O4a 30th Annual Conference for Aging and Disability Resource Networks
KINSHIP NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Kinship Navigation and Care in Ohio

AREA OFFICE ON AGING OF NORTHWESTERN OHIO, INC.

ARCELIA ARMSTRONG, LSW , COORDINATOR KINSHIP NAVIGATOR AND CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM

TINA GASTON, MBA, KINSHIP NAVIGATOR PROGRAM SUPERVISOR
LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- History of the Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio, Inc. - Kinship Navigator Program
- Twenty-year partnership with Lucas County Children Services
- Funding and service area of the Kinship Navigator Program
- Services the Kinship Navigator Program provides
- Examine the impact of the Heroin and Opioid epidemic.
The Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio, Inc.
Leading in a Changing Landscape

Vision of AOoA

Mission
The Area Office of Aging of Northwestern Ohio, Inc. promotes the health, well-being, and safety of older adults, persons with disabilities, and family caregivers to foster independence.

Goals
1. Person-centered and well coordinated services and support
2. A responsive regional infrastructure
3. Use nutrition, wellness, and prevention activities
4. Strengthening collaboration
5. Improving communication
6. Promoting mutual respect
7. Embracing diversity
8. Diversity and expand resources to improve the financial viability
9. Develop and implement a value proposition and outreach plan (marketing plan)
10. To be the first choice in Northwest Ohio for older adults, persons with disabilities, and their family caregivers.
11. To be a collaborative partner with our network of service providers and other community-based organizations

Core Values
- Providing compassionate care
- Promoting mutual respect
- Embracing diversity
History of the Kinship Navigator Program

Kinship Navigator Program was a state-wide initiative stemming from the Department of Job & Family Services. Ohio is one of a few states that has a specific program for serving kinship families.

The Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio, Inc. responded to a Request for Proposal (RFP) every few years, until funding was cut and fell below the federal threshold for bidding.

The Kinship Navigator Program began in 2001 with funding from:

- Lucas County Children Services Levy
- Lucas County Department of Job & Family Services (Title XX)
- National Family Caregiver Support Program (Title III-E)
- Lucas County Senior Services Levy
Other forms of Support for the Kinship Navigator Program

In-Kind Support

- **Managed Care Plans:** Buckeye Health Plan and Molina Healthcare of Ohio, provided hams and turkeys during the month of December.
- **The Toledo Mud Hens** Minor League Baseball Team & The Toledo Walleye Hockey Team provided game tickets.
- **The Toledo Opera** provided tickets.
- **United Way of Greater Toledo** provided backpacks filled with school supplies.
- **Books 4 Buddies** – Provide gently used books to kinship families.

Monetary

- **Aetna Better Health of Ohio** – Provided funds to purchase hams and turkeys during the month of December.
- **Aetna Better Health of Ohio** – Provided funds to purchase tokens at Toledo Farmer’s Market, so caregivers could purchase fresh fruits and vegetables.
- **Walmart Foundation Grant of $70,000** received for *Mitigating Malnutrition with Farm Fresh Delivery* for Kinship Families. In addition, a cooking demonstration was held at the ProMedica Ebeid Institute led by a registered dietician to promote healthy food preparation for Kinship families. Funds made it possible to purchase fresh produce. AOoA partnered with local farmers who prepared boxes filled with fresh fruits and vegetables. Caregivers picked up their box of veggies at the Hunt Senior Center or delivered as needed.
KINSHIP NAVIGATOR PROGRAM SERVICE AREA

Kinship Navigator Program Service Area is Lucas

**Cities:**
- Maumee
- Oregon Sylvania
- Toledo (county seat)
- Waterville

**Villages:**
- Berkey
- Harbor View
- Holland
- Ottawa Hills
- Swanton (mostly in Fulton County)
- Whitehouse

**Townships:**
- Harding
- Jerusalem
- Monclova
- Providence
- Richfield
- Spencer

Area Office on Aging of NW Ohio Service Area

Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio Region,
Urban and Rural Areas

10-county region served by Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio, Inc. is bordered by Indiana, Michigan, and Lake Erie.

