

Building Connections

A Newsletter for Resource Families

Volume 12 | Issue 3

January 2019

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This issue of Building Connections will focus on kinship care. We are proud that approximately half of the children in foster care are placed in kinship relative placements. Commitment to ohana runs strong in Hawaii. For more than 20 years, Hawaii has utilized Ohana Conferencing, the bringing together of family, extended and immediate, and everyone else that has a vested interest in the success of the family, to facilitate family decision making. Family Finding is also done immediately to search for family once a child is placed into foster care. We recognize the importance of maintaining family connections and it pays off. Enjoy the issue!

Happy National Adoption Day!

By Breahna Robinson, MSW Intern for Hawaii International Child



This year's National Adoption Day was another huge success! It took place on November 18, 2018 at Ice Palace with over 300 families and children in attendance. Families shared they had a ton of fun and were able to meet new people, catch up with old friends, and spend quality time with one another. As many families skated and enjoyed their time on the ice, there was one family in particular that had a loving story.

Alette Kanakaole is the grandmother to five awesome grandchildren, Jason, Jayda, Jayze, Jadyn, and JayLee. Family is important to Alette, so there was no question that after her grandchildren were in foster care, she took the initiative to make sure they were all kept together. It took 26 months before everything was finalized, but in the end she was able to adopt all five grandchildren. Alette explained that "They're happy, it was a tough process in the beginning, but I'm happy now that I have them." She explained that she and her husband took the youngest when she was 10 months old, and that child is now three, which showed how long the process took. She went on to proudly say that they are all growing into great people. Alette gives credit to the programs she has been a part of and exclaimed that they all have been wonderful. Alette stated that she and her children always look forward to the annual ice skating event and that her children have a lot of fun.

This National Adoption Day event was made possible by HAPA (Hawaii Adoption and Permanency Alliance) and funds from GLUE, HAPA member agencies include Catholic Charities Hawaii, Child and Family Service, Family Programs Hawaii, Hawaii International Child, Partners in Development Foundation and Better Together Hawaii. HAPA's goal is to provide support, education and advocacy for all those involved in the adoption triad.

HUI HO'OMALU STATEWIDE RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Hui Ho'omalua Statewide Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) provides support to the resource family community through identifying ongoing needs, facilitating communication and by sharing resources.

The Building Connections Newsletter is published quarterly by Partners in Development Foundation, 2040 Bachelot St., Honolulu HI 96817-2433, to provide information regarding foster and adoptive care to resource families, service providers, and to the public.

This newsletter may be viewed on the following websites:

www.hawaii.gov/dhs/protection/social_services/child_welfare/foster

www.pidfoundation.org

If you would like to receive this newsletter, please call:

441-1121 (O'ahu),

888-879-8970 (Toll Free) or

E-mail: RAC@pidfoundation.org

GO GREEN!

Want to help our environment? Contact us today and request an electronic copy!



Kinship Care Basics

By Elisa Agpaoa, Catholic Charities Hawaii

Kinship Care is when a child is removed from the home and placed with relatives or adults with whom the child has a close family-like relationship. Kinship placement allows children in foster care to maintain connections to communities, school and family members. Evidence shows that being placed with relatives can help reduce trauma.

According to the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), for Hawaii's Children in 2017,

577 of the children in out-of-home-care in 2014 were living with relatives.

In 2015, approximately 9,890 grandparents in Hawaii had the primary responsibility of caring for their grandchildren.

Of the 919 children exiting out-of-home care in 2014 in Hawaii, 68% were reunited with their parents or primary caretakers.

The following data is taken from the Grandfamilies Grandfacts for Hawaii (see more about Grandfamilies in following pages):

17,000 (5%) children live with a relative with no parent present.

61,017 (19.9%) children under 18 live in homes where householders are grandparents or other relatives.

46,913 (15.3%) of these children live with grandparents.

14,105 (4.6%) of these children live with other relatives.

When a child in foster care is placed with family members or people known to that child, that home is provisionally licensed as a Child Specific Resource Family. Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH), assists with the Child Specific Licensing process for the Department of Human Services for those families to be unconditionally licensed. Part of CCH's services are to conduct Home Studies and to provide HANAI Trainings for Child Specific families to gain a better perspective on what to expect and some of the challenges that children in foster care face day-to-day. Previous resource caregivers have shared: "HANAI Training was the most comprehensive and well-structured program that we have sat in as a child specific/resource family during August 2016. We fostered in 2000. Cannot compare." "I learned a lot in our HANAI Training that the average person isn't thinking about or even anticipating. I found it to be very helpful." "I love how friendly everyone is. It's a nice feeling when you are treated with respect and Aloha."

