



A Tradition of Caring, Collaborating, and Advocacy **CWLA's Three Decades of Dedication to** **Kinship Caregiving Families**

1991

- Proposed “Kinship Care” as the name for full-time protection and nurture of children by relatives, members of Tribes or clans, non-related extended family members or anyone children and relatives identify as kin. The definition was recommended by the National Commission on Family Foster Care, convened by CWLA in collaboration with the National Foster Parent Association, and published as a chapter, “The Significance of Kinship Care,” in the book, *A Blueprint for Fostering Infants, Children, and Youth in the 1990s*. Until then, there was no widely recognized or defined name; the Commission selected “kinship care” based on the book by Dr. Carol B. Stack, *All Our Kin – Strategies for Survival in a Black Community*. The *National Commission* advocated for kinship care to be recognized as an “essential first option” to be considered when parents and children were separated and under the formal jurisdiction of child protective services. “Informal kinship” was defined as arrangements made by family members or others who identified as “kin.”
- Created a staff position of “National Kinship Care Program Director” to help ensure CWLA’s commitment to kinship care.
- Created a CWLA North American Kinship Care Committee with the Kinship Care Program Director serving as a liaison.

1994

- Published the book *Kinship Care: A Natural Bridge*, detailing the recommendations of the CWLA North American Kinship Care Committee. *

1996

- Published a special issue of the journal *Child Welfare*, featuring articles on kinship care research, policy, practice, and advocacy.*

1997

- Convened the first National Kinship Care Conference in San Francisco, with Dr. Carol Stack, as the keynote speaker.
- Published the book, *Relatives Raising Children – An Overview of Kinship Care*, with seven chapters highlighting the benefits and challenges; clinical concepts; assessment and interventions; case management; race/culture considerations; legal relationships; federal and state policy and program issues; and a case study.*

2000

- Published *CWLA Standards of Practice for Kinship Care Services* providing practice related to supports and services for kinship families, organizational and administrative issues, and community-based support.*

2004

- Senator Hillary Clinton addresses CWLA National Conference and announces introduction of Kinship Caregiver Support Act legislation. The legislation is cosponsored by Senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME), the 2003 CWLA Congressional Advocate. CWLA, working with the Children's Defense Fund and CLASP TO assist in the development of the legislation.

2007

- In testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee, CWLA restates its support for the Kinship Caregiver Support Act, "*Practice Guidelines* have revealed the value of children living with relatives when appropriate. The financial difficulties many relatives experience, along with other challenges, potentially threaten the use and merit of this practice."

2008

- In September, Congress passes the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (HR 6893) on September 17 (PL 110-135). the new legislation allows states to extend federal Title IV-E funding to kinship care families through the use of subsidized guardianships.

2009

- **Developed and published *Collaborating with Kinship Caregivers: A Research to Practice, Competency-based Training Program for Child Welfare Workers and Their Supervisors*, based on research conducted by faculty from California State University, Long Beach School of Social Work. When kinship care emerged as a formal child welfare program in the previous decade, this research-based model of practice supported a collaborative relationship between child welfare workers and kinship caregivers.**

2011

- Sponsored the *National Kinship Summit: A Voice for the Nation's Informal Kinship Care Community*, in partnership with CWLA's National Kinship Care Advisory Committee and the National Committee of Grandparents for Children's Rights (with support from the Hagedorn Foundation), and published a report on Summit recommendations.

2013

- Published the book, *National Blueprint for Excellence in Child Welfare – Raising the Bar for Children, Youth, and Families*. The vision - all children will grow up safely, in loving families and supportive communities - recognizes that kinship families will flourish as well. *

2014

- Convened a National Kinship Care Conference in New Orleans with a focus on the future of kinship care policy and practice.

2016

- Collaborated with the New York Navigator Program and State University of New York at Albany in planning and hosting the September 2016 Kinship Summit; which included participants from various states throughout the country highlighting their kinship care policy and practice expertise.

2018

- Published “Kinship Care and Child Welfare: New Directions for Policy and Practice,” a special double issue of *Child Welfare, Journal of Policy, Practice, and Program*, focusing on kinship families and the successes and challenges they experience, with a view toward assuring a comprehensive system of kinship care that is inclusive of all such families.*

2019

- Updated the 2009 curriculum as *Traditions of Caring and Collaborating Trauma Informed Model of Practice for Kinship Family Information, Support and Assessment*, with a new: *Implementation Guide*, providing the foundation for agency staff – from direct service providers to administrators - to know roles and responsibilities for collaborating with kinship caregiving families.*
Facilitator’s Guide, conducting nine information, support, and assessment meetings for kinship caregivers.*
CAREbook, including all the information, support, and assessment resources (i.e. handouts), for participating kinship caregiving families.*

2020 to present

- Published the book *Reflections – Learning from the Past, Implications for the Future*. Leading figures in the field of kinship care shared their own personal and professional experiences and perspectives spanning a half century to highlight practice values, legislation and policy, research, support and advocacy for kinship caregivers.
- Providing workshops and webinars on kinship care best practices, advocacy, and CWLA’s curriculum, *Traditions of Caring and Collaborating Trauma Informed Model of Practice for Kinship Family Information, Support, Assessment*.*

Thank you for continuing CWLA’s 30 years of kinship caring, collaborating, and advocacy!

