

# Ohio Grandparent/Kinship Coalition — Where Your Voice is Heard!

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## SUPPORTING CHILDREN BEING RAISED BY RELATIVES AND OTHER KIN CAREGIVERS

**HB 197, Representative Marian Harris, Sponsor was presented to the House of Judiciary on Jan. 27, 2010**

■ **Expands use of the Power Of Attorney (POA) form from only grandparents to a kin caregiver of the parent's choice** in consensual arrangements, when the custodial parent(s) are temporarily unable to care for their children. All other current power of attorney law remains the same; forms con-

tinue to provide legal documentation for educational enrollment, information and consent for activities, plus authorizes caregiver to access medical, dental and psychological services for the child (3109.52, 3109.53)

■ **Expands use of the Caretaker Authorization Affidavit (CAA) from only grandparents to "qualified relatives"** (related by blood or marriage), when the location of the birth parent is

unknown. All other current CAA law remains the same and forms continue to provide legal documentation for educational and medical services. (3109.65, 3109.66)

■ **Requires ODJFS to conduct a cost impact feasibility study of implementing a Title IV-E subsidized relative guardianship program;** involves looking at relative care placement trends across the continuum of options (*Temp Law Sec 5; required federal Fostering Connections Act of 2008*)

**Thanks to the Caregivers, Kinship Navigators, and Supporters that testified on behalf of HB 197**

Patrick Donavan, Kinship Navigator, Muskingham County  
Dionne Simmons, Program Director Kinship Navigator Program, Montgomery County  
Dawn Yeakley, Kinship Specialist, Clinton CDJFS  
Crystal Ward Allen, Executive Director, Public Children Services Association of Ohio  
Louanne did not testify, but brought two Caregivers: Brenda Owens, Barbara Colvin  
Written testimony submitted by Barbara Turpin, Children's Defense Fund-Ohio

## CAREGIVER'S CORNER

### Students with Autism eligible for a \$20,000 Scholarship starting at age 3

Families affected by autism know how important early intervention is. But they may not know that Ohio has an Autism Scholarship that allows students to access private early intervention services – up to \$20,000 per year. The Autism Scholarship started about five years ago and serves more than 1,300 kids across Ohio. Students are eligible starting at age 3 all the way through high school.

Families can mix and match services such as therapy and school to help their student get off to a good start in their education. Any family is eligible, regardless of income. All you need to get started is an Individual Education Program (IEP) from your public school.

### EdChoice Scholarship available for Students to attend Private School

Many families have thought about sending their kids to private school but were scared off by the cost of tuition.

Did you know there is a state scholarship program that pays for private school tuition? More than 10,000 kids in Dayton, Toledo, Cleveland, Columbus, Portsmouth, Canton, and many other cities and towns have switched to private school already, and you might be also eligible.

The scholarship – called EdChoice – is for any student who attends (or is assigned to) one of the state's lowest-

rated school. This list of public schools is on [www.schoio.org](http://www.schoio.org) and you can call also 1-800-673-5876 to find out if you are eligible. Around 90,000 students – including kids getting ready to start kindergarten – around Ohio are eligible.

If you are eligible and want to apply, the first step is to contact private schools in your area to apply. Then you will go through the regular application process. The only difference from any other student is that the school will charge the tuition to the state rather than to you!

Important: The early bird gets the worm with this scholarship because the scholarship deadline is in April for the 2010-11 school year. It is important to apply in February or March before the schools fill up or the deadline passes. There are no extensions. Many schools charge application fees and the scholarship doesn't cover those fees. So, just make sure you ask about that up front.

This is a wonderful opportunity to access a private school that may not have been affordable before. Rose Mooney, a grandmother whose two kids use the scholarship to attend private school in Lorain, said "The scholarship means the world to me. I am very grateful. It's like winning the lottery!"

Interested? Check out School Choice Ohio's website ([www.schoio.org](http://www.schoio.org)) or call the EdChoice hotline at 1-800-673-5876. And, please, spread the word!



