

Traditions of CARING & COLLABORATING

Kinship Family Information, Support and Assessment Trauma-Informed Model of Practice

CWLA is proud to share our **new evidence-informed model of practice** providing public and nonprofit child welfare agencies and organizations with a **standardized framework** to support **kinship caregivers**.

Traditions of Caring and Collaborating addresses the unique strengths and needs of kinship caregivers, formally through child protective services or through informal family arrangements. This **Model of Practice** identifies **issues of concern** for kinship families and agency staff who work with them including legal, financial, family relationships, health and mental health, child behavior, fair and equal treatment, satisfaction and recommendations. It focuses on **competencies** needed to address those issues through **phases of collaboration** aimed at achieving the **three federally mandated outcomes** for all children: **safety, well-being, and permanence**. The model has guiding principles grounded in a caring and collaborating approach to protect and nurture children and strengthen families. Our approach **differentiates between kinship caregivers and foster parents** based on the dynamics unique to the inherited role of being someone's grandparent, other relative, or a non-related extended family member and the acquired role of volunteering to foster.

The **primary target group is public- and private direct-service staff** that provide child welfare, health and mental health, and older adults services, as well as kinship navigator programs and resource centers, community social service and mental health agencies, faith-affiliated, community-based, or other types of support groups, and public and private child welfare organizations. This content is equivalent to what agencies typically provide to prepare prospective foster families to care for children who are not known to them, but is responsive to the needs and experiences of kinship caregivers.

Three work tools provide specific direction for implementation:

- An **Implementation Guide** and accompanying **PowerPoint slides** provide the foundation to help ensure that all staff know their roles and responsibilities in collaborating with the kinship caregiving families your agency or organization is committing to serve.
- A **Facilitator's Guide** to conduct nine information, support, and assessment meetings for kinship caregivers, with accompanying **PowerPoint slides**.
- A **CAREbook** which includes all the handouts, activities for relative caregivers who participate in the information, support, and assessment meetings.

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About the Implementation Guidebook Writing Team

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Donna D. Petras, PhD, MSW. Dr. Petras is an experienced child welfare practitioner, administrator, researcher and educator both nationally and internationally. She is the former Director of Foster Care for the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and Past President and Founding Board Member of the National Association of State Foster Care Managers. She supervised line caseworkers working with relatives in the child welfare system, which included the family known for the *Miller vs. Youakim* Supreme Court decision giving relatives equal access and resources. Dr. Petras is Professor Emerita of the Jane Addams College of Social Work, University of Illinois at Chicago, as well as Visiting Professor, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. She is experienced as a kinship caregiver for her niece and twin toddlers. Dr. Petras joined CWLA in 2010. Based in Chicago, she is the Vice President, Models of Practice and Training. (dpetras@cwla.org).

Charlene Ingram, MSW. Ms. Ingram joined CWLA in 1998 to serve as a senior consultant, based on her years of experience in public child welfare. She has worked with dozens of state and local public and private agencies providing consultation for program assessment, development, and implementation. Ms. Ingram co-authored CWLA’s *Supervising to Advance Success and Excellence* curriculum. She co-edited the two-volume special edition of CWLA’s *Child Welfare Journal* devoted to kinship care. Now as CWLA’s Director for Program Development, Ms. Ingram continues to work with public and private agencies across the country as well as on special projects. She is a co-editor for CWLA’s recently published title, *Reflections on Kinship Care: Learning from the Past, Implications for the Future*. (cingram@cwla.org).

Eshele Williams PsyD, LMFT. With a doctorate focusing on organizational management and consulting and experience as a licensed marriage and family, Dr. Williams integrates the best of macro and direct practice. She has worked with agencies providing family foster care and adoption services as well as programs for transitional age youth and children impacted by commercial sexual exploitation. Dr. Williams serves as a curriculum developer and trainer for CWLA for their models of practice relating to family foster care, adoption, and kinship care. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the National Foster Parent Association (NFPA). She teaches courses in marriage and family therapy at Pacific Oaks College. Dr. Williams is recognized nationally and beyond for her practice skills and advocacy regarding the impact of fostering, kinship care, and adoption on children in those families. Based on her research and lived experience as a birth child in a family that fostered, adopted, and was kinship caregiving, Dr. Williams’ special focus is on disruption preventions and interventions. (eshele@att.net)