**KinGAP Timeline**

*This timeline follows the steps Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) or the voluntary agency (VA) will take over the course of a relative/kinship foster care placement that leads to KinGAP*.

LDSS notifies relative and kinship family members that a child has been removed from their home within 30 days of the removal. LDSS also notifies parents of siblings or half-siblings of the removed child, where the parent has legal custody of such sibling or half-sibling. Relatives are given two handbooks: *Having a Voice & a Choice* and *Know Your Permanency Options: the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program*.

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LDSS and the relatives/kinship caregiver(s) discuss whether relatives/kinship caregivers are willing to have the child placed in their home and are willing to become a certified or approved foster home. If they agree, the child is placed in their home.

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The family is engaged in discussions about the child’s need for permanency. LDSS starts by seeking reunification with the parents, if appropriate.

LDSS discusses all permanency options with the foster caregivers, while trying to reunify the child and parents.

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If reunification is NOT appropriate, LDSS asks the relative/kinship foster parents about their desire and capacity to provide a permanent home for the child.

LDSS will also have discussions with the child’s parents, if appropriate, to help them understand the permanency options.

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If the child is old enough to understand and participate, LDSS will also have discussions with the child. For KinGAP, there MUST be a consultation if the child is 14 years of age or older, and any child 18 years of age or older must consent. For adoption, any child 14 years of age or older must consent.

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If return home and adoption are ruled out by LDSS as permanency options for the child, and if the relative/kinship caregiver(s) demonstrates willingness to provide a permanent home, the following are necessary:

* The child has been in foster care with the relative/kinship caregivers for at least six consecutive months and the relative/kinship caregiver(s) was approved or certified as a foster parent during the entire period.
* The fact-finding hearing has been completed for a child who was placed into foster care under Article 10 of the Family Court Act.
* The child’s initial permanency hearing has been completed for all categories of foster care.
* Other eligibility requirements such as the child’s attachment to the relative/kinship caregiver(s) and their commitment to permanently care for the child are considered.
* The relative/kinship caregiver(s) have filed a completed application and the LDSS has approved it.

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If the application is approved, LDSS completes the Kinship Guardianship Assistance and Non-Recurring Guardianship Expenses Agreement with the prospective relative/kinship guardians.

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The prospective relative/kinship guardians or their attorney petitions the court for KinGAP guardianship.

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The court makes a decision.

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If the petition is granted by the court, the court orders that the relative/kinship caregivers now have guardianship, letters of guardianship are issued by the court and provided to the guardian, the child is discharged from foster care, and LDSS is relieved of all responsibility for supervision of the child. The guardian must provide the LDSS with copies of the letters of guardianship before payment can begin.

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The relative must complete an annual notification and certification form until the youth reaches age 18. The KinGAP arrangement and the annual notification and certification requirement can last until age 21 if the child agrees and participates in an approved educational program or is employed for at least 80 hours per month or is unable as of yet of such educational or employment activities.

**Note:** The Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) funds Regional Permanency Resource Centers that provide support to local guardians and their families post guardianship.