

SECOND ANNUAL

Ohio Family Engagement

— LEADERSHIP SUMMIT —



*CHARTING NEW
TERRITORIES*

in Family Engagement



**THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY**

CENTER ON EDUCATION AND
TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT



Ohio Statewide
**Family
Engagement
Center**
— at The Ohio State University —



THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

Grandfamilies in Schools: Kinship- Informed Care

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About me



KINSHIP CAREGIVERS CONNECT SUPPORT GROUP

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Kinship Caregivers Connect Virtual Support Group

Supported by The Ohio Grandparent Kinship Coalition

September Schedule



Sept 2: Group Check-In (caregivers only)



Sept 9: Adolescent Mental Health



Sept 16: Group Check-In (caregivers only)



Sept 23: Parenting Q&A



Sept 30: Group Check-In (caregivers only)



Kinship Caregivers
Connect

What comes to mind with the word “grandparent”?

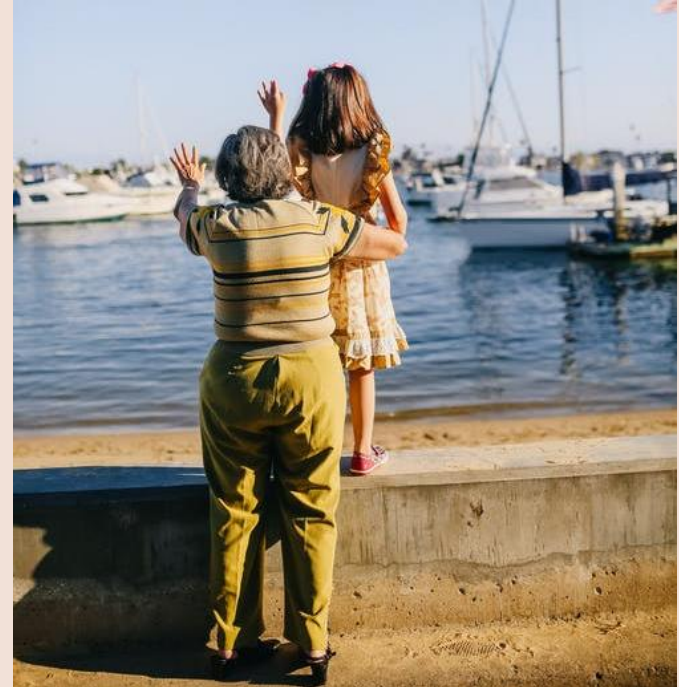






"Kinship Caregiver"

- Relatives (who are not biological parents) that are the primary caregivers of a child
 - Grandparents*
 - Great grandparents
 - Aunts/ uncles
 - Cousins
 - Family friend
- Formal vs. informal care





Most common reasons for becoming a kinship caregiver

- Biological parents are not fit to care for children due to...
 - Mental illness
 - Substance abuse disorder
 - Incarceration
 - Death
 - Financial hardship

**Kinship caregiving may be much more common
than you think...**



7,416,698

children nationwide live in homes where householders are grandparents or other relatives (CPS ASEC, 2017)

65%

Of kinship caregivers are grandparents (Wallace et al., 2018)

