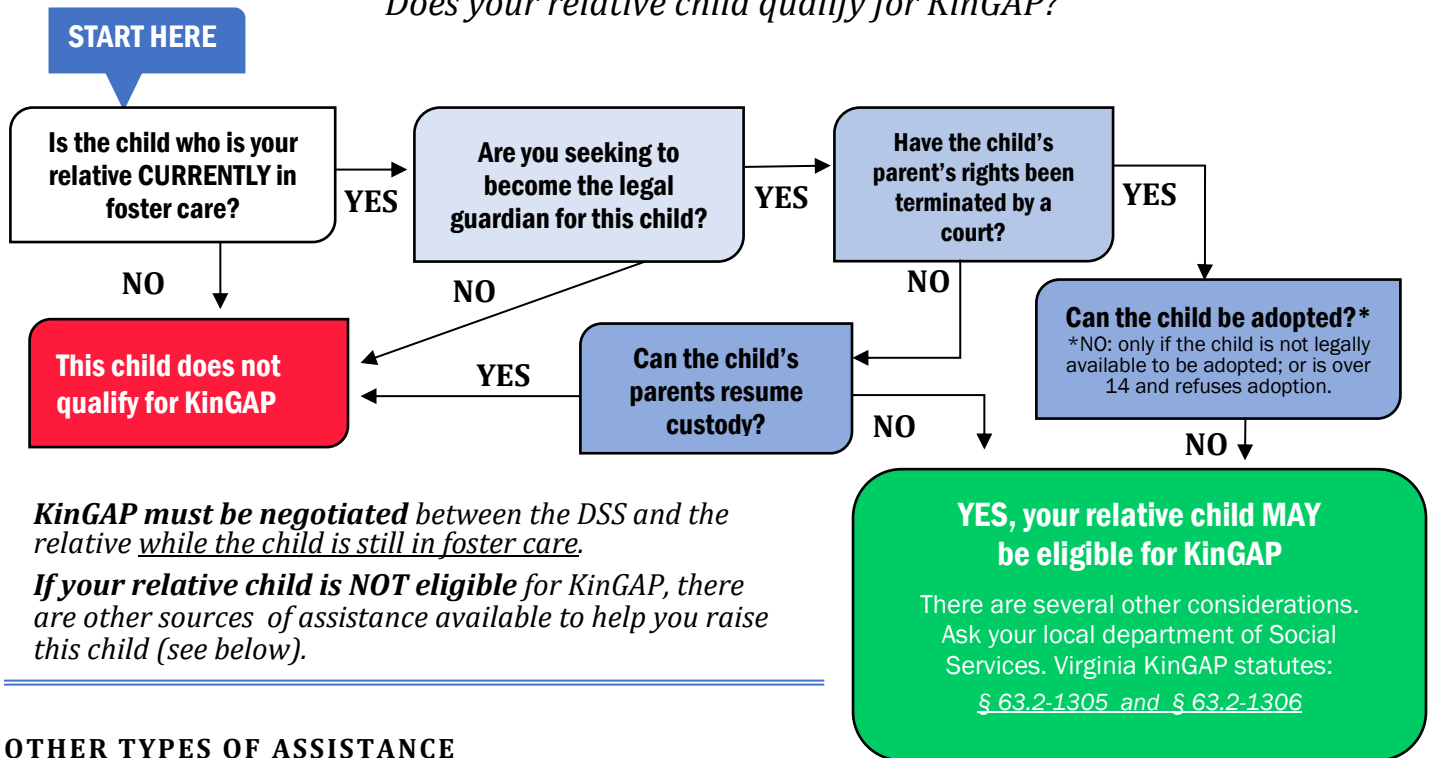


# Virginia Kinship Guardian Assistance Program (KinGAP) Flowchart

*Does your relative child qualify for KinGAP?*



## OTHER TYPES OF ASSISTANCE

**Cash assistance:** A “child-only” grant from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is available to a child living with a *relative* (by blood or marriage) caretaker. Only the *child's* income is counted. However, low-income caretakers may qualify for a larger TANF family grant. Not all eligibility workers know about the child-only grant, also known as “Payee TANF”—ask to see a supervisor if denied.

**Relative Maintenance Support:** IF a child is living with you as a result of CPS involvement, you may be eligible for a Relative Maintenance Support “bump” to the Payee TANF. Ask the social worker who arranged for the child to live with you. Not every situation will qualify.