However, since our agency's service area includes nine other surrounding counties, occasionally we receive inquiries from kinship caregivers outside of Lucas county. We provide the kinship caregiver with contact information for the county Department of Job & Family Services, Child Support Enforcement Agency, and Public Children Services Agency in their county for further information and assistance.
Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Kinship Navigation and Care in Ohio

- Services the Area Office on Aging, Kinship Navigator Program Provides
- Impact of the Heroin and Opioid Epidemic
The Kinship Navigator Program serves over 1,300 families in Lucas County.
Quarterly Kinship Club Support Groups

- In an effort to help caregivers cope well with the added stress of parenting again, we provide two, quarterly support groups affording them the opportunity to connect with others who are in a similar situation.

- The club meetings are designed to help increase kinship caregivers’ knowledge and skills in parenting and child development.

- The meetings allow them to strengthen their relationships with the children in their care and educate them about various topics that will benefit them.
Evidenced-based Workshops

- This educational program offers six (6) lessons that cover a variety of topics where kinship caregivers:
  - Learn about the aging process and how to make healthy lifestyle choices.
  - Discuss risk factors and behaviors you should avoid to stay healthy.
  - Examine how alcohol, prescription medications, and over-the-counter medications affect seniors differently.
  - Learn how to use simple tools to help you feel more empowered about your health and the healthcare you receive.
    - Free $50 Kroger gift card upon successful program completion!

*The Kinship Navigator Program is your connection to valuable community resources.*

*The WISE program is sponsored by*
Kinship Navigator Program Quarterly Newsletter

Kinship Staff provide caregivers with quarterly newsletters in an effort to offer updates on upcoming events and programming as well as provide education on various topics relevant to the caregivers needs. The newsletter is also available via constant contact and is sent to community agencies who work with kinship families.
Access to Special Events

- Toledo Opera
- Toledo Walleye Hockey Games
- The Toledo Mud Hens
- Gene Cook Baseball Camp
- Drug Education, in partnership with:
  - The Toledo Mud Hens, the Toledo Police Department, Lucas County Sheriff’s Office, and Lucas County Prosecutors.
This Guide provides information about available resources, benefits, and resources to help caregivers who can find information on the following:

- Parenting and Child Development
- Help with Expenses
  - Stable Account, Ohio Treasure's Office
  - Kinship Permanency Incentive (KPI)
  - Child Only, Ohio Works First (OWF)
- Early Childhood Education
- Babysitting and Occasional Care
  - Ohio Childcare Finder
- Education
  - Scholarships
- Understanding Legal Issues
  - Caretaker Authorization Affidavit
- Medical Services and Wellness
- Recreation
- And more
One Nation Overdosed: How Children Cope With A Parent's Addiction | NBC Nightly News

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YslhIY7ZyFM
AMERICA’S OPIOID CRISIS: THE UNSEEN IMPACT ON OHIO CHILDREN
AS OHIO FAMILIES STRUGGLE WITH ADDICTION, CHILDREN ARE CAUGHT IN THE FRAY.

A GROWING CRISIS

28% MORE opioid-related deaths nationwide since 2015.

82.5% of people in Ohio suffering from drug dependence or abuse go untreated.

8.7 MILLION children nationwide have a parent who suffers from a substance use disorder.

A NEED FOR FAMILY-CENTERED POLICIES

KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER IMPROVES OUTCOMES AND LOWERS COSTS

MORE THAN HALF of children placed in foster care go home to their families. Keeping families together from the start helps prevent further trauma and improves outcomes.

MEDICAID PAID 81% OF THE $1.5 BILLION that hospitals billed for treating babies suffering from opioid withdrawal in 2012.

A DEVASTATING TOLL ON CHILDREN

FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS ON THE RISE

10,769 OHIO CHILDREN were placed in foster care in 2016.

17% WERE INFANTS.

In 25% of these placements, parental substance use was a factor.

MORE BABIES BORN EXPOSED TO OPIOIDS

Every 25 minutes in America, a baby is born suffering from opioid withdrawal, which can mean:

1. LOWER BIRTHWEIGHTS
2. RESPIRATORY CONDITIONS
3. FEEDING DIFFICULTIES
4. SEIZURES
5. LONGER HOSPITAL STAYS

A LIFELONG IMPACT
Children dealing with traumatic experiences can face social, emotional, physical, and mental health challenges that last into adulthood.