CCH also works in collaboration with Partners in Development Foundation, who assists with the General Licensing process and Families Program Hawaii, which provides additional resource trainings and support services for Resource Caregivers.

Help! Looking For Stories!

Would you like to share some helpful tips? Got an inspirational story to tell? Know of some useful resources in your community?

These are just some of the many possibilities that you can contribute to this newsletter. Please send them over so we can all benefit from each other's wisdom!

We would also appreciate any feedback, comments and suggestions on ways that we can improve this newsletter so that it is useful to you. What would you like to see in it? Topics of interest? We look forward to hearing from you!



Looking to
help your
kids and
teens with
their
mental
wellness?



Find out more about how Amare Global's revolutionary and award-winning gut-brain axis system can help you and your child feel less tension, depression, anxiety and fatigue naturally.

Visit: www.healthygutmind.com
Email: healthygutmind@gmail.com



INVITATIONS COMING SOON!

Annual National Foster Care Month Celebration

Keep a lookout in your mail—invitations for the Annual National Foster Care Month Celebration in May will be arriving right around the corner!

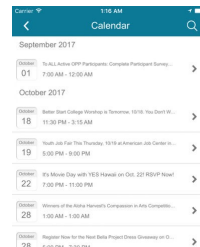
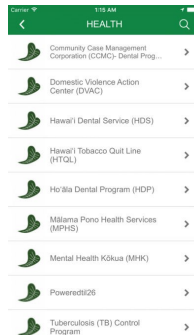
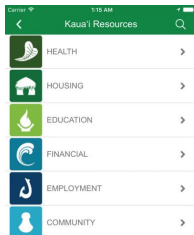
To our newer Caregivers and Adoptive parents, the celebration is a fun event for the whole family. It's hosted by the Foster Care Training Committee in collaboration with other community members. Past events have ranged from fun in the sun at Secret Island, chilling out after dark at Ice Palace, and even the grand-opening for the heart-wrenching play, *Dragonfly: The Story of a Young Girl's Journey through Foster Care* by PlayBuilders Hawaii. The events are great opportunities for not only Caregivers and Adoptive parents to bond with others like yourselves, but for the youth and children in your care to socialize as well. The events are well attended—as many as 328 people were at the Ice Palace celebration in 2018!



Watch for your invitation in the mail around April 2019 and be sure to RSVP! Hope to see you there!

DOWNLOAD THE APP! Foster HOPE Hawai'i

IT'S FREE, AND FULL OF INFO! HERE'S A PREVIEW:



The app's information is island-specific; find detailed information on topics such as Health, Housing, Education, Employment. There is also a Calendar with important dates for college deadlines, community happenings, and more! The app is updated regularly, and you can set it up to receive alerts of upcoming events and new resources.

The **Foster HOPE Hawai'i** app is one way the State of Hawai'i is working to empower youth who are in the foster care system and the many adults who support them. The Independent Living Collaborative, which implemented and maintains the app, is led by EPIC 'Ohana and includes Hale 'Opio, the Salvation Army, Hale Kipa and Maui Youth and Family Services.



Happy Retirement, Cynthia Goss!

By Stephanie Helbush

Cynthia retired from the Department on December 28, 2018, after 34 years with Child Welfare Services. We wish her all the best retirement has to offer! I spent a few minutes with her to get some of her thoughts and reflections on her years with the Department.

What position are you retiring from at the Department?

Asst CWS Branch Administrator (ACWSBA)

How long have you been with DHS and in what different capacities? ie where did you start, unit, etc.

After I earned my Master's Degree from UH Manoa in 1984, my first job was with Child Welfare Services or Child Protective Services at the time. I am proud to say that my entire career with the State of Hawaii was with CWS. I went straight to Child Protective Services and worked in case management, assessment, intake, adoption, and then administration. My last day with the Department was December 28, 2018, I will retire after 34 years of service.

How is the Department different now than it was when you first began there?

The Department is much more family focused. It is important for us to engage family, use a strength-based, child-centered approach, and now we are introducing Trauma and Healing Informed Care in our approach with families. We strongly believe, along with the rest of the nation, that when a child can stay at home safely, that is the preference. If children have to come into foster care, relative or kinship care is the priority.

What strides do you feel the Department has made in the years you have been there?

Engaging with families is a two-way street, a partnership. We listen to and hear the voices of the family. Ohana conferencing is an important tool and resource to bring the family together, we engage the family in that process to focus on solutions and support.

What are your hopes for the Department after you are retired?

