

DHS KinConnector Update

I wanted to share some information on a new resource that recently launched. Act 89 of 2018, established a kinship navigator program for Pennsylvania to help kinship care families. Kinship care occurs when a child is raised by a relative like a grandparent, aunt or uncle, or adult sibling or a non-relative caregiver like a close family friend when their parents cannot care for them. Grandparents raising grandchildren are among the most common type of kinship care family, and kinship care arrangements help maintain family bonds and reduce trauma experienced when children cannot be cared for by their own parents.

The Bair Foundation was selected to run the kinship navigator in Pennsylvania in 2018 and is available to work with kinship care families around Pennsylvania to help them access resources and supports and connect with families in similar situations around the commonwealth. Through this, they run a KinConnector helpline that can be reached by calling 1-866-KIN-2111 (1-866-546-2111). The

KinConnector helpline is staffed by knowledgeable, compassionate social service professionals prepared to help kinship care families understand and access resources that may be able to help them. The helpline is available from 9 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. on Fridays. The KinConnector helpline can support callers needing assistance in English and Spanish.

KinConnector also recently launched a website at www.kinconnector.org, another support outlet for families across Pennsylvania. Kinship caregivers can visit the KinConnector website to find resources in their communities, learn about trainings and services available for kinship families, and find support groups and networks of other kinship care families and family care professionals. I encourage you to share this resource with kinship care families you know or people you serve so it can be a resource for those families moving forward.