

**Item Title:** Proclaim September Kinship Care Month

**Specific Action Requested:**

**That the Board of Commissioners proclaims the month of September as Kinship Care Month and recognizes Kinship Caregivers for the care they provide to relative children.**

**Item Summary:**

Proclaiming September 2018 as Kinship Care Month will increase awareness and bring attention to the ongoing needs of Wake County children and youth being cared for by a relative caregiver. Kinship Care Month is both a celebration and an advocacy strategy. There is a great need for more programs and policies that support children being raised by relative caregivers. Proclaiming September as Kinship Care Month bring focus to the issues and may encourage more families to become involved in the lives of relative children.

Kinship Care is the raising of children by grandparents, other extended family members, or adults with whom they have a close family-like relationship because the biological parents are unable raise them. Kinship Care reduces the need for children to be placed in foster care, thereby allowing them to maintain connections to communities, schools, and family members. These connections increase the likelihood of eventual reunification with birth parents.

It costs substantially less for children to live in Kinship Care than in foster care. The average monthly foster care payment is \$440 per child. Whereas the average monthly Kinship Care payment is \$198.

**Additional Information:**

Nationally over 5-million children are living with grandparents in Kinship Care Placements. Ove these 5 million, over 225,000 children of reside in North Carolina and 5,000 of these of these reside in Wake County.

Kinship Care is an indispensable resource, yet many of these families face daunting obstacles with very little supports. Children in their care have many of the same problems faced by foster children, including developmental disabilities, maltreatment, trauma, and loss. Additionally, the caregivers may be older, have limited resources, and must cope with the intergenerational issues associated with the birth parents' failure to parent successfully. Despite these obstacles, studies conclude that Kinship homes provide as good if not better outcomes for children than foster care placements in the homes of strangers.

Children have better outcomes when they are raised in their extended family of origin due to these benefits:

- Provides parents with a sense of hope that children will remain connected to their birth families.
- Enables children to live with people they know and trust.
- Reinforces a child's sense of cultural identity and positive self-esteem.
- Helps a child make and sustain extended family connections.
- Continues lifelong family traditions and memories.
- Supports the child in building healthy relationships within the family.
- Fulfills the child's need for safety and well-being and creates a sense of stability in the life of a child.

**Attachments:**

1. Proclamation