The work is very difficult and taxing over time, and therefore difficult to retain our workers. We have tried methods of retainment such as pay increases, but that has not worked. My hope is that the Department will introduce new ways to retain workers, such as allowing staff to work from home a couple of days a week to do data entry, case updates, writing reports. When done right, it's a win-win for the Department, the employees, and the families.

What are some of your fondest memories of working with the Department?

Helping families get back together is always rewarding. I have also made many lifelong friends at the Department, and this is also where I met my husband. This job was not possible to do alone, therefore friends and my husband, Jay, were keys to my success.

Anything you would like to share with Resource Caregivers?

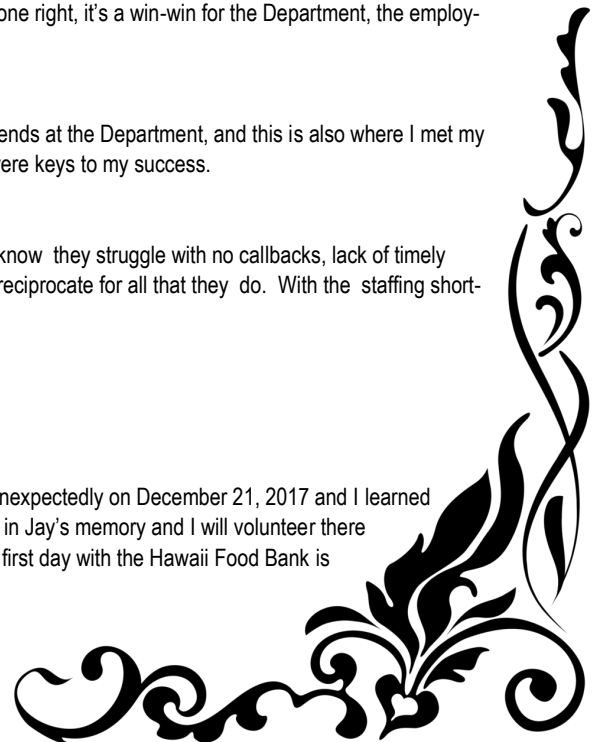
I understand that they feel unappreciated and I wish that we could do things differently. I know they struggle with no callbacks, lack of timely information, and I feel bad about that because we count on them and I want to be able to reciprocate for all that they do. With the staffing shortages and large caseloads, this has been difficult.

What are your hobbies/interests?

I am a big baseball fan. I love watching the Dodgers play!

What do you plan to do in your retirement?

I will take care of myself, my son, my house and my dog. My husband Jay passed away unexpectedly on December 21, 2017 and I learned that he was a long time supporter of the Hawaii Food Bank. I am continuing the donations in Jay's memory and I will volunteer there twice a month packing snack baggies for children and packing food boxes for seniors. My first day with the Hawaii Food Bank is January 5, 2019.



A moment to reflect...



In the middle of a season where schedules become out of control and people are rushing from here to there, I had an opportunity to pause for a moment to watch something very beautiful take place. A teenager on my caseload was matched with a potential forever family. The beauty of this was that it answered two heart cries:

First, on the part of the youth.... "When is anyone ever going to choose to love me?" and second, on the part of the family.... "When will we be able to welcome a child into our home and pay forward the love that was afforded to us?" This from a family who was unsure if they were willing to adopt a teen, but when they looked at things they realized age didn't matter if it meant a child wouldn't have to age out of a system without a place to call home.

The road will have it's bumps and bruises. Expectations won't always be met, but sometimes they'll be exceeded!!! This is family. This is forever. Thank you to all the people (like you) that makes the journey of our kids in foster care that much easier. To the social workers, and the treatment teams, to the resource caregivers, to the adoptive parents: You each play such an important role in the journey of our youth in care, and from the bottom of my heart I just want to say thank you.

PRUDENT PARENTING: OVERNIGHTS AT FRIEND'S HOME

The following is an excerpt from the *Don't Say "NO" Until You "Know" guide*, which was developed by the State of Hawai'i Department of Human Services, Child Welfare Services and our community partners. The guide presents common questions and answers for Resource Caregivers on providing normalcy for children/young people in foster care so they can participate equally in age or developmentally appropriate extracurricular, social, and cultural activities, just as their classmates and peers do. These Q & A's can be found within the Normalcy Guidelines provided by your DHS licensing worker.

Question: For a child/young person in foster care to stay overnight at a friend's house, do the adults living or staying in the friend's house have to undergo a Child Abuse and Neglect (CA/N) and Hawaii State Criminal History Check?

Answer: No. The friend's parents are not considered resource caregivers and do not need a background check. Only the Resource Caregivers and adoptive parents, their adult household members, and staff at child Caring Institutions are required to undergo background checks.

Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR) 17-1625 Licensing of Resource Family Homes for Children §17-1625-17 Personal qualifications required.

(b) The agency receiving the application shall conduct criminal history, child abuse and neglect (CA/N) registry checks, background, and any other checks deemed necessary, such as employment checks, on applicants, employees, and household members.

Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) §346-17 Child placing organizations, child caring institutions, and resource family homes; authority over, investigation of, and standards for:

(j) The department or its designee shall request:

(1) A criminal history record check through the Hawaii criminal justice data center on all operations, employees, and new employees of child care institutions, child placing organizations, and resource family homes, including all adults residing in the resource family homes, subject to licensure pursuant to section 846-2.7; and

(2) A child abuse and neglect registry check on all operators, employees, and new employees of child care institutions, child placing organizations, and adults residing in a resource family home subject to licensure in accordance with departmental procedures.



There may be times when you, as a resource caregiver, have a question or concern and are not sure where to go for help. We will be presenting scenarios in each newsletter as a way to highlight different situations and suggestions on "Who Ya Gonna Call?"

If resource caregivers or other family member falls ill which affects the ability to care for the child, be sure to contact the child's social worker and licensing worker.

Resource Family Basics ~ FYI

Enhancement Funds and DHS Funds to promote normalcy

The Department is committed to support children and young people's participation in normal activities and to have them be included in resource caregiver's family vacation.

Children and young people in foster care may qualify for private enhancement funds, which are available from:

- Friends of Children's Justice Center of East Hawaii and Maui
- Family Programs Hawaii for Oahu, Kauai, and East Hawaii
- Friends of the Children of West Hawaii

The funds may be used to assist the child and young person's participation in extracurricular and family activities such as camp, sports and school functions, airfare for family vacations, etc. Funding is limited for Enhancement funds to \$500 per child per year.

Funding is also available through the Department of Human Services to assist children and young people's participation in travel, extracurricular, social, cultural, and community activities.

Please contact your child's social worker for any funding requests. Forms for Enhancement funds are available on DHS and FPH website.

'OHANA REWARDS

Want to know how you could receive a \$200.00 gift card?

Would you like your name to appear in a future RAC newsletter?

All you need to do is help us find more homes for Hawai'i's keiki in foster care!

If you can refer, help, cheer, and see your referral to the finish line to become licensed, you could earn a **\$200 gift card** of your choice

Congratulations

Jen Emmick - Kauai
Steve Guo - West Hawaii
Gaberelyn Oshiro - Oahu

Call Hui Ho'omalū today at 441-1117 or 1-888-879-8970 (toll free) for more information!

Happy Anniversary!

How long have you been a resource caregiver? We would like to honor you by printing your name and current years of service in our newsletter. We know you are out there but we need your help. Please send your name and years of service to:

RAC@pidfoundation.org ★ (O'ahu) 441-1125
(Toll Free) 1-888-879-8970

*Mahalo for all you do for
Hawai'i's keiki and families!*

Advertise in the Newsletter—Promote Your Business

100% of the proceeds will be used towards supporting Hawai'i's resource families

Display advertisements with borders: business card size = \$30; 1/4 page = \$50; 1/2 page = \$75; full page = \$115.

Send information to: Hui Ho'omalū—RAC, 680 Iwilei Rd., Ste. 500, Honolulu, HI 96817

441-1125 (O'ahu) ★ 888-879-8970 (Toll Free) ★ Fax: 441-1122 ★ Email: RAC@pidfoundation.org

RAC reserves the right to accept, reject or edit advertisements, articles and notices of events based on publication schedule, space limitations, and appropriateness.



Welcome to FPH's Resource Family Support Services Corner

By Karen Kaneshiro-Soon, RFSS Warm Line Family Resource Specialist
Resource Family Support Services (RFSS) is funded by the Department of Human Services

Ask the Warm Line



**Karen
Kaneshiro-Soon**

As we ring in the New Year, I'd like to introduce myself as the new Resource Families Support Services - Family Resource Specialist. I am a former resource caregiver myself and have many years of experience as a social worker working with resource caregivers and their children. I welcome you as resource, adoptive and legal guardian caregivers to contact me on the Warm Line for your referral and support needs.

One of the common concerns that we hear from Warm Line callers at this time of year is how best to prepare for the upcoming tax season. This can be an especially stressful time as we look to our family's finance health and consider possible Federal Tax Benefits that may be available to resource caregivers, adoptive parents and kinship caregivers.

