



Eric J. Holcomb, Governor  
Terry J. Stigdon, MSN, RN, Director

**Indiana Department of Child Services**  
Room E306 – MS47  
302 W. Washington Street  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2738

317-234-KIDS  
FAX: 317-234-4497

[www.in.gov/dcs](http://www.in.gov/dcs)

**Child Support Hotline: 800-840-8757**  
**Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 800-800-5556**

## **DCS celebrates National Kinship Care Month**

**INDIANAPOLIS (SEPT. 1, 2020)** — Indiana’s Department of Child Services will celebrate the importance of kinship care this September in recognition of National Kinship Care Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness and connecting kinship families to resources.

“Many Hoosier children live with or are cared for by relatives that might not necessarily be their parents,” DCS Director Terry Stigdon said. “Families provide a critical support system for children, and our kinship programs can help caregivers support those in their care.”

Throughout the month, DCS, in partnership with The Villages, will celebrate these caregivers in a variety of ways, including a special newsletter and a month-long social media celebration on Twitter (@IndianaDCS) and Instagram (@VoicesofDCS). Kinship caregivers and families will be spotlighted on the Stories of DCS website and the Voices of DCS podcast, which will feature a story about an older sister, Sharvonne Williams, who stepped in and took care of her much-younger brother in a time of need.

“Keeping kids with family is really, really important. In this case it was a positive because we knew each other, but we didn't know each other. We never lived with each other for a long period of time,” Williams said. “So it was more of just learning, learning about him and learning about me at the same time, but it gave us a chance to grow. No one had to force me to do this. I just, I wanted to do this, and I think both of our lives have changed drastically.”

The public is encouraged to celebrate by using #KinshipCare and wearing yellow throughout the month.

“Kinship caregivers offer children safety and stability during difficult times,” Stigdon said. “This month gives us an exciting opportunity to raise awareness about kinship care, lift up those who take on this important role in children’s lives, and help them care for those children by connecting them to the resources that they need.”

For more information about kinship care, visit [www.indianafostercare.org](http://www.indianafostercare.org), or you can reach Kinship Indiana Support Services at [DCS.KinshipCare@dcs.IN.gov](mailto:DCS.KinshipCare@dcs.IN.gov).

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***About Indiana DCS:*** *The Indiana Department of Child Services protects children from abuse and neglect and works to ensure their financial support. Indiana Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline: 800.800.5556. Child Support Customer Service Kidsline: 800.840.8757 or 317.233.5437. [www.in.gov/dcs](http://www.in.gov/dcs)*

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