



# Kinship Navigator Program

**Navigating the Seas of Relative Childcare**



# What is the Kinship Navigator Program?

- ▶ Throughout the world, there are children who are raised by someone other than their parents.
- ▶ In 2012, 2.7 million grandparents raised their grandchildren in the United States! (United States Census Bureau, 2014)
- ▶ According to the Virginia Governor's proclamation in September 2019 there are more than 180,000 children in Virginia being raised in kinship families
- ▶ Kinship care is the full-time care and nurturing of a child by a relative or someone who has a significant emotional relationship with a child not born to them.
- ▶ Kinship care is often looked to when children must be separated from their parents, either voluntarily or by court order;



# What is the Kinship Navigator Program?

- There are many factors that lead into relative care, including:
  - Parental substance abuse
  - Illness & death
  - Extended military employment
  - Financial hardships
  - Incarceration
  - Mental health issues of parents
- Unfortunately, families who raise children who are not their own often have little to **no support!** They are usually older and on fixed incomes with less energy and often with health issues of their own. They often do not want to become foster parents for these children and do not want to be involved with Social Services.



# What is the Kinship Navigator Program?

- ▶ The **Family First** Prevention Services **Act** was signed into **law** as part of the Bipartisan Budget **Act** on February 9, **2018**.
- ▶ Virginia has piloted 6 Kinship Navigator programs...**ARLINGTON, BEDFORD, DICKENSON, JAMES CITY COUNTY, SMYTH COUNTY, AND VIRGINIA BEACH**
- ▶ Each of these programs covers several counties
- ▶ The purpose of the Navigator programs is to assist kinship caregivers to find and utilize appropriate community resources to prevent foster care placement and ensure success of these newfound families.
- ▶ Kinship Navigator programs across the country are assisting with keeping children in relative placements to provide greater continuity of care and preservation of the family.



# What services do the Kinship Navigators provide to families?

- ▶ The Kinship Navigator Program has 4 major areas of focus. **INFORMATION, EDUCATION, REFERRAL TO RESOURCES, AND ADVOCACY**
  - ▶ INFORMATION....services available local, federal and state  
community activities such as library or school events  
camps, afterschool programs, parks, programs like junior fire
  - ▶ EDUCATION.....parenting classes, discipline, internet uses etc
  - ▶ REFERRAL TO RESOURCES.....financial, legal, educational, medical, community
  - ▶ ADVOCACY.....face to face visits, accompanying to court or other service venues, case management

The Kinship Navigator directs Kinship Caregivers to resources that enhance family functioning and supports the family in dealing with their circumstances.



# Our Team and Our Recruitment Plan

- ▶ Our team consists of 1 full time position, 1 part time position and supervision provided by the host agency of the program
  - ▶ We are able to tap into other people within the agency to help with things like events, recruiting families, contacting community partners etc...
- ▶ Defining our target population in each county and finding ways to reach that population.....Measure our success quarterly.
- ▶ Monthly contact with all the DSS agencies in Planning Districts 1 and 2 by phone, email, or visits
- ▶ Host educational and celebratory sessions in each of the counties
- ▶ Develop support groups for this population in each area
- ▶ Provide resource guide for this population tailored to their specific needs and make these available within their communities.
- ▶ Increase marketing of services year by year



# Who does the Dickenson Kinship Navigator Program serve?

- ▶ The Kinship Navigator Program serves the relative caregivers in 8 localities in SWVA.
  1. Dickenson County
  2. Wise County
  3. City of Norton
  4. Buchanan County
  5. Lee County
  6. Russell County
  7. Scott County
  8. Tazewell County



# Who does the Smyth Kinship Navigator Program serve?

The Kinship Navigator Program serves the relative caregivers of 13 localities in SWVA.

Bland County

Carroll County

Floyd County

Grayson County

Giles County

Montgomery County

Pulaski County

Smyth County

Washington County

Wythe County

City of Bristol

City of Galax

City of Radford



# What does resource referrals look like for Kinship families?

- ▶ **FINANCIAL**....TANF, Medicaid, SNAP, Childcare, WIC, Heating and Cooling Assistance, Housing, SSI, Church assistance, local thrift stores, food banks, Senior agencies and community agencies to assist with paying bills.
- ▶ **MEDICAL**....medical doctor, dentist, mental health counselors, local Health Department for immunizations, FAPT referrals, Medicaid transportation for appointments, referrals for eye exams
- ▶ **LEGAL**.....locations of the courts. List of local attorneys that deal with family court, how to apply for custody, where to find adoption information
- ▶ **EDUCATIONAL**....school enrollment, getting social security cards and birth certificates, immunization records, Head Start or daycare resources, homework lines and tutoring
- ▶ **COMMUNITY SERVICES**....Parenting classes, community events, libraries, church, school or business events, camps, support groups, recreation activities.

