



# 2022 Policy Initiatives for New York State's Kinship Families



## Ensure Safety in Kinship “Safety Plans”

Alternative living arrangements (aka “safety plans”) place children with kinship caregivers via informal arrangements initiated by Child Protective Services in order to avoid formal removal proceedings. The practice is commonly used but not adequately monitored or regulated, threatening the potential safety and permanency for the youth and kinship caregivers:

2021-22 Bill Numbers:

<b>A8090 (Hevesi)</b>	<b>S8148 (Brisport)</b>
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## Assign Counsel to Kinship Caregivers

Indigent kinship caregivers do not have a right to counsel when they seek custody or guardianship in family court, and while some judges occasionally assign counsel, many do not. Providing assignment of counsel for indigent kinship caregivers will ensure that custody and guardianship petitions are timely and fully considering the best interests of children.

2021-22 Bill Numbers:

<b>A2581 (Hevesi)</b>	<b>S6074 (Salazar)</b>
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## Reinforce the Good Cause Exemption

Prohibit child support collection enforcement when good cause exemptions are claimed and proven by kinship caregivers who are seeking TANF Non-Parent child only grants

2020-21 Bill Numbers:

<b>A6266 (Hevesi)</b>	<b>S2586 (Brisport)</b>
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## Maximize Benefits for Low-Income Children

Current law requires caregivers and any other minor siblings living in the home to also apply for assistance and be included in the household for purposes of determining both eligibility and grant amount. This reduces the entire grant for the household, negatively impacting poor children.

<b>A4256A – 2019 (Hevesi)</b>	<b>S4809A – 2019 (Persaud)</b>
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## Expand Housing Opportunities

Secure Kinship Housing as a State Housing Priority and expand the definition of “Special Needs Populations” in NYS Division of Homes & Community Renewal’s programs to include Kinship Caregivers.

## Commemorate “Kinship Care Month”

Since 2014, the Legislature have passed resolutions and the Governor has issued proclamations declaring September as Kinship Care Month in recognition of the families who sacrifice to keep children safe in their homes. We request this be done again in 2022.