Although it would not be possible to provide an in-depth summary of tax benefits, here are 3 tips to consider:

- 1) Explore the possibility of deductions related to the costs of being a licensed resource caregiver, qualifying expenses related to a legal adoption, or an adoption tax credit with your tax professional.
- 2) If you are considering including your child on your tax returns, it will be necessary to have your child's valid Social Security number (SSN) on hand, as required by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Please note that your child's SSN and name on file with Social Security cannot always be made available to you.
- 3) Although the IRS does not expect or want additional documents attached to your tax forms, it's a good idea to keep documentation & record-keeping for at least 3 years.

If you are a member of the National Foster Parent Association, see their website at <https://nfpaonline.org> to access their "Federal Tax Guide for Foster Parents" for additional information.

Oahu Holiday Party 20th Anniversary!

With the smell of popcorn and a light "snow fall" of cotton candy floating through the air, Christmas came early this year for many resource families and children in foster care at Family Programs Hawaii's 20th Annual Holiday Party for Resource Families. On December 2nd, Oahu resource families gathered together to celebrate the holiday season in a room filled with smiles, giggles, and the sound of holiday cheer. Many first time families attended the party this year. Here is what some of them had to say:

"My first time we are here, so blessed to see the love and aloha. Feeling like my granddaughter deserves this special day."

"This is our first Holiday Party and our family had so much fun. We literally enjoyed everything. The sponsors that came out to show support are awesome."

"This is the first year attending this function and we loved it. Thank you so much. You put a smile on their faces."

We love to hear these stories and the many others that were shared at this event. This party is truly a community effort that would not be possible without the assistance of the Department of Human Services and the many other amazing sponsors and community groups who gave so much to make the annual Holiday Party happen this year. Mahalo Nui Loa and we look forward to the many years to come that we can celebrate all the amazing resource families who share their love and aloha with Hawaii's keiki.

SUPPORT
Foster Care
change a lifetime

BAKE SALE

February 13, 2019 (Wednesday)
7:15 am - 1:00 pm

Shops at Dole Cannery, 2nd Floor Atrium
Treats & gifts in time for Valentine's Day!

SILENT AUCTION!

BAKED GOODS!



ALL proceeds earned will be used for events that directly support Hawaii's foster keiki & the resource families who care for them.

For more information, contact

Partners in Development Foundation-Hui Ho'omalua Program

Stephanie 441-1121 or Richele 441-1127

This event is brought to you by the Department of Human Services, Partners in Development Foundation, Catholic Charities Hawai'i, & Family Programs Hawaii

Everyday Heroes

By Ronnie Hee, Program Coordinator, Family Programs Hawaii

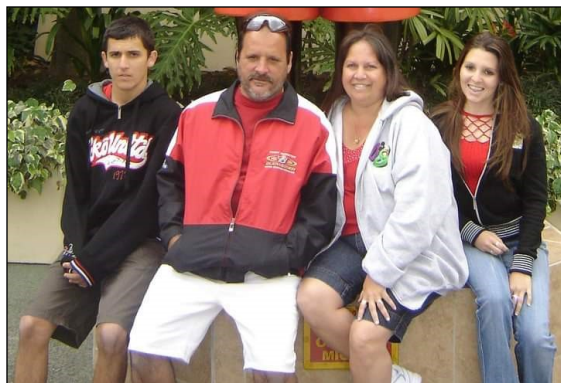


Photo taken 2008: (L-R) Brother Scotty,
Uncle Steven, Auntie Loretta, Annette

"Having the support of my Auntie and Uncle when I was growing up was essential to me becoming a successful adult," **Annette Snyder** describes. "They supported me through one of the toughest times in my life and continue to do so. Taking in a 13 year old and an 11 year old is no easy task for anyone," she explains. "I knew that I had someone to pick me up when I fell down and celebrate with me when I succeeded."

Twenty-nine year old Annette Snyder works with current and potential resource caregivers every day in her position as Lead Community Liaison with Partners in Development Foundation. She knows the challenges that resource caregivers face. Annette also knows first-hand how important these caregivers are to the lives of the children in foster care because she was a former foster youth herself.

Extended family members play a key role in the lives of children, especially when they live together. According to the National Kinship Alliance for Children, over 42,000 children in Hawaii live with grandparents or other relative caregivers. Perhaps that can be attributed to the multi-generational living that is unique to Hawaii. However, it is notable that more than half of Hawaii's children in the foster care system are placed with relatives, nearly double that of the national average.

'Kinship care' is the term used to describe the arrangement in which grandparents and other relatives care for children whose own parents are unable to care for them. Grandparents, uncles, aunties, and other relatives become much more than extended family. They become the main source of love, support, structure, and care for the child while reunification plans with parents are in effect. Sometimes reunification between the child and their birth parent happens. Sometimes it does not. Regardless of the outcome, kinship care is a vital component in the health and well-being of a child in foster care.

