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## STATE OF MAINE

### TASK FORCE ON KINSHIP FAMILIES

#### INFORMATION REQUESTS, AUGUST 3 AND SEPTEMBER 7, 2010

1. Information on the Annie E. Casey Foundation meeting in Pittsburgh. (Sen. Craven and Ginny Marriner)
2. Have changes in adoption subsidy levels changed the rates of adoption in other states and in Maine? (Nina Williams-Mbenge, NCSL and Ginny Marriner, DHHS)
3. How to balance the parents' fundamental right to raise their child and the best interests of the child:
  - A. How do the best interests of the child interact with the parents' wishes and rights?
  - B. What time should be allowed for rehabilitation and reunification?
  - C. When should the parents' visitation with the child be limited?
  - D. Are there standards or benchmarks for the time periods for protective care, guardianship and adoption?  
(Nina Williams-Mbenge, NCSL)
4. Suggestions for amending Title 20-A, section 5205, subsection 3-A ( new law on school enrollment for children placed by DHHS in foster care) to extend it to children placed with kin in order to protect the child's safety and well-being. (Nancy Connolly, DoE and Ginny Marriner, DHHS and Karen and Jane, OPLA)
5. Information on education decisions regarding children in kinship care that are made by superintendents and are appealable to the Commissioner of Education:
  - A. What types of decisions are these?
  - B. Can the law be changed to provide clearer or firmer standards for the superintendents in order to decrease the number of appeals to the Commissioner?  
(David Stockford, DoE)
6. Suggestions for getting superintendents to recognize power of attorney forms for enrolling children in school. (David Stockford, DoE)
7. With regard to financial assistance or medical coverage for kinship families:

- A. If the child qualifies for MaineCare does an adult in the household automatically qualify?
  - B. What is the “granny grant”? What is the child-only TANF grant?
  - C. Are there possibilities for financial assistance with General Fund and non-General Fund monies? For low-income families? For middle-income families?
  - D. How to provide more financial help for middle class kinship families?
  - E. Do staff in the Office of Integrated Access and Support need additional training regarding consideration of the adults’ assets and income?  
(Ginny Marriner, DHHS and Jane, OPLA)
8. With regard to information resources for kinship families in the informal system, how can we more widely disseminate information? (Ginny Marriner, DHHS, Barbara Kates)
9. Suggestions for amending Title 22, section 4038-C and section 4038-D to remove the requirement that a child eligible for a guardianship subsidy have special needs, conforming Maine law to federal law? (Ginny Marriner, DHHS)
10. Suggestions for reducing the threshold for terminating parental rights, making it easier to terminate. (Ginny Marriner, DHHS, Janice Stuver, AAG, Judge Mazziotti)
11. Once a guardianship has been ordered, suggestions for:
- A. The legal standard for modifying a guardianship?
  - B. The legal standard for terminating a guardianship?
  - C. Requirements/limits on filing motions to amend or terminate a guardianship?
  - D. A recognized timeline that should be followed or considered by the Courts?
  - E. Mechanisms for decreasing the uncertainty in kinship care situations, increasing the likelihood of the child staying with the kinship care provider?  
(Judge Mazziotti, Janice Stuver, AAG, Ginny Marriner, DHHS, Barbara Kates)
12. How can Maine provide more legal representation for kinship families in the informal system?
- A. Who qualifies for assistance now?
  - B. Who funds the assistance?
  - C. If legal representation were more uniformly provided would total costs decrease?
  - D. How would savings be calculated and recognized?  
(Ginny Marriner, DHHS, Barbara Kates, Sen. Craven regarding Volunteers of America idea, Judge Mazziotti)
13. Suggestions for legislation on reinstatement of parental rights. (Ginny Marriner, DHHS)