



Throughout Ohio, and especially in Lorain County, there are thousands of children being cared for by grandparents, relatives, and kin often temporarily and sometimes permanently. With September designated as Kinship Appreciation Month we encourage all residents to acknowledge and help support the many families that have stepped up to care for their family's children when their parents could not.

*We especially want to thank you personally for being the exact right person your children needed when they needed you. Whether the decision to care for your kin was easy or difficult, we are happy you said yes.*

For children in Lorain County, the use of foster care has declined 13% in the past 5 years while the use of Kinship Care has grown by 15%. More relatives than ever are readjusting their lives and homes to accommodate children who need a safe and stable family.

When we look beyond the Kinship statistics that are a part of Lorain County Children Services and include all the other Kinship arrangements that have been made privately through the courts, there are thousands of children in our community being cared for by a relative or close friend of the family.

According to KinshipOhio, kinship families are more likely to have a higher level of knowledge and interaction with the birth parents. Research has indicated that kinship caregivers can have good outcomes including more regular school attendance, better grades and fewer community problems than others in unrelated foster care.

Kinship families are unique because the caregivers were not necessarily planning to raise the children in their care, as foster families are, but have agreed to do so often on short notice. There are costs associated with caregiving including the cost of child care, clothing, groceries, school fees/activities, etc. The potential financial and emotional strain of quickly becoming a caregiver to children can be reduced by support programs developed by the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services as well as locally through both Lorain County Children Services and the Kinship Navigator program, headquartered in the Lorain County Office on Aging.

If children cannot stay safely at home, we search diligently for relatives and kin to care for the children. Kinship placements are less traumatic for the children, allow them to more readily stay together as sibling groups, and maintain a connection to the whole family. Our commitment is to continue to explore ways to provide support to our kinship families to increase their well-being and the well-being of the children in their family.

Kinship families, along with our foster families, are remarkable people who really love and care for the children in their homes.

- The entire staff at Lorain County Children Services