Ed and Lori Ignacio have been resource caregivers to their two young granddaughters for nearly two years. They try to keep things as normal for their granddaughters as they can, including keeping their granddaughters connected with other relatives. "We have to keep the family ties strong," Ed explains. "The girls are looking for love and they're caught in a situation out of their control," he continues. "We're here for them. I don't want them to be lost forever."

Rhonda Felix was a resource caregiver to her three grandchildren for one year before the children got reunified with their mother. "They are a success story and have done amazingly well," she says. Because of her positive experiences as a resource caregiver, Rhonda wondered if she could extend that love to children who she didn't know. She asked herself, "Could I love a child who I don't know as much as I love the ones that I do?" Needless to say, Rhonda tested out her theory, became a general licensed resource caregiver, and has been providing care to a sibling pair, aged four and 15, for nearly two years now. Her goal is to one day have a large home and have as many children live there as she can.



Rhonda Felix



Annette Snyder



Ed & Lori Ignacio

Whether related or not, resource caregivers provide that for children in foster care. They are our everyday heroes.

Resource caregivers come in all shapes, sizes, cultures, and generations. Not all families look the same. However, one thing is certain—children are indeed in need of love, support and care. Whether related or not, resource caregivers provide that for children in foster care. They are our everyday heroes.

RESOURCES

GRANDcares: Resources and Supports for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

When parents are unable to raise their children and grandparents step in, everyone benefits! Children do better in school, have fewer run-ins with the law, and stay more connected to their families. Meanwhile, grandparents also benefit both physically and emotionally. But oftentimes these grandfamilies experience challenges in navigating social supports and resources. GRANDcares aims to support grandparents and grandchildren as they navigate the foster care system.

GRANDcares is a project of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and currently operates on Maui, Big Island and Oahu, with support from a USDA grant. It includes three parts:

Powerful Tools for Caregivers – GRANDfamilies. The 6-week program for grandparents focuses on managing grandfamily stress, setting and reaching goals, finding community resources, communicating in a way that advocates for themselves and their grandchildren, and making tough decisions.

GRANDcares Youth Club. The 6-week 4-H club is designed for grandchildren between ages 8 and 12 who are raised by their grandparents. It is held at the same times as the grandparent program and includes fun, hands-on activities that build leadership, confidence, communication skills, goal setting, and much more.

Service provider webinars. These quarterly webinars focus on strengths-based strategies to better support grandfamilies.

To learn more about GRANDcares, get involved with upcoming trainings, or bring this program to your agency, community, or organization, contact Heather Greenwood-Junkermeier at heather8@hawaii.edu.

There is a new resource for grandparents raising grandchildren! Here is what the authors of "The Grandfamily Guidebook" had to say about their new book:

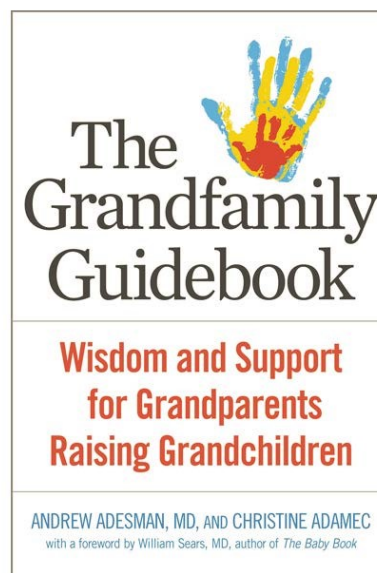
The Grandfamily Guidebook

Wisdom and Support for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

If you find yourself raising your grandchild – whether it's due to a parent's addiction, incarceration, or inability to parent – consider this book your one-stop guide. In the *Grandfamily Guidebook*, authors Andrew Adesman, MD and Christine Adamec share expert advice on raising a grandfamily coupled with insights from grandparents who have been there themselves. Discover practical tips on topics like coping with uncooperative birth parents; working through legal, financial, and medical issues; overcoming challenges with school and social life; and managing your own self-care through it all. With this book, you'll have a practical, inspiring guide to raising a family...your grandfamily...again.

"Wow, what a needed book!... If grandkids came with a guidebook, this book would be it." --Dr. William Sears, Author of *The Baby Book*.

This book is available to borrow through the Family Programs Hawaii Lending Library. Please call the Warm Line at 545-1139 (Oahu) or 1-866-545-0882 for more information.