1:20

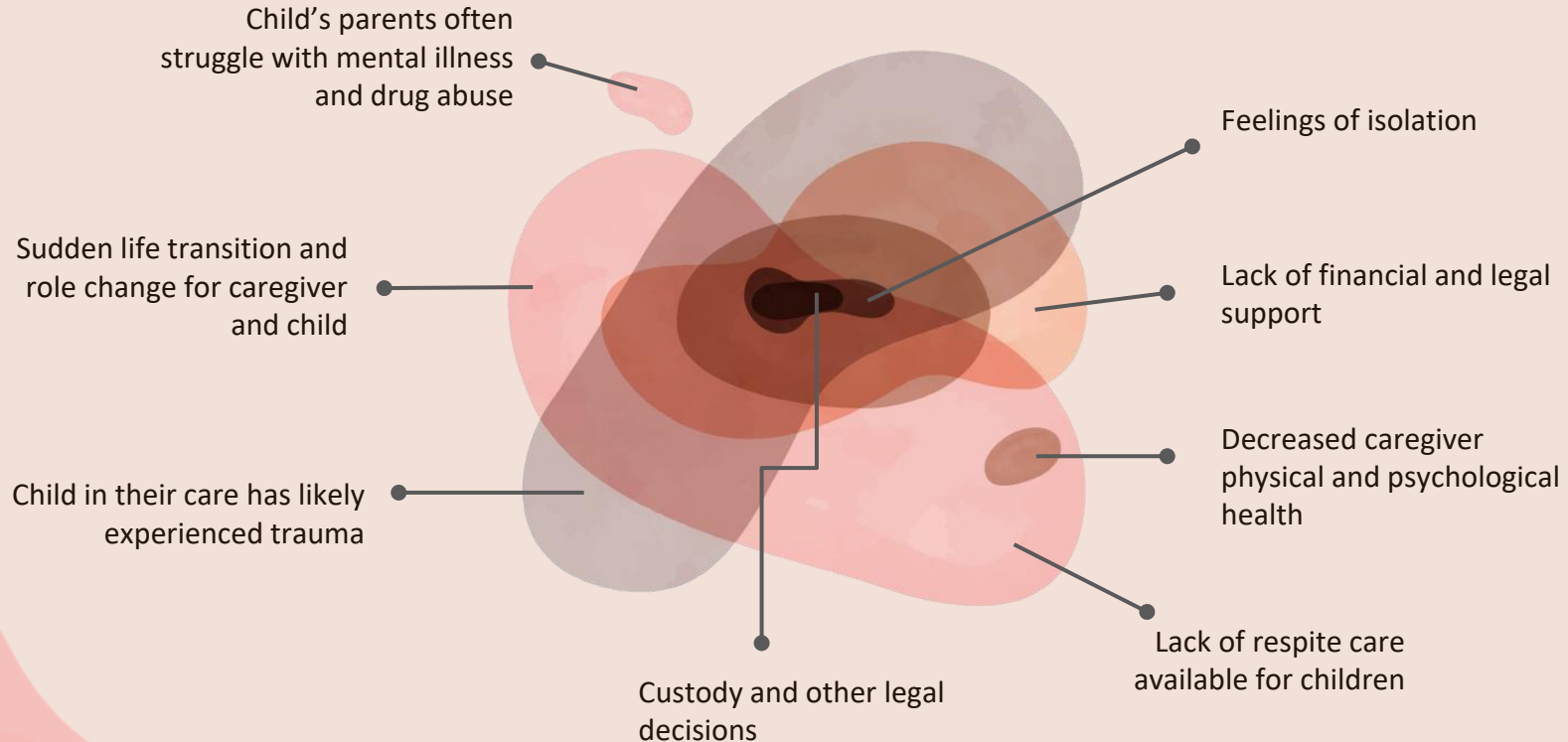
Children being raised by relatives within the foster children compared to children raised by relatives outside the foster system ("The State of Grandfamilies in America", 2017)

