



96TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2009 and 2010

HB2365

Introduced 2/19/2009, by Rep. Eddie Washington

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act
20 ILCS 505/34.11

Creates the Kinship Navigator Act. Defines "kinship care" as the full time care, nurturing, and protection of children by relatives, members of their tribes or clans, grandparents, godparents, stepparents, or any adult who has physical custody and a kinship bond with a child. This definition is designed to be inclusive without age restrictions on the kinship caregiver and respectful of cultural values and ties of affection. It allows a child to grow to adulthood in a family environment. Establishes a program, to be administered through a grant to a not-for-profit organization, to serve as liaison among State agencies and groups, to promote kinship care through conferences, and to provide the following services: organizing diverse, enriched, and culturally conscious kinship support groups and counseling; assisting with applying for benefits within the Family Community Resource Centers for those who qualify; publishing monthly newsletters; coordinating respite and crisis care services; assisting kinship caregivers with job readiness, job search, and job retention; and providing technical assistance to start up kinship support groups. Amends the Children and Family Services Act to provide for coordination with the grandparent child care program. Effective immediately.

LRB096 10282 JAM 20452 b

FISCAL NOTE ACT
MAY APPLY

A BILL FOR

1 AN ACT concerning children.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the
5 Kinship Navigator Act.

6 Section 5. Definitions. In this Act:

7 (1) "Department" means the Department of Human
8 Services.

9 (2) "NPO" means a not-for-profit organization.

10 (3) "Municipality" has the meaning ascribed to it in
11 Section 1-1-2 of the Illinois Municipal Code.

12 (4) "Kinship care" means, as defined by Child Welfare
13 League of America, the full time care, nurturing, and
14 protection of children by relatives, members of their
15 tribes or clans, grandparents, godparents, stepparents, or
16 any adult who has physical custody and a kinship bond with
17 a child. This definition is designed to be inclusive
18 without age restrictions on the kinship caregiver and
19 respectful of cultural values and ties of affection. It
20 allows a child to grow to adulthood in a family
21 environment.

22 (5) "Kinship Navigator" means a statewide program
23 designed to ensure kinship caregivers the necessary

1 resources for the preservation of the family.

2 Section 10. Legislative findings and intent.

3 (1) Kinship caregivers often care for non-biological
4 children without compensation or support systems.

5 (2) Kinship caregivers are crucial to avoiding
6 institutionalization of children and saving taxpayer
7 dollars.

8 (3) Kinship caregivers are frequently under
9 substantial physical, psychological, and financial stress.
10 Unrelieved by support services available to the caregiver,
11 this stress may lead to premature or unnecessary
12 institutionalization for the care recipient or
13 deterioration of the health condition and family
14 circumstances of the kinship caregiver.

15 (4) Sudden responsibility for children often precludes
16 kinship caregivers the opportunity to plan basic day to day
17 responsibility.

18 (5) The Kinship Navigator shall establish itself to be
19 seamless and statewide through an NPO serving as the
20 liaison among the Department of Human Services, Illinois
21 Housing Authority, Department of Children and Family
22 Services, Department of Corrections, and federal and local
23 governments as well as other public and private sources.

24 (6) Additional services provided under the Kinship
25 Navigator shall be: organizing diverse, enriched, and

1 culturally conscious kinship support groups and
2 counseling; assisting with applying for benefits within
3 the Family Community Resource Centers for those who
4 qualify; publishing monthly newsletters; coordinating
5 respite and crisis care services; assisting kinship
6 caregivers with job readiness, job search, and job
7 retention; and providing technical assistance to start up
8 kinship support groups.

9 Section 15. Kinship Navigator conferences: promotion. The
10 Department shall annually hold 2 conferences, one in Cook
11 County and one in Sangamon County, and provide for exhibits and
12 activities for kinship caregivers and social service
13 providers.

14 Section 20. Kinship Navigator administration. The
15 Department, subject to appropriation, shall administer Kinship
16 Navigator through grants to an NPO that has worked statewide
17 with kinship families. The Department shall coordinate the
18 program created by this Act with the grandparent child care
19 program administered by the Department of Children and Family
20 Services under Section 34.11 of the Children and Family
21 Services Act.

22 Section 25. Rules. The Department shall adopt the rules
23 necessary for the implementation and administration of this

1 Act.

2 Section 90. The Children and Family Services Act is amended
3 by changing Section 34.11 as follows:

4 (20 ILCS 505/34.11)

5 Sec. 34.11. Grandparent child care program.

6 (a) The General Assembly finds and declares the following:

7 (1) An increasing number of children under the age of
8 18, including many children who would otherwise be at risk
9 of abuse or neglect, are in the care of a grandparent or
10 other nonparent relative.

11 (2) The principal causes of this increase include
12 parental substance abuse, child abuse, mental illness,
13 poverty, and death, as well as concerted efforts by
14 families and by the child welfare service system to keep
15 children with relatives whenever possible.

16 (3) Grandparents and older relatives providing primary
17 care for at-risk children may experience unique resultant
18 problems, such as financial stress due to limited incomes,
19 emotional difficulties dealing with the loss of the child's
20 parents or the child's unique behaviors, and decreased
21 physical stamina coupled with a much higher incidence of
22 chronic illness.

23 (4) Many children being raised by nonparent relatives
24 experience one or a combination of emotional, behavioral,

1 psychological, academic, or medical problems, especially
2 those born to a substance-abusing mother or at risk of
3 child abuse, neglect, or abandonment.

4 (5) Grandparents and other relatives providing primary
5 care for children lack appropriate information about the
6 issues of kinship care, the special needs (both physical
7 and psychological) of children born to a substance-abusing
8 mother or at risk of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment,
9 and the support resources currently available to them.

10 (b) The Department may establish an informational and
11 educational program for grandparents and other relatives who
12 provide primary care for children who are at risk of child
13 abuse, neglect, or abandonment or who were born to
14 substance-abusing mothers. As a part of the program, the
15 Department may develop, publish, and distribute an
16 informational brochure for grandparents and other relatives
17 who provide primary care for children who are at risk of child
18 abuse, neglect, or abandonment or who were born to
19 substance-abusing mothers. The information provided under the
20 program authorized by this Section may include, but is not
21 limited to the following:

22 (1) The most prevalent causes of kinship care,
23 especially the risk of substance exposure or child abuse,
24 neglect, or abandonment.

25 (2) The problems experienced by children being raised
26 by nonparent caregivers.

1 (3) The problems experienced by grandparents and other
2 nonparent relatives providing primary care for children
3 who have special needs.

4 (4) The legal system as it relates to children and
5 their nonparent primary caregivers.

6 (5) The benefits available to children and their
7 nonparent primary caregivers.

8 (6) A list of support groups and resources located
9 throughout the State.

10 The brochure may be distributed through hospitals, public
11 health nurses, child protective services, medical professional
12 offices, elementary and secondary schools, senior citizen
13 centers, public libraries, community action agencies selected
14 by the Department, and the Department of Human Services.

15 The Department shall coordinate the grandparent child care
16 program under this Section with the program established and
17 administered by the Department of Human Services under the
18 Kinship Navigator Act.

19 (Source: P.A. 88-229; 88-670, eff. 12-2-94; 89-507, eff.
20 7-1-97.)

21 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
22 becoming law.