**Child care assistance:** If you work and the child needs day care, you may qualify for a child care subsidy.

**Food assistance:** A child may make your household eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP). The child may also be eligible for free or reduced-cost school meals. Foodbanks can also help:  
<https://www.feedingamerica.org/>

**General relief:** These funds may be available for some expenses, or if the child living in your home does not meet other eligibility requirements. Ask your local Department of Social Services.

**Housing:** If you need more space to take in your relative child, or you are not allowed to have children on your lease, you may be eligible for public housing or subsidized housing vouchers.

**Legal assistance:** You or your relative child may be eligible for legal information or assistance through your local legal aid office ([www.valegalaid.org](http://www.valegalaid.org)) or [virginia.freelegalanswers.org](http://virginia.freelegalanswers.org).

**Medical assistance (Medicaid or FAMIS):** A relative child in your care should qualify for medical assistance based on the child’s income.

**SSI:** A child may be eligible if they are disabled or a parent is disabled, or if an eligible parent died. Check to ensure the child receives their benefits directly (ie, no one is cashing the child’s check). [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).

**VA benefits:** a child of a veteran or service member may be eligible for VA benefits. [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

**NOTE:** *If the parent previously received benefits or support for the child, immediately contact the local department (or Social Security Administration) to change their records so the child receives the support through you. Failure to do this may result in owing money to the state, or even fraud accusations.*

# Relative Caregivers of a Child

## *Applying for benefits, eligibility and other issues:*

- ▶ **Applying:** Apply for state assistance in person through your local department of social services, or online at [CommonHelp.Virginia.gov](http://CommonHelp.Virginia.gov). Have your financial and legal documents ready.
- ▶ **Eligibility:** Most children do not have their own income, so most will be eligible for some forms of assistance even if you are not, unless they receive some other kinds of assistance (such as SSI).
- ▶ **Denials:** Not all workers are familiar with available assistance for relative families. *If a worker tells you the child in your care does not qualify for assistance, ask to speak with a supervisor.*

**Child support:** If you receive public assistance for a child, the state will ask for information about the child's parents to collect child support payments as reimbursement. *If you do not provide this information, the child could receive a reduced benefit.* (And if you receive child support, this may be used to offset the amount of benefits the child receives. Ask your eligibility worker about this.)

**Citizenship:** If you are not a citizen, but the child was born here or is a naturalized citizen, the child will be eligible for benefits even if you (or the parents) are not.

**Educational help:** If you need help with enrollment, or the child needs tutoring or educational support, check with the counseling office of your child's school to learn what resources are available, or [JustChildren.org](http://JustChildren.org)

**Emotional support:** Children who have gone through difficult situations and separations may need therapy or counseling to help them cope. You may need this too! The child should be able to get a therapist through Medicaid. Your local Community Services Board or Behavioral Health Authority may be able to help with therapy or support groups. [www.dbhds.virginia.gov](http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov).

**Foster Care:** although many families do not want to become foster parents, or have reasons why that won't work for them, the foster care maintenance payment and services provided to the children and families, including the opportunity to qualify for KinGAP assistance in the future, make it worth checking into. Ask your local department of social services.

**Gaining legal custody:** if you seek legal custody for your relative child, you must file with the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court in the correct district. This may be where you live, or where the child's parents live, or where the child lived previous to living with you. <https://selfhelp.vacourts.gov/>

**Navigators and support groups:** some communities have "Kinship Navigator" programs, or support groups for grandfamilies. Ask your local department of social services, or your Area Agency on Aging: <http://vaaaa.org/25-area-agencies-on-aging/>

**Parenting a child:** If you have not been a parent, it's been a long time, or your child has been traumatized, it may be helpful to learn new skills. Ask social services about free or low-cost parenting classes or groups.

**Tax breaks:** with a minor child dependent on you, you may qualify for an Earned Income Tax Credit. <https://www.dss.virginia.gov/community/eitc.cgi>

## **OTHER RESOURCES:**

- Grandfamily fact sheets: <http://www.grandfamilies.org/State-Fact-Sheets>
- African-American grandfamilies: <https://www.gu.org/app/uploads/2018/07/AA-Grandfamilies-Fact-Sheet.pdf>
- Native grandfamilies: <https://www.gu.org/app/uploads/2018/07/AI-AN-Grandfamilies-Fact-Sheet.pdf>
- Benefits for older caregivers: <https://www.benefitscheckup.org/>
- Guide for relatives: <https://www.gu.org/app/uploads/2019/01/Grandfamilies-Report-GRANDResource-Opioids.pdf>
- 211 helpline - call 211, or <https://www.211virginia.org>



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