One Caregiver's Experience





The layers that come with kinship families



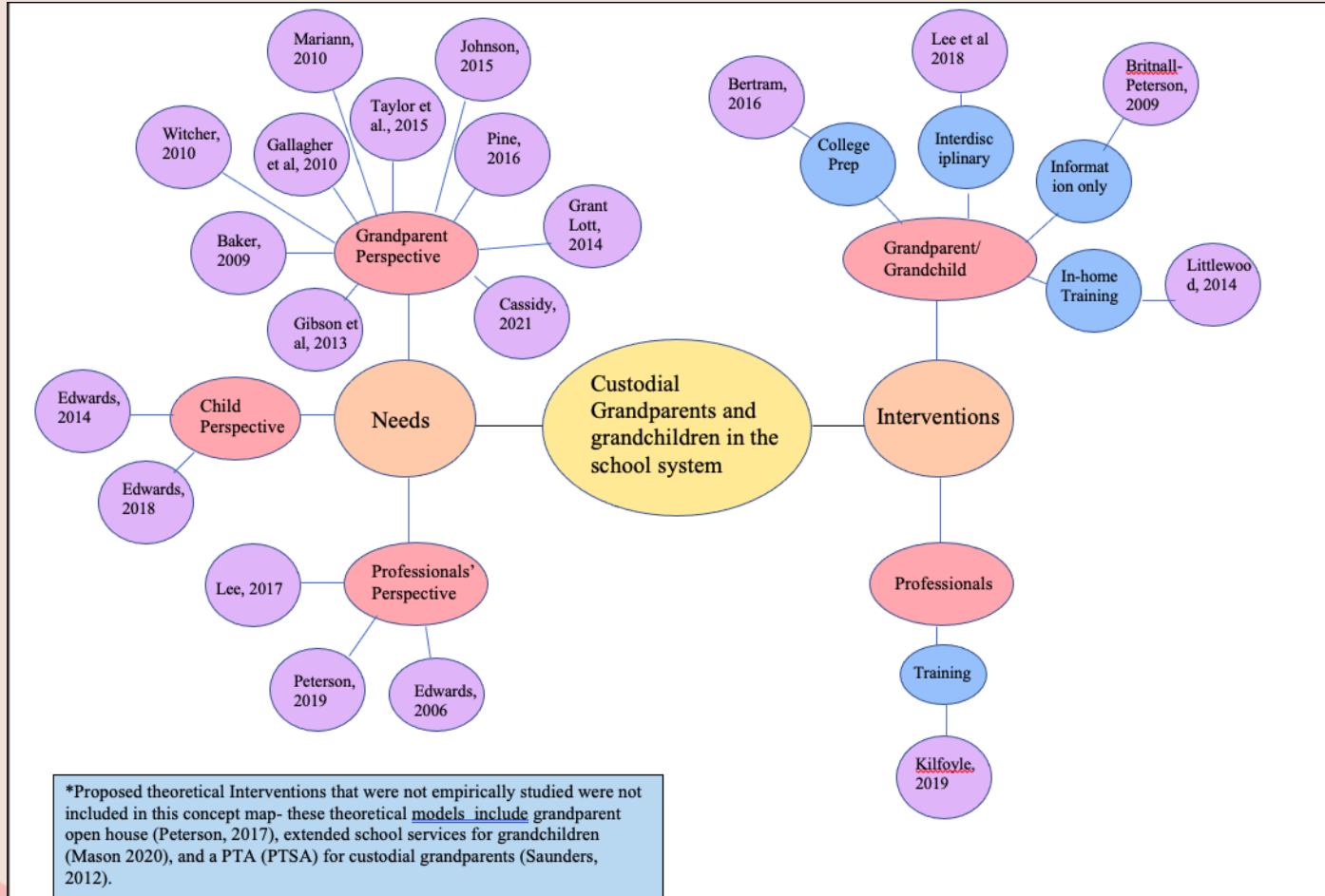


Caregivers' Lived Experience in the School System

- Need for understanding towards child's behavior
- Feelings of shame
- Not being seen as "equal" to a parent
- Need for inclusive language around caregiver/parent
- Need for support in navigating school system

What the research says...

Findings from a rapid scoping review



Overarching needs identified

Caregivers

- Concerns over children **exhibiting learning problems, behavioral problems, and low-self-esteem** (Baker, 2009)
- Challenges with **raising a child with a disability**; need for information and guidance (Gallagher et al., 2010)
- Factors influencing **grandparent engagement in school**: attitude and support of school personnel, grandparent health, and transportation (Watson, 2010)

Professionals

- Lack of **adequate knowledge** about grandfamilies and **strategies** for engaging grandparents (Lee, 2017; Peterson, 2019)
- Teacher's concerns: **students' social, emotional, and academic needs** and grandparents' wellbeing, involvement, and parenting style (Peterson, 2019; Edwards, 2006)
- Grandchildren report that they believe teachers **view their academic performance negatively** when compared to children living with birth parents (Edwards, 2018)

Pre-school children in kinship care: Are we doing enough as EPs?

Lisa Cunningham & Fraser Lauchlan

Table 5: Respondents' perceptions of the main issues for children.

