



Kinship Navigator Program

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What is the Kinship Navigation Program?

The Kinship Navigator Program is a demonstration project in Linn and Johnson Counties. The goal of this project is to allow children to stay connected to their communities and Kin when removal from their parental home becomes necessary. Kinship Specialists will assist with developing a network of support and guidance for the Kinship Caregivers who have opened up their homes. Our goal is to assist Caregivers in accessing resources, keeping children safe, feeling empowered and supported.

What do Kinship Specialist Provide?

- ◆ In-Home Services
- ◆ Parent Education
- ◆ Kinship Support Groups
- ◆ Community Resource Referrals

How can you become involved in the program?

Families First accepts referrals for Kinship Navigation Services directly from DHS. If you are a Kinship Caregiver who is interested in the program please reach out to your DHS worker and request a referral.

For more information contact:

kinship@families-first.net

or visit

www.families-first.net/kinship-resources

Like us on Facebook at

<https://facebook.com/FFkinshipcare>

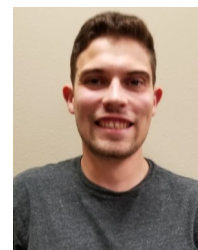
Meet our staff!

Alyssa McDowell B.S.: Kinship Specialist



In May of 2017 I graduated from Mount Mercy University with my B.S. in Education with a Psychology minor. I have experience as a preschool teacher as well as working for Consumer Choice Options and Abbe Health. In August, I began the Marriage and Family Therapist Masters Program at Mount Mercy. With the free time I have, I teach cycling classes and spend time with my family. I'm excited for the opportunity to be a part of the team at Families First!

Caleb Johnson B.A.: Kinship Specialist



My name is Caleb. I grew up in Marion and went to Linn-Mar High School. I received my undergrad at the University of Iowa studying Sociology and Religious Studies. My first experience with human services was with a camp for Chinese orphans in Wuhan, China after graduating college. I then spent a year working as a para with the Iowa City School District with BD students. I also have experience as a shift leader for Foundation II Youth Shelter, which serves kids 11-17 who are runaways or removed from the home. I am also a big NBA fan!



Winter Family Fun Ideas

- * Build a Snowman
- * Go Sledding
- * Have a Movie Day
- * Bake Cookies
- * Make Paper Snowflakes
- * Have a snowball fight
- * Read a book
- * Have a family talent show
- * Go ice-skating
- * Build with Legos
- * Put together puzzles

Thank you for your commitment to children and helping them to develop and grow! We'd like to thank you for opening your heart and home to your Kinship placement. Kinship Care allows us the opportunity to keep children better connected to their communities, school, and people who they are close to. You are doing amazing things!

-Families First Kinship Team

Upcoming Important Dates

- * **Kinship Navigator Q&A Sessions— Let us help you understanding more about our program goals and how we may be helpful to you! Snacks Provided!**
 - * February 12th , 2019 5:30pm-6:30pm
- * **Kinship Caregiver Support Group**
 - * March 12th, 2019 5:30pm-6:30pm
 - * April 9th, 2019 5:30pm-6:30pm

*All of the above meeting will be held at the Families First Office: 411 3rd Street SE, Suite 160, Cedar Rapids.

“Together may we give
our children the roots to
grow and the wings to
fly “

-Anonymous



Family Investment Program (FIP) for Kinship Caregivers

What is FIP?

The Family Investment Program (FIP) is Iowa's Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. FIP provides cash assistance to needy families as they become self-supporting so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives. Relative caregivers may qualify for FIP should they be close enough relation.

Do I make too much money?

Your income is not counted when applying for caretaker FIP for relatives' children. Your income is counted when applying for yourself and your children.

How do you apply?

Caregivers can apply through an online DHS portal at: <https://dhsservices.iowa.gov/apsspssp/spp.portal> or print a paper application at <https://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/470-5170.pdf>. Paper applications must be submitted to your local DHS office.

**Please reach out to your Kinship Specialist regarding any questions or assistance in completing these applications.*

Food Assistance Resources

◆ Green Square Meals

(Monday-Friday 3:30 to 5:30pm)

605 2nd Avenue SE

Cedar Rapids, IA

◆ Mission of Hope

(Monday-Friday 12pm to 1pm)

1700 B Avenue NE

Cedar Rapids, IA

◆ Crisis Center-Food Bank

Johnson County

(319) 351-0128

◆ Benton County Food Bank

Belle Plain, IA

319-444-3031

◆ South Tama City Food Pantry

Tama, IA

641-484-4805