

## WHAT IS THE RELATIVE CAREGIVER PROGRAM?

The Relative Caregiver Program describes the array of services available for relative and fictive kin caregivers when DCBS opens a case for services.

If DCBS becomes involved with the family and the child is not able to remain in the home with the parents, a relative or fictive kin may be able to choose between two options.

**Option 1:** Receive temporary legal custody of the child.

**Option 2:** Place the child in DCBS custody until the relative or fictive kin caregiver can pursue approval as a foster parent.

## SUPPORT FOR THE CHILD AND THE FAMILY

With either option, DCBS will complete home visits and coordinate services that may be needed. Children and caregivers may receive supportive services, such as resource information and referrals for services, support groups, and ongoing case management until permanency is achieved. Should reunification not be possible, post permanency services are available and may include a subsidy if you adopt the child from foster care. The Guardianship Assistance Program will be additional support soon.

## PERMANENCY OPTIONS

### WHAT IS ADOPTION?

When you adopt a child, you become his or her legal parent. A court order terminates the biological parent's rights to the child permanently. Legal representation is necessary to complete this process, regardless of whether the child is in DCBS custody at the time the adoption process begins.

### WHAT IS GUARDIANSHIP?

Guardianship is typically granted by district court rather than family court and lasts until a child is 18. Parents do maintain parental rights, although they do not have physical custody. Guardianship permits the caregiver to consent for educational and medical care and do everything the parent would do. Parents can request to rescind guardianship but must return to court to do so.

### WHAT IS PERMANENT RELATIVE CUSTODY?

If a child is placed with you by DCBS, and you choose not to pursue becoming a foster parent, you may be granted temporary legal custody of the child. The goal will be reunification with the parents. However, if that cannot occur due to the parents not making changes that allow the child to return home safely, a judge may grant permanent relative custody. The parents may petition the court in the future to request custody be returned and typically must show completion of case plan tasks.

# KENTUCKY RELATIVE CAREGIVER PROGRAM



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