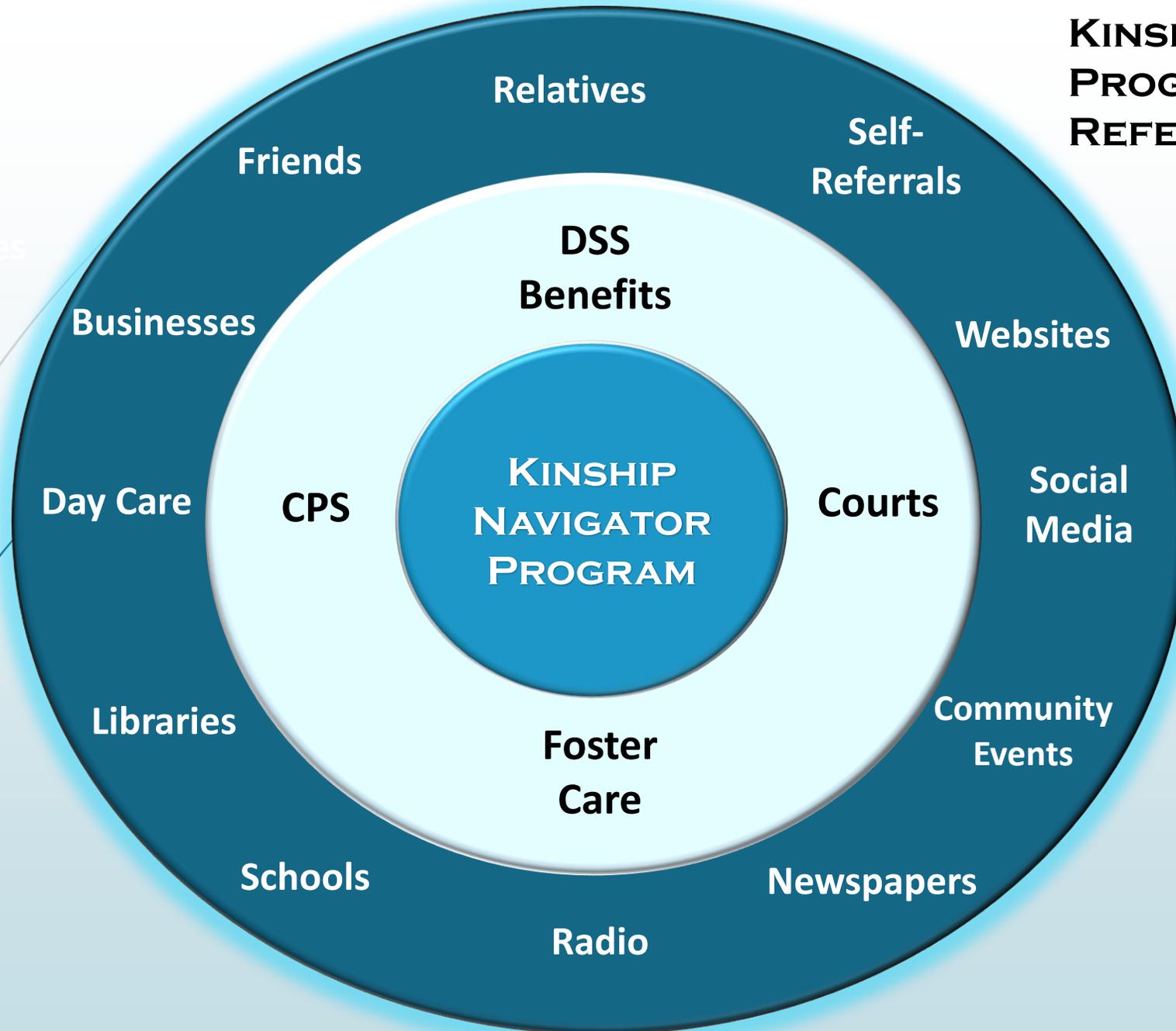


# What Outcomes Can Kinship Services Achieve?

- ▶ Helping to reduce the incidence of foster care placements from Kinship homes by:
  - ▶ Provides stabilization of families using community resources
  - ▶ Enhances the ability of the Kinship caregiver to deal with children with trauma
  - ▶ Connecting isolated families to other kinship families that have taken on this role of parenting a second time around.
  - ▶ Links families with Social Services in a positive way
- ▶ Allows Kinship families to thrive in their roles by providing support.

***Normalizes the situation in which they find themselves!***

# KINSHIP NAVIGATOR PROGRAM REFERRAL SOURCES



Churches

## UNDERSTANDING THE WHEEL

- ▶ To show how we planned to access the target population of formal and informal Kinship families we developed a wheel. The inner circle is the Navigator and the second circle represents our use of systems already in place to obtain referrals for Kinship families. The outer circle represents our wider attempt to expand into the community with indirect referrals from families, businesses and other agencies not directly linked to Social Services including counseling agencies, Children's Advocacy centers, Police, Fire and local medical facilities. Our plans to reach this referral source are through flyers, brochures and Kinship Resource guides placed strategically in those areas.
- ▶ The inner part of the wheel shows our direct referrals come from within the agency itself, CPS units, APS units, Benefits, Foster Care and the Court Services section. We use direct referral from these to our program by phone, email or fax. We interact almost daily with these partners.
- ▶ To receive referrals from within the community we use our website, information, through the media such as newspapers and radio, brochures in the community, face to face networking with community partners and social media such as a facebook page. We plan to increase our visibility in the community through networking with the schools, local churches and local businesses.

QUESTIONS?



# For more information, please contact

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