



Advocating for Kinship Care Families

Who represents me?

- Visit Kentucky's Legislative Research Commission website:
<http://lrc.ky.gov/Find%20Your%20Legislator/Find%20Your%20Legislator.html>
- Or call 1- 800-372-7181

How do I contact or set up a visit with my legislator?

- Contact your legislator's office by calling the main office number. You will probably speak with a legislative aid who may set up an appointment over the phone or ask you to send your request in writing. If you send a letter, be sure to include the dates and times you are available, the issues you want to discuss, and the names of others joining you on the visit. If your appointment is arranged over the phone, send a letter confirming the appointment date, time, location, the issues you want to discuss, and any other people who will be coming with you.
- Legislators' offices handle various sizes of group meetings. Often it is easier to schedule an appointment if you go as part of a larger group. As a constituent, you can meet on your own or with a group.
- If your legislator is not available to meet at a time that is convenient to you, consider meeting with an aide or another staff member.

Tips for calling your legislator

- Typically you will speak with a receptionist who will take your call on behalf of your legislator.
- Inform the receptionist that you are a constituent and would like to convey your feeling on an issue.
- You will need to give basic information including your name, address, the issue about which you are calling and your opinion. It is helpful for you to have the name and/or number of the bill you are discussing.
- Phone calls are viewed as a means of communicating a brief opinion. For example, "I want Representative Doe to vote against the XYZ bill." If you want to communicate more than that, consider writing a letter or scheduling a meeting.

Tips for meeting with your legislator

- Be prepared. Bring any relevant materials or [resources](#) with you, like an [infographic](#). If you visit in a group, have one person take the lead. He/ She can introduce the group, make a brief statement about why you are there, and then call on various people in the group to talk about their particular concerns. Have a mock run-through of what you want to say beforehand to ensure everyone understands their roles.
- Legislative visits generally run twenty minutes in length.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, explain that you do not have the answer but would be happy to send the information after the meeting in a timely manner.



Follow Up

- Write a thank you letter to the legislator and staff with whom you met after the meeting. Reiterate your main position on the issues and include any additional information that might have been requested at the meeting. If the legislator was not present, you should still send him/her a copy of the thank you letter you send to the aide.
- Invite your legislator to visit your local support group.

Discussing your concerns with your legislators

- Have 2-3 main talking points with a focus on potential solutions, **for example:**
 - Lift the moratorium on the Kinship Care Program
 - Offer child care assistance
 - Increase supports like training and education for caregivers

Sample talking points

- Actively supporting relatives as they assume new caregiving roles helps children recover from the trauma of being separated from their parents. Restore funding for the Kinship Care Program to support family members stepping up to care for kin.
- Child care is one of the largest expenses in a working household. In Kentucky, 49 percent of caregivers in KY are still active in the labor force and 37 percent of children in kinship care are under the age of 6. Ensure kinship families have access quality child care to balance employment and parenting by creating access to child care assistance for all families in the Kinship Care Program.
- Raising children is a tough job, especially when it is unplanned. Kinship families need adequate support in order to ensure children have every opportunity for success. Create opportunities for kinship caregivers to learn the skills needed for raising kin children.

Share a story

Be sure to:

- Explain how you or your child(ren) are/were negatively impacted by lack of supports, insufficient information, or other experiences or the specific identified needs of your family
- Explain how your clients or members of the community are negatively impacted by lack of supports, insufficient information, or other experiences
- Keep it brief so all points can be incorporated within the small time frame of the meeting

Be careful not to:

- Stray too far from your main point
- Discuss kinship care and foster care as competing priorities. Every kid needs a family and a safe place to call home.