Left unaddressed, early childhood adversity can lead to school failure, risky behaviors like alcohol and drug use, and increased chance of health conditions like obesity and heart disease.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

RETHINK OUR APPROACH: SUPPORT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN HEALING TOGETHER

Create policies that prioritize prevention and allow children to remain safely with their families during treatment.

Give providers tools to recognize, treat, and support children and their parents affected by trauma to lessen the lifelong impact and promote healthy families.

Ensure families have real and timely access to services through Medicaid and other prevention and treatment programs.

Sources for this document are available at www.aap.org/OpioidFactsheets.
Impact of the Heroin and Opioid Epidemic

- Due to the opioid crisis, kinship caregivers increasingly are being called on to become the primary caregivers for children.¹

- Ohio is one of the worst-hit states in the nation for overdoses.²

- According to PCSAO (Public Children Services association of Ohio), 70% of infants in child protection custody are in care due to parent’s opiate addiction.³

- If the opioid epidemic continues to grow, the number of children in Ohio’s foster system will increase to 20,000 by 2020, according to a 2017 report from the PCSAO.⁴

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F.I.R.S.T. (Families in Recovery Sticking Together)

- The Kinship Navigator Program was selected by SeaGate Food Bank for a grant funded program on February 6, 2019.
- In order to qualify for this program, one must be a kinship family due to substance abuse issues (opioids, heroin, marijuana, alcohol, etc.).
- Weekly the Kinship Navigator Program staff send referrals for caregivers to receive fresh produce and meats.
D.A.R.T. (Drug Abuse Response Team)

Kinship Older Adult Outreach Project
n4a: National Innovation Award, July 2019

Kinship Navigator Program
Summer Series, 2019
It’s a Brain Thing – Two hour workshop for kinship caregivers to learn how heroin and opioids affect on the brain. Along with it’s impact on families and the community; including support available to assist them. Presented by AOoA Pharmacist – Director of Medical Education & AOoA D.A.R.T. Officer (Drug Abuse Response Team)

“How Drugs Affect the Brain

“Drug related deaths have increased in all age groups, the greatest increase has been in adult between 55-64.”

Source: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db273.pdf
Lucas County Children Services believes kinship caregivers are vital to help keep children safe and maintain family connections. Kinship caregivers are often given short notice when asked to take in children, and the Kinship Navigator program ensures the caregivers know what community resources are available and how to navigate effectively. –Robin Reese, Executive Director, Lucas County Children Services

The Kinship Navigator staff possesses an excellent an in-depth knowledge of how to navigate the complex child welfare, special education and disability education, mental health and substance abuse treatment, and financial assistance systems in our community. –Judith Leb, J.D., Court of Common Pleas, Juvenile Division

School counselors and nurses routinely call these advocates so students and their caregivers can get the information, support, education and connections they need to continue flourishing in a stable home environment instead of the student unnecessarily ending up in the foster care system. –Dr. Romules Durant, Superintendent Toledo Public Schools

I can speak directly to the gap in services that both our aging and our youth populations experience. Even more so, minority populations are vastly underserved. The Kinship Navigator Program is one of the few services that address these important gaps by providing excellent support, education and resources to families in need here in our community. –Danielle Cisterino-Hajdu, Teen PEP Coordinator, ProMedica Toledo Children’s Hospital

In this day and age there are more grandparents and other relatives who are rearing children in their extended families. These families are in desperate need of support and services that the Kinship Navigator Program has been able to provide to them. This program has helped kinship care families become better informed about service and support in our community. –Linda Decker, Supervisor Community Relations, United Healthcare Community Plan of Ohio

The Kinship Navigator Program is supported by the Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio, Inc., Lucas County Children Services, and Lucas County Department of Job and Family Services.
Thank You!

Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio, Inc.

www.areaofficeonaging.com

Contact Information:

Arcelia Armstrong, LSW, Coordinator Kinship Navigator and Caregiver Support Program
aarmstrong@areaofficeonaging.com  419.725.6963

Katina (Tina) Gaston, MBA, Kinship Navigator Program Supervisor
kgaston@areaofficeonaging.com  419.725.7039