The following is an excerpt from “Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: The Rewards and Challenges of Parenting the Second Time Around” by Melinda Smith, M.A., and Jeanne Segal, Ph.D. Find the full article at: <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/parenting-family/grandparents-raising-grandchildren.htm/>

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

The Rewards and Challenges of Parenting the Second Time Around

By Melinda Smith, M.A., and Jeanne Segal, Ph.D.

When parents are absent or unable to raise their children, grandparents are often the ones who step in. Raising a second generation brings many rewards, including the fulfillment of giving your grandkids a sense of security, developing a deeper relationship, and keeping the family together. It also comes with many challenges. No matter how much you love your grandkids, taking them into your home requires major adjustments. But with the right guidelines and support, you can roll back the years and make a real difference in the lives of your grandchildren.

The challenges of grandparents raising grandchildren

As grandparents, we usually have the benefit of interacting with our grandkids on a level that is once removed from the day-to-day responsibilities of parents. For many of us, grandparenting means a weekend together every now and then, an afternoon play date, an evening babysitting, a summer vacation, or chats on the phone and email exchanges here and there. But when life circumstances change—through divorce, the death of parents, or changes to a parent’s work or school-related responsibilities, for example—it often falls to grandparents to assume full- or part-time responsibility for their grandchildren.

Also known as “kinship care,” a growing number of grandparents are now taking on the parenting role for their grandchildren, thus foregoing the traditional grandparent/grandchild relationship. This often means giving up your leisure time, the option of traveling, and many other aspects of your independence. Instead, you once again take on responsibility for the day-to-day maintenance of a home, schedules, meals, homework, and play dates. And if it was tragic circumstances that required you to step into the role of a parent, you’ll face many other stress factors, such as coping with your own and your grandchildren’s grief.

But raising your grandchildren, while challenging, can also be incredibly rewarding. Yes, you may have to deal with colicky babies or moody teenagers, but you’ll also experience a much greater connection to your grandchild’s world, including their school and leisure activities. You may also find yourself rolling back the years, rejuvenated by the constant companionship of much younger people. And you can derive immense satisfaction from providing your grandchildren with a safe, nurturing, and structured home environment in which to grow and feel loved.

Exploring your rights as a grandparent

Some circumstances make it necessary for grandparents to seek legal help. If there’s been a divorce, death of one parent, estrangement, or the suspicion that your grandchildren are undergoing neglect or abuse, you may need to consult a lawyer or advocacy group to clarify your legal rights and ensure access to your grandchildren.

Grandparents raising grandchildren Tip 1: Acknowledge your feelings

The prospect of raising grandchildren is bound to trigger a range of emotions. Positive emotions, like the love you feel for your grandchildren, the joy in seeing them learn and grow, and relief at giving them a stable environment, are easy to acknowledge. It’s more difficult to admit to feelings such as resentment, guilt, or fear.

It’s important to acknowledge and accept what you’re feeling, both positive and negative. Don’t beat yourself up over your doubts and misgivings. It’s only natural to feel some ambivalence about childrearing at a time when you expected your responsibilities to be dwindling. These feelings don’t mean that you don’t love your grandchildren.

Tip 2: Take care of yourself

You probably weren’t expecting to be raising kids again at this stage in your life. At times, the physical, emotional, and financial demands may feel overwhelming. That’s why it’s vitally important that you take care of yourself and get the support you need. When you’re preoccupied with the daily demands of raising grandkids, it’s easy to let your own needs fall by the wayside. But taking care of yourself is a necessity, not a luxury. You can’t be a good caretaker when you’re overwhelmed, exhausted, and emotionally depleted. In order to keep up with your grandkids, you need to be calm, centered, and focused. Looking after your own mental and physical health is how you get there.

Tip 3: Your grandkids will have mixed feelings too

Moving to a new home is never easy, even in the best of circumstances. When children are dealing with the loss of regular contact with their parent or parents, the move is even harder. It will take some time for your grandchildren to adjust, and in the meantime, they may act especially contrary and difficult. And if the children have suffered from emotional neglect, trauma, or abuse, those wounds will not disappear just because they are now in a safe place. They will need time to heal.

Tip 4: Focus on creating a stable environment

While it will take your grandkids time to adjust to their new living arrangement, there are steps you can take to make the transition easier. Above all, your grandchildren need to feel secure. Children thrive in an environment that is stable and predictable.

Tip 5: Encourage open and honest communication

Communicating openly and honestly with your grandchildren is one of the best things you can do to help them cope with their new situation. It’s especially important to take the time to really listen to your grandkids. In this difficult time, they need an adult they can go to with their questions, concerns, and feelings.

