



January 2025

NEWSLETTER

KINSHIP CIRCUIT 20

*Happy
New Year*

Who We Are

The Children's Network of Southwest Florida, LLC, was created in April 2003 as the Lead Agency for child welfare services in Circuit 20.

Children's Network of Southwest Florida is a private, nonprofit organization managing the child welfare system in Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Hendry, and Glades Counties. Our mission is to collaborate with the community to protect children and support families. We oversee the care of over 2,500 abused and neglected children and work with more than 50 social service agencies. Additionally, our Diversion Program assists over 300 at-risk children each month. Founded in 2003, we are committed to creating safer communities and providing children with access to resources and stable, loving homes. We collaborate with the Department of Children and Families to oversee the child welfare system in our region.

For more information about our programs, visit www.childrensnetworkfl.com or call us at 239-226-1524.



FAQ

Do caregivers receive financial assistance?

Assistance is available for relative and nonrelative caregivers. Kinship caregivers are encouraged to become licensed level 1 foster parents for increased financial assistance.

What is Level 1 foster parents?

Level 1 is a Child Specific Foster Home provided by Kin caregivers and includes relatives, non-relatives and fictive kin and allows these families to be paid a foster care board rate. Level 1 foster parents receive the same support as Kin caregivers and are provided access to programs and resources to support them and ensure they are equipped to care for the child(ren) placed in their home. Kinship Specialists work closely with the Level 1 caregivers to provide resources to ensure a safe and stable home such as safety locks for homes with small children, fire extinguishers, and financial resources to assist in placement of the children.

What other supports are available?

Available supports include:

child receives Medicaid to cover medical, dental and therapeutic services; education supports; access to financial resources to help meet the needs of the child(ren); and connections to community services.

Funding for Kinship Caregivers



- Relative and nonrelative caregivers can apply for TANF and food stamps through DCF Access immediately upon placement.
 - Food stamp eligibility is based on caregiver's income.
- Relative and nonrelative caregiver funds are not available until the child is adjudicated dependent.
 - Caregiver/Case Manager must apply for relative/nonrelative caregiver funds, they are not automatic.
 - There must be an approved relative homestudy in FSFN for approval.
 - There is no backpay for relative/nonrelative caregiver funds.
 - The caregiver will receive an enhanced payment for the first 6 months (equivalent to foster care board payment). The rate will then drop down to \$242-292 if the caregiver is not Level 1 licensed.
 - Relative/nonrelative caregiver funds are paid by DCF.
- All relative/nonrelative and Level 1 caregivers will receive a childcare subsidy of \$200 per month per child for all children ages 0-5 or school entry.
 - Funding is paid by CNSWFL.
- All relative/nonrelative caregivers must be referred to Level 1 licensing.
 - Placement homestudy and change of custody must be completed and child must already be residing with the caregiver for Level 1 licensing.
 - Funding starts effective the date of licensure.
 - Payment is issued around the 15th of the month for the prior month (prorated if the child is not there for the full month).
 - There is no backpay for Level 1 funding.
- Funding available to Level 1 caregiver:
 - Monthly foster care board rate: \$570.36 for ages 0-5; \$584.98 for ages 6-12; \$684.70 for ages 13-17
 - For ages 13-17 there is a 10% Supplemental Room & Board Rate, which calculates to an additional amount of \$68.47 monthly
 - Childcare stipend: \$200 per month per child ages 0-5 (or school entry)
 - Annual back to school clothing allowance per child: \$200 (ages 0-4); \$300 (ages 5-17) (CNSWFL added benefit, may not be available in other counties)
 - Diaper stipend: \$30 per month per child ages 0-3 (CNSWFL added benefit, may not be available in other counties)
 - Mileage reimbursement for travel for the child (medical, dental, visitation, meetings, etc.): \$0.445 per mile (CNSWFL added benefit, may not be available in other counties)

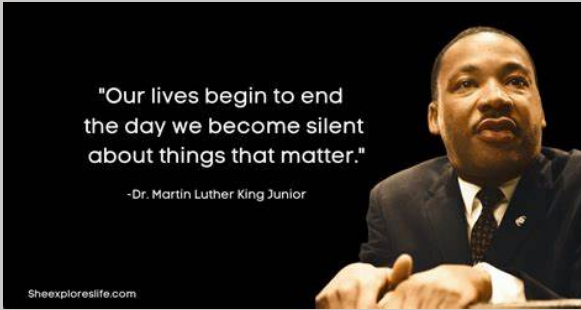
Kinship Navigators

- The purpose of the kinship navigator is to provide support to relative/non-relative caregivers.
- The kinship navigator will read the CBHA (if available) and ensure all referrals are made for the child(ren).
- An intake will be completed by the kinship navigator with the caregiver to identify all needs and services.
- Kinship Navigators will also connect you with community resources. After needs are identified referrals will be made. (Automatic referrals include level 1 and BET intro session).
- The kinship navigator will confirm that the caregiver has necessary information for the child. Copy of CBHA, custody letter, and court orders.
- Kinship navigator will complete an exit assessment to make sure all referrals and needs were addressed.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Greg Reyna at greg.reyna@cnsfwf.org or Giuliana Mendivil at giuliana.mendivil@cnsfwf.org

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January 20th, 2025



Martin Luther King Jr. Day (MLK Day) is a federal holiday in the United States, observed every year on the third Monday of January. This day honors the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a key figure in the American civil rights movement. MLK Day serves as a day of remembrance for his contributions to promoting racial equality, justice, and nonviolent activism.



Resources



Food Assistance (SNAP)

The SNAP Program can add to your food budget to help you place healthy food on the table.

Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA)

TCA gives temporary cash payments to families who have a pregnancy or a child in the home.

Where to apply or see if I qualify?

MyACCESS

Click Here! →



**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT
OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

Resources



What is United Way?

211 is a United Way program that provides free information and referral to human/social service agencies within Lee, Hendry, and Glades Counties. Clients can call and receive information and referrals appropriate to their needs.



Harry Chapin Food Bank
OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

Harry Chapin Food Bank feeds a quarter of a million people each month in our five-county footprint. We serve Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee counties. Here are three ways you can help us lead our community in the fight to end hunger.



FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Read to Dogs

East County Regional Library
Storytime Room (EC)
881 Gunnery Road N
Lehigh Acres, FL 33971
(239) 533-4200
Saturday, January 11, 2025
11:00am - 12:00pm



Jan 26, 2025
9:30-11:30am
Shy Wolf Sanctuary
1161 27th St SW Naples,
FL 34117



KidStrong in Fort Myers on Friday, January 17th for a special class just for children experiencing the foster care system! (Including children in foster, adoptive, or kinship care homes).
REGISTER HERE!



Fort Myers, FL
Sports Challenge America
Mar 7 - 9

