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## What is kinship care?

If you are looking after the child or children of a relative or friend, on a full-time basis, then you are a kinship carer!

(See our short video for more information: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjjkLbOe2AI> )

## What now?

Grandparents, aunts, uncles, adult sisters, brothers, cousins, and close friends have always been there, to keep children in the family when there is a crisis, or breakdown of relationships, or care. In Ireland there are an estimated 10,000-12,000 children living in the kinship care of loved ones. Kinship Care can often mean a child can remain connected with their family, identity, culture and their community.

While there are so many benefits of kinship care, there are also areas that need support that can be difficult to navigate. If you are a new kinship carer, you are probably trying to find your way through a maze of issues, but even if you have been looking after the child of a relative or close friend for some time, you might still need some advice or support.

We hope this checklist will give you some helpful guidance.  
See QR code for link to relevant application forms.

Please feel welcome to give us a call to discuss any of the information enclosed.

In some circumstances families may have the option to formalise their care by becoming a relative foster carer. If you are considering formalising your care you can contact the Irish Foster Care Association to find out more on [ifca.ie](http://ifca.ie) or 01 4599474.

## Information for informal kinship carers

### Guardian's Payment

If you are a kinship carer caring fulltime for a child, you may be eligible to the Guardian's payment (this is a weekly payment of €215 to support meeting a child's caring needs, up to the age of 18 or 22 if young adult is in fulltime education).

Applications should be supported with verifying documentation, some examples:

Supporting letter from: Tusla Social Worker, Kinship Care Ireland, the child's school or educational setting, other professional that is aware of your circumstances (eg. Child's Youth Worker), local TD, as well as a personal letter.

Copy of supporting documentation – Proof of receipt of child benefit, copy of parent death certificate, proof of Guardianship or an upcoming court date for Guardianship (You do not need to be a child's legal guardian to apply for the Guardian's payment)

Link: [Guardian's Payment Application Form](#) Additional child form: [GPIA from guardians payment additonal children.pdf](#)

### Supplementary Welfare Allowance

You may be eligible to a Supplementary Welfare Allowance Payment from your local Intreo Office, Community Welfare Officer. This is a means tested payment.

Applications can be for a once-off Additional Needs Payment which may assist covering the cost of some essentials when newly stepping in to your kinship care role. See more details on the cover of form. You may also apply for a small weekly Supplementary Welfare Allowance Payment with this same application form if you are awaiting outcome of a Guardians payment application.

Link: [Supplementary Welfare Allowance Application Form](#)

### Tusla Family Support Payment

If Tusla requested you to step in to care fulltime for a child and are aware of your family circumstance, in some rare situations Tusla may be able to support with a short-term Section 8/Family Support Payment while you apply for the Guardians payment.

Tusla Family Support/Section 8 Payment is on a case-by-case basis and only in extra-ordinary circumstances.

## *Legal*

### Legal Guardianship

If birth parent is deceased you can apply for Guardianship as soon as you are ready.

When a birth parent is living, guardianship can be applied for in court once you have been caring for a child for 12 consecutive months. You can make an appointment on [www.courts.ie](http://www.courts.ie)

Further Information: [Guardianship Application Forms](#) ; [Guardianship Information Booklet](#)

### Legal Advice Services

Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC): [Telephone Information & Referral Line](#)

Community Law & Mediation Children and Young People's Legal Advice Service: [Contact Details](#)

### National Childcare Scheme (NCS)

Children in kinship care are eligible to access NCS sponsorship from Tusla for early years/afterschool. This is subject to early years/afterschool place availability. It is recommended that you check with the childcare provider and ask if they accept NCS sponsorship. Childcare space availability is limited, you are encouraged to apply to several childcare providers in your area. For NCS form processing, contact Kinship Care Ireland. Link: [Application Guide](#)

### Schools

Children in kinship care have experienced Adverse Childhood Experience. This means a child may need additional supports from their school. It can be helpful to have a teacher/Home School Community Liaison, who knows about the situation so that there can be open conversations that may lead to additional supports being offered.

Some schools may have access to one or some of the following: Counsellor, Guidance Counsellor, Sensory Room, Theraplay, Emotional Regulation Support, Nurture groups etc.

### Tusla Education Support Service (TESS)

Educational Welfare Services which are part of the Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) support children and families who have difficulties in relation

## *Educational*

to school attendance, participation, retention. Link: [Information for Parents and Guardians](#)

### SUSI Grant

The Student Grant Scheme is the main financial support scheme for third level students studying in Ireland and abroad.

Link: [How to Apply](#)

## *Family Resources*

### Kinship Carer Peer Supports

Contact Kinship Care Ireland for details. Link: [Kinship Care Ireland Website](#)

### Tusla Supports

(See Meitheal & family Support)

Link: [Tusla](#)

### Family Resource Centre

Link: [Find your nearest Family Resource Centre](#)

## *Targeted Supports*

### Bereavement and Loss Services

Support Services Link: [Bereavement Support Services](#)

### Mental Health Support Services

Link: [Mental Health Supports and Services](#)

### Domestic Violence

Link: [Domestic Violence Support Services](#)

Link: [Court Accompaniment Service](#)

### Addiction

Link: [Family Support Services](#)

Link: [Find Services](#)

Families impacted by parental imprisonment

Link: [Imprisonment Support Services](#)

*QR code for links*

