



KinGAP

**FACT Sheet for Child Welfare
Professionals**

Program Guidelines:

- Benefits are available for any individual (licensed kin or foster parent) assuming legal guardianship of the youth who has demonstrated a strong attachment and commitment to the youth AND has been licensed a minimum of 6 months prior to entering into an agreement for guardianship assistance.
- Fingerprint clearances and Responsible Individuals List (RIL) checks are required, but there is currently no requirement that they be specifically for the purpose of guardianship. Therefore, fingerprint clearances and RIL checks that are completed at time of licensure will meet this requirement.
- Eligibility for KinGAP is based on the youth's foster care eligibility. A IV-E eligible youth will be IV-E eligible for KinGAP, and a State funded youth will be SFHF eligible for KinGAP.

Kinship Care and the Guardianship Assistance Program

What is KinGAP?

The Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGAP) is designed to support permanent placements for foster youth who are placed with relatives and other kinship caregivers. In North Carolina, **kin** can be related to the youth by birth, or can have a demonstrated “family-like” relationship with the youth, such as a close friend of the family or the youth’s foster parent. Kinship caregivers are the preferred resource for children and youth who must be removed from their home because this placement maintains the child/youth’s connections with their family. The Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGAP) offers financial assistance and Medicaid for youth who are placed with licensed kinship caregivers or foster parents who are committed to being a permanent home for the youth.

Criteria for KinGAP

- ✓ The court has determined that Reunification and Adoption are not appropriate permanency options for the youth.
- ✓ The youth must be placed in the licensed home for a minimum of 6 months prior to guardianship being awarded.
- ✓ The youth is the placement responsibility of a NC county department of social services at the time of entry into the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program.
- ✓ The youth is at least 14 years of age but not older than age 18, or is a sibling of the qualified youth who is also placed in the guardianship arrangement.
- ✓ The youth demonstrates a strong attachment to the prospective guardian and has been consulted regarding the guardianship arrangement.
- ✓ The prospective legal guardian shall have entered into a guardianship assistance agreement with the county department of social services who holds custody of the youth prior to the order granting legal guardianship.

Timeline for KinGAP

- A permanent plan of guardianship is established by the Court with adoption and reunification being ruled out as appropriate plans.
- The Guardianship Assistance Checklist and Guardianship Assistance Agreement are completed with the prospective guardian.
- The Court grants legal guardianship to the identified individual.
- Monthly cash assistance at the standard monthly board rate begin the month following establishment of legal guardianship, and will continue until the youth’s 18th birthday.
- For youth who enter into guardianship assistance at age 16 or 17, benefits continue to they turn 21, as long as they meet one of the requirements for Foster Care 18 to 21.