MAIN ISSUES (frequency of references in brackets)	
ACCORDING TO SWs AND EPs (N=19)	ACCORDING TO KINSHIP CARERS (N=20)
Availability of support (9) (47% of respondents)	They need love, patience, care and understanding about their issues (8) (40%)
Identity issues/confusion regarding sense of belonging/having divided loyalties to different carers (9) (47%)	Emotional and behavioural issues (7) (35%)
Sense of loss/separation/bereavement (7) (37%)	Lack of support (4) (20%)
Inconsistencies in care, expectations and boundaries (5) (26%)	They are forgotten about (4) (20%)
Uncertainty about the future (4) (21%)	Financial problems (3) (15%)
Emotional and behavioural issues (4) (21%)	Children are damaged (2) (10%)
Contact with parents (3) (16%)	Need for stability and security (2) (10%)
Concern for their parents/distress caused by parental contact (3) (16%)	Poor sleeping patterns (1) (5%)
Attachment/abandonment issues (3) (16%)	Distress caused by continuing parental drug issues (1) (5%)
Relationship issues (1) (5%)	Loss/bereavement issues (1) (5%)
Feeling different (1) (5%)	Relationship issues (1) (5%)

Table 6: Respondents' perceptions of the main issues for kinship carers.

MAIN ISSUES (frequency of references in brackets)	
ACCORDING TO SWs AND EPs (N=19)	ACCORDING TO KINSHIP CARERS (N=20)
Financial concerns (13) (68% of respondents)	Lack of financial support (11) (55%)
Need for practical and emotional support and advice, including the need for respite (12) (63%)	Lack of other types of support, e.g. emotional, respite care, 'especially for pre-school children' (8) (40%)
Problems surrounding new parental role/role conflict (5) (26%)	Being mentally stable for the children (2) (10%)
Family dynamics/split loyalties to child and grandchild (4) (21%)	Lack of information on kinship care (2) (10%)
Stresses of child care when older (3) (16%)	To provide stability (1) (5%)
Working with service providers (2) (11%)	Resentment ('having to put your own life on hold') (1) (5%)
Anxiety over practical issues (e.g. school hours, transport, their own employment hours) (2) (11%)	Concerns about age ('hoping that you will still be there for them when they grow up') (1) (5%)
Managing contact with the parents (1) (5%)	Concerns about working with service providers and not being listened to (1) (5%)
Uncertainty about planning for the future (1) (5%)	
Anxiety over parent's situation (their relative) (1) (5%)	
Information sharing (1) (5%)	
Resentment about the role they have been asked to fulfil, but feel there was no alternative (1) (5%)	



Takeaways for Supporting Kinship Caregivers

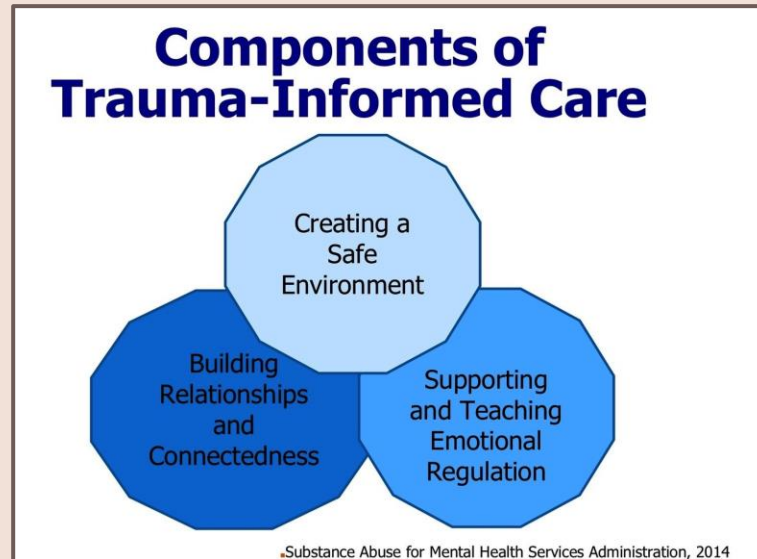
- Reach out to kinship caregivers, form a foundation of trust
- Provide validation to caregivers whenever you can
- Different needs, but equal as parents
- Become familiar with resources that could benefit caregivers
- Help them to feel as part of the classroom
- ONE person can make ALL the difference





Takeaways for Supporting Children in Kinship Care

- Implement trauma-informed care and Handle with care principles when interacting with children in kinship care*