WWW.OHGRANDPARENTKINSHIP.ORG

## PCSAO LAUNCHES KINSHIPOHIO.ORG WEBSITE

Columbus, OH - As part of a Kinship Navigator Grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services, received by seven Ohio counties, in collaboration with Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO), the KinshipOhio website [www.KinshipOhio.org](http://www.KinshipOhio.org) was launched today.

The KinshipOhio website provides a wealth of information for and about kinship caregiver families. The site includes pages on Statewide Supports, County Profiles, Advocacy, News, and Resources. Its primary goal is to ensure all kin caregivers are directed toward, and able to access available and needed supports. The website not only offers a description of who kinship families are, but also takes the time to explain key differences between Kinship families and other families including biological families, foster families, and adoptive families.

“Research shows that children and youth fortunate enough to be raised by a safe familiar kinship caregiver have better outcomes than those children in unrelated foster care” says Crystal Ward Allen, Executive Director of PCSAO.

“More regular school attendance, better grades and fewer behavior problems. And they are less likely to move from home to home.”

An important component of the new website is the Statewide Supports section. This section offers an understandable explanation of the numerous resources available to kinship caregivers. From seeking financial assistance, to accessing legal documentation for school enrollment and routine / emergency medical care, to obtaining SNAP (Foodstamps), caregivers are given understandable direction on how to obtain the needed resources to provide for their “extended families”. Of course, since most all ser-

vices are local, the site also includes a County Profiles clickable map of Ohio. Initially loaded with pertinent local information for the seven Kinship Navigator grant counties, who are actively developing and expanding services for kinship families, PCSAO invites and hopes to include local information for all other Ohio counties.

The 2000 US Census counted Grandparents Raising Grandchildren for the first time ever. At that time, 2.4 million grandparents were the primary caregivers for children in our country; in Ohio, the number was 86,000 grandparent caregivers. Remember, this only counts grandparents, not other kin caregivers, and many of these families involve sibling

groups of children. These children are being cared for by familiar faces, and have avoided the foster care system. We are anxious to see new numbers from the 2010 Census, as it is believed the numbers have increased. “While the child protection system works to safely strengthen families that are struggling to positively care for their own child, kinship care offers an important option when the child cannot safely remain in their own home,” says Crystal Allen. “This is one of a variety of strategies Ohio has steadily embraced, to safely reduce the number of children in out of home care, which is a traumatic and costly action.”

ABOUT US: PCSAO is a membership driven association serving Ohio's 88 County Public Children Services Agencies through the support of program excellence and sound public policy for safe children, stable families and supportive communities. We do this through member dialogue, active sharing of information, building partnerships, research, training and technical assistance, and advocacy at the state and federal level.

### OHIO GRANDPARENT KINSHIP COALITION T-SHIRTS

The bright green T-Shirts will raise awareness and help support the Coalition. These shirts will be great to wear all year long, especially at Grandparent events. \$10.00/ each sizes M-XL \$12.00/ each sizes 2X-3X If you are interested in buying a T-shirt, please call Adel at 937-775-8247, or visit [www.ohgrandparents.org](http://www.ohgrandparents.org)



### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

#### UPCOMING OGKC MEETINGS

All meeting at the Overbrook Presbyterian Church 4131 N. High Street Columbus, Ohio 43214 10:00 a.m. -12:30 p.m.	<p>Wed, May 26, 2010</p> <p>Wed, July 28, 2010</p> <p>Wed, Sept 22, 2010</p> <p>Wed, Nov 17, 2010</p> <p>Coffee and Pastries Provided</p>
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#### JOIN US at the OGKC MEETINGS

If you are kinship caregiver in Ohio consider attending an OGKC meeting. The meetings are structured to provide an open forum to hear your concerns as a kinship caregiver. The meetings provide valuable statewide resources that can be utilized by kinship caregivers and Kinship Navigators.

To receive future copies of the OGKC Newsletter, visit the website at [www.ohgrandparentkinship.org](http://www.ohgrandparentkinship.org)