



# Relative Caregiver Certification

## Relative Caregiver Certification means:

- ✓ An alternative and generally faster path than traditional licensure when caring for your related youth in care.
- ✓ Accessible orientation and resources, without annual training requirements.
- ✓ Relative Caregiver Certification includes Fictive Kin, a person who is unrelated to the child in care by birth, marriage, tribal custom or adoption who is shown to have a significant and close personal or emotional ties with the child or the child's family prior to the child's placement with DCFS.

## For placement of a youth in care into a relative caregiver's home, Illinois requires the following:

1. Fingerprint-based checks for all adults (18+ in the home) and name-based background checks for anyone 13+ who lives in the home.
2. A walk-through Safety and Needs Assessment to review the youth's potential living space and identifying needed supports including, but not limited to, concrete goods or safety modifications for the placing worker to provide or assist the relative in meeting the needs of the youth in care.
3. Caregiver Assessment to consider the relative caregiver's ability to care for all physical, emotional, medical and educational needs of the youth in care.

## How does Relative Caregiver Certification support relative caregiver families?

- ✓ Creates safety-first standards for certifying relative caregivers who meet the needs of their related youth in care.
- ✓ Increases financial support for relative caregivers.
- ✓ Makes certified relative caregivers eligible for subsidized guardianship when returning home is not possible.



## What changed?

Governor JB Pritzker signed the [Kinship in Demand \(KIND\) Act](#) into law on February 5, 2025. This law represents a major step forward to support you, our relative caregivers for youth in care!

## What's next?

DCFS is here to support our relative caregivers! Please reach out to your related youth in care's caseworker today to learn more and start the streamlined Relative Caregiver Certification process.