in our own unique ways, we are our own kind of beautiful? and that is good enough for me!

With Gratitude,

Elaine

www.elainekwilliams.com



Soul-Trees.com

We especially want to invite KinCare Families!



KIDS Fun Fest

**Saturday, May 2nd
9am-5pm
Expo Idaho, Boise**

211 and Navigation from the Department of Health and Welfare present: *My Family/My Story ART CONTEST! GAMES! FUN! KinCare Families, be sure to stop by our booth!*

IBL Events, Inc. is excited to host Idaho's Kids Fun Fest, the place to find the latest information, products and services for babies, kids, teens and parents, May 2, 2015, 9am-5pm at Expo Idaho in Boise.

The Kids Fun Fest provides a packed full day of entertainment and interactive fun zones for all ages!

This fun-filled day provides hundreds of local families, and introduces them to possibly new services.

Kids Fun Fest can help parents make informed choices to enrich the lives of their families.

