

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF
THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION KINSHIP LEGAL TOOLKIT

RESOLVED, That the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges urges all judges, attorneys and other legal professionals to learn about their role in supporting kinship families under law. Nearly 2.5 million children in the U.S. are growing up in kinship families being raised by relatives, or close family friends. Research is clear - when children can't stay with their parents, they do best with kin. Kinship families offer greater stability and permanency, stronger connections to cultural identity, and deeper community ties than non-kin foster families. The ABA Center on Children and the Law, with support from the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, has developed a kinship legal toolkit to assist judges and attorneys understand the value of kinship, the federal laws impacting kin, and their role in supporting kin who open their hearts and homes, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges urges federal, state, local, territorial, and tribal governments and courts, as well as attorneys, judges, legislatures, governmental agencies, and policymakers to:

- 1) Recognize the value of placement and permanency of children with kin, as well as the importance of maintaining family connections, when children are removed from their homes or cannot safely return to live with their parents as evidenced by social science research;
- 2) Encourage all legal professionals to become familiar with the laws and policies that require notification, engagement, and placement with kin, whenever possible;
- 3) Ensure kinship caregivers are meaningfully engaged during court hearings so that they may provide critical evidence to judicial officers to allow for informed decision-making.
- 4) Make sure kin caregivers understand their legal options for involvement in the child's life, the ramifications of their decisions with regard to these options, and have all necessary supports to meet the child's needs.

Adopted as proposed by the American Bar Association by the NCJFCJ Board of Directors, XX/XX/XXX in XXXXX. For further reference, please see:

- Kinship Legal Toolkit at: <https://www.grandfamilies.org/Resources/Kinship-Legal-Toolkit>