



TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services

Relative and Other Designated Caregiver Placement Program Report

September 2021

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Background..... 1

Analysis of Data..... 2

 Benefits to Kinship Caregivers 2

 The Number of Disruptions in Kinship Homes 3

 The Reasons for Disruptions 3

 The Length of Time to Obtain Permanent Managing Conservatorship 3

Conclusion 3

Introduction

Pursuant to Texas Family Code 264.762 added by House Bill 4 (85th Texas Legislative Regular Session), the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) shall, not later than September 1 of each year, publish a report on the Relative and Other Designated Caregiver Program.

The report must include data on permanency outcomes for children placed with relative or other designated caregivers, including:

- The number of disruptions in a relative or other designated caregiver placement;
- The reasons for any disruptions in a relative or other designated caregiver placement; and
- The length of time before a relative or other designated caregiver who receives monetary assistance from the department under this subchapter obtains permanent managing conservatorship of a child.

Background

Kinship care is the term used to describe care provided to a child in DFPS conservatorship by relatives or fictive kin who live outside of the child's home.

The Relative and Other Designated Caregiver (RODC) Program supports continuity and stability for children in the conservatorship of DFPS, by providing financial assistance to eligible kinship caregivers. Prior to September 1, 2017, the RODC Program provided an initial, one-time cash payment, or Integration Payment, of \$1,000 for the first child and \$495 for each additional child in a sibling group, to defray the costs incurred for essential child care items at the time of placement. Eligible caregivers were also able to receive an Annual Reimbursement of \$500 per year, per child, to be paid on the anniversary date of placement.

As a result of the passage of House Bill 4 (85th Texas Regular Legislative Session), there were changes to the RODC Program. The changes included replacing the Integration Payment and Annual Reimbursement with a monthly reimbursement payment. Currently, the rate is \$11.55 per day, per eligible child, and is paid to the kinship family monthly. Monthly reimbursement payments are time-limited and may be paid for up to twelve (12) months. However, if DFPS determines there is good cause for an exception, payments may be made for up to an additional six (6) months.

Good cause exceptions listed in the Texas Administrative Code Rule §700.1007 include:

Relative and Other Designated Caregiver Placement Report (September 2021)

- the identification, release, or location of a previously absent parent of the child;
- awaiting the expiration of the timeline for an appeal of an order in a suit affecting the parent-child relationship;
- allowing additional time for the caregiver to complete the approval process for adoption of the child;
- waiting for approval of a child's placement from another state;
- a delayed determination of the child's Indian Child status, or awaiting the approval of the Indian Child's Tribe; and
- any other circumstance surrounding the child or the caregiver that DFPS deems to necessitate the extension.

An annual reimbursement of up to \$500 per year, per child for child-related expenses for up to 3 years or until the child turns 18, whichever occurs first may be provided if DFPS transfers conservatorship of the child to the kinship caregiver, and the caregiver does not receive Permanency Care Assistance.

Analysis of Data

The data in this report represents state fiscal year 2021 (FYTD 21) year to date from September 2020 through May 2021 unless otherwise noted. As of FYTD 2021, 44.5 percentⁱ of children were placed with relatives or kinⁱⁱ. 12,333ⁱⁱⁱ children were in a kinship placement as of May 2021. In FYTD 20, 42.6 percent of children were placed with relatives or kin. The most recently available national data (FY 2019) indicates that the national average for relative placement is 32 percent.^{iv}

Benefits to Kinship Caregivers

In Summer 2021 qualitative feedback about kinship caregivers' experiences with financial support was solicited from caseworkers serving families receiving payments. Caseworkers and caregivers felt strongly that financial support enabled caregivers to provide better care for youth, thereby improving youths' quality of life:

"The kinship reimbursement has been an enormous help for all of my caregivers but none was more deserving of the help than a 25 year old caregiver who bent over backwards to have her 7 year old sister placed in her home. The older sister was living alone but quickly moved into a 2-bedroom apartment and went above and beyond meeting her young sister's needs and complying with all of the requests made by the department. The older sister works full time at Target but she doesn't have a lot of extra money at the end of the month. With the help of kinship reimbursement she has made it work." -- Caseworker

Relative and Other Designated Caregiver Placement Report (September 2021)

“Grandma took in four young children all under the age of 6 and the youngest was a few months old, with none of the children in daycare. Grandma took in all four children and went to get a larger vehicle at the department’s request in order for the Kinship placement to be approved. Grandma took a leap of faith and said ‘it has not been easy but I would doing [sic] anything for my grandkids.’” -- Caseworker

“The child is having some self-esteem problems because of her need for braces. The kinship reimbursement payments were able to help a grandma pay for the child’s braces.” – Caseworker

The Number of Disruptions in Kinship Homes

There were 21,700 non-foster kinship placements which ended in FYTD 21; of these 1,843 (8.49%) kinship placements disrupted, meaning the placement ended and the child’s next placement was in some type of non-kinship foster care.^v This compares to 21,851 non-foster kinship placements that ended in FYTD 20, with 2,014 (9.22%) of subsequent placements in a non-kinship foster care setting.^{vi}

The Reasons for Disruptions

Disruptions reasons data was obtained for all children placed in a kinship home who had a subsequent move into a non-kinship paid foster care living arrangement. The most common reason caseworkers identified for a disruption in a kinship home was the child’s behavior.^{vii}

The Length of Time to Obtain Permanent Managing Conservatorship

The average time it took for a relative to be awarded Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC)^{viii} of a child in FYTD 21 for caregivers who received a payment under HB 4 at any point during their time as caregiver was 15.1 months, compared to 15.7 months in FYTD 20.^{ix}

Conclusion

The new payment program started September 1, 2017. Evaluation of the permanency outcomes highlights consistency of findings between FYTD 20 and FYTD 21. The reasons for disruptions for children in kinship placements remains consistent with reasons for disruptions for children in traditional foster care. Analysis shows a decline in disruptions and a slight improvement in time to permanency.

ⁱ DFPS data warehouse report Executive Dashboard.

ⁱⁱ This includes both those in kinship foster care and non-foster care kinship placements.

ⁱⁱⁱ DFPS data warehouse report SA_09. Based on children in substitute care on May 31, 2021.

^{iv} <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/afcarsreport27.pdf>

Relative and Other Designated Caregiver Placement Report (September 2021)

^v A move from one relative placement to another relative placement does not count as a disruption.

^{vi} DFPS Management and Reporting Statistics report 103247

^{vii} DFPS Management and Reporting Statistics report 103247

^{viii} Unless otherwise noted, relative PMC means a relative or kin obtained PMC but did not exit under the Permanency Care Assistance (PCA) program.

^{ix} DFPS Management and Reporting Statistics report 103246. Methodology for this metric was updated in FY21 to reflect changes in available financial data. This metric calculates permanency for all caregivers who obtained PMC in FYTD 21/FYTD 20 and received HB4 payments at any point in their time as caregiver.