Tip 6: Encourage contact with parents

It is not always possible for children to remain in contact with their parents, and at times, it may not be in a child’s best interest. But in general, it is healthy for your grandchildren to maintain relationships with their parents, especially if they may live with them again. If meeting in person isn’t possible, you can encourage contact in other ways, including phone calls, video chats, cards and letters, and email.

Calendar of Events

O'AHU

- Jan 25 (Fri)** **Waianae Resource Families Support Group:** 5:30pm-8:00pm. Maili Learning Center. RSVP to FPH at 540-2538 by 1/18.
- Feb 8 (Fri)** **Windward Resource Families Support Group:** 6:00pm-8:30pm. Kailua District Park- Downstairs Meeting Room. RSVP to FPH at 540-2538 by 2/01.
- Feb 13 (Wed)** **GLUE Bake Sale:** 7:15am—1:00pm. Shops at Dole Cannery, 2nd Floor Atrium. Proceeds used for events such as NFCM, National Adoption Month, and National Reunification Month celebrations.
- Feb 28 (Thurs)** **Central O'ahu Resource Families Support Group:** 5:30pm-8:00pm. Aiea United Methodist Church. RSVP to FPH at 540-2538 by 2/21.
- Mar 29 (Fri)** **Waianae Resource Families Support Group:** 5:30pm-8:00pm. Maili Learning Center. RSVP to FPH at 540-2538 by 3/22.

EAST HAWAII

- Mar 9 (Sat)** **Hilo Resource Families Support Group:** 12:00pm-2:30pm. Christ Lutheran Church. RSVP to the Warm Line at 1-866-545-0882 by 3/1.

WEST HAWAII

- Jan 28 (Mon)** **Kona Resource Families Support Group:** 5:30-8:00pm. Kealahou High School. RSVP to the Warm Line at 1-866-545-0882 by 1/21.

MAUI

- Feb 21 (Thurs)** **Maui Resource Families Support Group:** 5:30pm-8:00pm. Kahului Union Church. RSVP toll free to the Warm Line at 1-866-545-0882 by 2/14.

STATEWIDE

- Mar 6 (Wed)** **Online Resource Families Support Group:** 6:30pm-8:30pm. Zoom Web Conference. RSVP toll free to the Warm Line at 1-866-545-0882 by 2/27.

If you have access to the internet, please check the calendar for any additional or updated events at www.familyprogramshawaii.org

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Resource Caregivers are needed to assist with Co-Training Hanai sessions and recruitment activities!

Part-time Co-trainers Needed. *Resource Caregivers/Former Foster Youth on O'ahu, Kaua'i* are needed to co-train new Resource Caregivers in the HANAI curriculum. Your experience is invaluable to a new family just learning about providing foster care. Come and share what you've learned/experienced over the years with others!!! Trainings are generally held intermittently on some weekday evenings and some Saturdays. Training and compensation provided. Pay rate: \$15.00/hour.

Part-time Child Care Providers needed in West Hawaii'i, Kaua'i, O'ahu and Maui to provide child care (i.e., during trainings), in the evenings and weekends on an occasional basis. Training and compensation provided. Pay rate: \$15.00/hour.

Part-time Recruitment Assistants needed in Kaua'i and Maui to staff various recruitment booths and share information with potential applicants about the need for additional Resource Caregivers. Training and compensation provided. Pay rate: \$15.00/hour.

HUI HO'OMALU ~ A Program of Partners in Development Foundation

See www.pidfoundation.org/about/careers Email resume & application w/cover letter to: HR@pidfoundation.org or fax to 440-6619

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Statewide Resource Advisory Committee

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888-879-8970 (Toll Free)

Fax: 441-1122

E-mail:
RAC@pidfoundation.org

The concept for the Statewide Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) was created by the Department of Human Services (DHS) as a means to support the resource family community. Hui Ho'omalua facilitates this committee comprised of adoptive parents, resource caregivers and various community agencies, all dedicated to providing services and support to Hawai'i's keiki and the resource families who care for them. The purpose of the RAC is to identify ongoing needs, facilitate communication, share resources, provide information through a statewide calendar of events and a quarterly newsletter and report on local projects and other topics of interest to benefit Hawai'i's resource families.

This committee, the newsletter and many of the represented agencies are supported and funded by Department of Human Services contracts.

RAC Committee Members:

Catholic Charities Hawai'i—Hui Ho'omalua

Department of Human Services

EPIC, Inc. 'Ohana Conferencing

Family Court

Family Programs Hawai'i—Hui Ho'omalua & It Takes An 'Ohana

Resource Caregivers

Adoptive Parents

Hawai'i Foster Youth Coalition

Partners in Development Foundation—Hui Ho'omalua