

## **Options for Relatives – Information Provided by DFCS**

The Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) shall identify a safe and appropriate placement resource for children requiring out-of-home placement. Research has determined that children thrive best in their families. For many years it has been the practice of relatives to parent related children when the children's parents cannot. If placement with a non-custodial parent is not an option – then the agency seeks to place children with an identified relative or kinship caregiver.

DFCS is committed to advocating and implementing a stronger partnership with extended family to better serve the needs of children who are placed in foster care. Supportive services are provided to the family with the intent of establishing and achieving a permanency plan for the child.

### **How does the agency determine relative kinship?**

Relative Kinship, as defined by blood, marriage or adoption including the spouse of any of those persons even if the marriage was terminated by death or divorce.

### **Types of Approvals:**

**Relative Placement** refers to placement in the home of a relative who does not receive a foster care per diem for the care of the child. The relative placement may be a non-paid placement or the relative may receive TANF or an Enhanced Relative Rate (ERR) Subsidy.

### **What must happen prior to a relative being approved for placement:**

- Completion of a comprehensive home assessment, including all required background checks – unless an emergency placement is made.
- If an emergency placement is made, the relative/kinship caregiver assessment must be completed and submitted for approval within 30 days of the emergency placement.

### **What does DFCS also consider prior to proceeding with placement with a relative/kinship caregiver:**

#### ***To facilitate the approval of placement with a relative/kinship caregiver DFCS considers:***

- The age, desires, and needs of the child Any special needs the child may have and the relative's ability to meet those needs.
- The impact the abuse/neglect may have had on the child.
- The extent to which the relative was or should have been aware of the child's circumstances and what was done to intervene.
- The extent of the relationship between the child and relative.
- The level of cooperation between the relative(s) and parents towards the goal of reunification.
- The relative is notified of the requirements for becoming a foster parent.
- The relative has an understanding of the financial and non-financial supports available to assist in caring for the child.
- The court is notified of the plan to place the child with a relative.

### **Relative Partnership Parents (RPPs)**

**Relative Partnership Parents** are foster parents related by blood, marriage, or adoption to children placed in their home. They provide temporary homes for their relative's children who are in foster care.

They may also serve non-relative children. RPPs follow the same approval process as regular PPs and have all the benefits and responsibilities associated with being a PP, including full foster care per diem reimbursement. RPPs have the same expectations as PPs.

**Relative Adoptive Parents** are “forever families” who make a lifelong commitment to a child. They serve children whose birth parents’ parental rights have been voluntarily surrendered or terminated by a court, thus making the children legally free for adoption.

**Relative Resource Parents** (RPs) are a hybrid of a foster parent and an adoptive parent. They act as both a PP (temporary foster care placement) and are willing to become the adoptive parent (permanent family) for the child. Children placed with RPs have a concurrent permanency plan, meaning that two permanency goals are being pursued simultaneously. At least one of the permanency goals is adoption with the RP named as the permanency resource. RPs must be able to concurrently fulfill the roles of being a PP and an adoptive parent.

Caregivers serving children through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) are known as **ICPC-Partnership Parents, ICPC- Adoptive Parents, ICPC-Relative Partnership Parents and ICPC-Relative Adoptive Parents.**

### **Financial Support**

Relatives caring for children in foster care may be eligible for various types of financial/non-financial supports. The foster care case manager of the child will determine, in conjunction with the relative caregiver, which form of support is the most appropriate to ensure the child’s overall needs are met. The financial support for relatives are as follows:

Supports available for children in foster care (if program eligibility requirements are met):

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Foster Care per diem – for relatives who decide to become a foster parent.
- Enhanced Relative Rate (ERR) – for relatives who decide not to become a foster parent
- Prevention of Unnecessary Placement (PUP), Parent Aide or Homestead services e. Wrap-Around Services
- Initial and/or Annual Clothing Allowance
- Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS)
- Supplemental Supervision
- Mental and/or Behavioral Health services
- Medicaid
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Retirement, Survivors, Disability Insurance (RSDI).
- Adoption Assistance – eligibility determined by the agency.

**Resource:** <https://fostergeorgia.com>