



# Kinship-Friendly Organization Checklist

Use this with schools, clinics, recreation programs, nonprofits, workplaces and other services that want to be easier for grandfamilies to use.

## Language and forms

- ☐ Forms use inclusive choices such as parent, guardian, caregiver or other trusted adult.
- ☐ Staff do not assume that the child's surname matches the caregiver's surname.
- ☐ Staff do not ask a caregiver to explain private family history in a reception area or public setting.
- ☐ Printed and digital information explains unfamiliar acronyms and system terms.

## Authority and consent

- ☐ Staff ask what legal authority or documentation is required for the specific decision instead of assuming the caregiver has or lacks authority.
- ☐ The organization has a clear process for situations where the day-to-day caregiver is not the legal guardian.
- ☐ Staff know when a court order, guardianship document, GACP document or other authorization must be reviewed.
- ☐ Privacy and consent questions are handled by the appropriate professional rather than guessed at by front-line staff.

## Child-centred practice

- ☐ The child is not asked to explain why they do not live with a parent.
- ☐ Staff avoid language that blames or humiliates the child's parent.
- ☐ Family-themed activities allow children to recognize the important adults in their actual lives.
- ☐ Behaviour is considered in the context of trauma, grief, disrupted attachment and changing family circumstances.

## Caregiver access

- ☐ There is a clear contact person or pathway when a caregiver does not know where to start.
- ☐ Staff explain online portals, forms and procedures rather than assuming familiarity.
- ☐ Transportation, disability, language and financial barriers are considered when arranging services.
- ☐ The organization can identify practical accommodations when an older caregiver is managing several appointments or responsibilities.

### Quick test

Could a grandparent walk into this organization tomorrow, explain only what is necessary, and leave knowing what happens next?



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Page 2 focuses on privacy, affordability, collaboration and continuous improvement.

## Privacy and dignity

- ☐ Staff discuss sensitive family circumstances in private whenever reasonably possible.
- ☐ Photographs, social media and publicity involving children require appropriate authorization.
- ☐ The organization collects only the family information it actually needs.
- ☐ Lived experience is never used publicly without explicit, informed permission.

## Affordability and participation

- ☐ Staff know what fee waivers, subsidies, payment plans or equipment assistance may be available.
- ☐ A child is not singled out publicly because the family receives financial assistance.
- ☐ Registration systems can accommodate a caregiver who does not have every document on the first day, where law and safety allow.
- ☐ The organization considers transportation and scheduling when designing programs.

## Working with other systems

- ☐ Staff know when to refer to Child Protection, legal information, mental-health services, school supports or 211 instead of trying to solve an issue outside their role.
- ☐ With appropriate consent, staff coordinate with other professionals rather than repeatedly asking the caregiver to carry information between systems.
- ☐ The organization knows the difference between an emergency, a child-protection concern and a routine family support need.
- ☐ Referral information is checked periodically so families are not sent to programs that no longer exist.

## Learning and improvement

- ☐ Staff receive basic education about kinship and grandfamilies.
- ☐ The organization asks kinship caregivers what barriers they experience.
- ☐ Feedback can be given without jeopardizing a family's access to service.
- ☐ Policies are reviewed for hidden assumptions that every child lives with a parent.

**Need help making your service more kinship-friendly?**

Visit [grandfamiliesinc.com/educators-professionals.html](https://grandfamiliesinc.com/educators-professionals.html) or email [info@grandfamiliesinc.com](mailto:info@grandfamiliesinc.com).