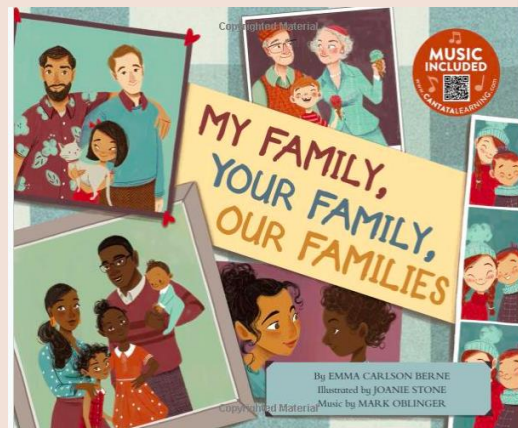
Takeaways for Supporting Children in Kinship Care

- Assess for need to refer to additional educational, mental health supports, OT services, basic needs services etc.
- Children should own their story; avoid asking them to re-explain their situation
- Create an accepting and inclusive environment



Creating an Accepting Environment

- Use family inclusive language in a classroom
 - “your adult”
 - “whoever is caring for you”
 - “family members”
 - “mom and dad or grandma and grandpa”
- Introduce the idea of family diversity



Recommendations for the school system

From “School Family Engagement with Grandfamilies in Mind” (Walker, Owens & Boone, 2020) - Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center

1. Design school events with grandfamilies in mind
2. Use family-inclusive language in school communication so grandparents know they are included
3. **Identify your grandfamilies by reviewing school forms and documents to ensure that they are included.**
4. **Ensure your grandfamilies are represented in committees and positions.**

Recommendations for the school system

5. Create school policies that increase grandparent caregivers' ability to participate in their grandchildren's education while caring for them, including temporary grandfamilies.
6. **Social support is key.** If you cannot create one, connect grandparent caregivers to local support groups.
7. Increase staff knowledge of grandfamilies by offering **professional development**.
8. Understand your school's grandfamilies' needs by using a brief survey.
9. **Offer workshops** on topics that often impact grandfamilies.

Additional Resources



Ohio Statewide
Family Engagement Center
at The Ohio State University

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GRANDUNDERSTANDINGS

#GrandUnderstandings

Kinship caregivers are relatives who provide care for minor children. Grandfamilies are one of the forms of kinship caregiving, where biological grand or great-grandparents provide for the care of their grandchildren.

Thank you for visiting our GrandUnderstandings Resource Hub! The Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center's GrandUnderstandings project is designed to provide resources to assist grandfamilies and the educators who support them. Click on the topics below to find grandfamily specific tools and resources.

Infographic

This GrandUnderstandings infographic is a tool designed for you to use to increase your understanding of the school, community and agency resources that are available to support you as you raise your grandchild. It is available in 6 different languages below.

#GrandUnderstandings

Our Message to Grandfamilies

Your care for your grandchildren is important for their today and for their future. We recognize that raising your grandchildren and supporting their learning and growth requires a lot of you. At the Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center, we are here to help you work together with schools, and to point you to helpful resources. Below you will find some recommendations based on research we have learned from Ohio grandfamilies and from research. The list includes resources you can turn to in order to support your grandchild's education and health, and the well-being of your entire family.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.



CONNECT EARLY WITH EDUCATORS

As soon as possible, connect to educators. Schools can help with resources to support your grandchild's transition to your home, and to help with issues they may face – things like motivation and attention, for learning, academic achievement, or friendships. In addition, they can provide YOU with emotional support, review school information with you, and connect you to other grandfamilies.

Emotional Support and Resources

- Teachers
- Administrators
- School Counselors
- Psychologists
- School Social Workers
- School Nurses

CONNECT TO OTHERS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Many grandfamilies find it helpful to have the support of others as well. Consider who you can reach out to for support.

<https://ohiofamiliesengage.osu.edu/grandunderstandings/>

Additional Resources- Support Group

Kinship Caregivers Connect Support Group

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Caregiver Resources

EXPLORE OUR VIDEO RESOURCES FOR KINSHIP CAREGIVERS
FROM OUR SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

LEGAL INFORMATION

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

SELF-CARE

[FIND OUT MORE](#)


CHILD WELL-BEING

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

NAVIGATING THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

We are all in this together



Solidarity is not an act of charity,
but mutual aid between forces
fighting for the same objective.

Samora Machel

quotesfancy

Citations

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THANK YOU FOR WATCHING!

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