



DCYF 2023 We Are Family Day <https://dcyf.wa.gov>

2024 DCYF Caregiver Survey Report Data Supplement

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Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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Department of Children, Youth, and Families
by Department of Social and Health Services
Research & Data Analysis Division

2024 Caregiver Survey Data Supplement



DCYF 2023 We Are Family Day
<https://dcyf.wa.gov>

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Overview

Supplemental Data for the 2024 Caregiver Survey

The following pages offer detailed results for the 2024 Caregiver Survey. It is divided into five sections:

1. **Responses to Structured Questions:** Distributions on the 11 structured questions for kinship and foster caregivers.
2. **Comment Theme Pages: Support**¹: Illustrative comments from kinship and foster caregivers, organized by support theme and sub-theme.
3. **Comment Theme Pages: Training**¹: Illustrative comments from kinship and foster caregivers, organized by training theme and sub-theme.
4. **Narrative Comment Summaries:** Summary of number and percent of comments in each theme and sub-theme.
5. **Technical Notes:** Discussion of research methodology and survey instrument.

The main 2024 Caregiver Survey Report is available at <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/rda>. Search for “2024 Caregiver Survey Report.”

Key to common acronyms:

Alliance/CaRES: [Alliance CaRES Program](#)

BRS: Behavioral Rehabilitation Services

CASA: Court-Appointed Special Advocate

DCYF: Department of Children, Youth, and Families

DSHS: Department of Social and Health Services

GAL: Guardian Ad Litem



GettyImages.com/Marizza

¹ Comments that are relevant to more than one theme may appear on multiple theme pages.

Responses to Structured Questions

Overall Support and Helpfulness

		Caregiver Type						
		All Caregivers		Foster Caregivers N=458		Kinship Caregivers N=884		Chi-Square
		N	%	N	%	N	%	p-value
Do you feel personally supported by DCYF staff?	Always or Almost Always	469	36%	109	24%	360	42%	<.0001
	Usually	391	30%	158	35%	233	27%	
	Seldom	211	16%	97	22%	114	13%	
	Almost Never or Never	236	18%	82	18%	154	18%	
								0.0011
	Positive	860	66%	267	60%	593	69%	
	Negative	447	34%	179	40%	268	31%	
Total N for %		1,307	.	446	.	861	.	
Did DCYF staff offer you resources or ask if you needed support?	Always or Almost Always	636	48%	170	38%	466	53%	<.0001
	Usually	331	25%	135	30%	196	22%	
	Seldom	205	16%	90	20%	115	13%	
	Almost Never or Never	149	11%	54	12%	95	11%	
								0.0019
	Positive	967	73%	305	68%	662	76%	
	Negative	354	27%	144	32%	210	24%	
Total N for %		1,321	.	449	.	872	.	
Can you get help when you ask for it?	Always or Almost Always	483	37%	127	28%	356	41%	<.0001
	Usually	483	37%	198	44%	285	33%	
	Seldom	235	18%	99	22%	136	16%	
	Almost Never or Never	110	8%	23	5%	87	10%	
								0.5633
	Positive	966	74%	325	73%	641	74%	
	Negative	345	26%	122	27%	223	26%	
Total N for %		1,311	.	447	.	864	.	
How helpful was the support from CaRES?	Very helpful	245	45%	98	38%	147	51%	0.0022
	Somewhat helpful	219	40%	120	46%	99	34%	
	Slightly helpful	72	13%	35	14%	37	13%	
	Not at all helpful	14	3%	6	2%	8	3%	
								0.9060
	Positive	464	84%	218	84%	246	85%	
	Negative	86	16%	41	16%	45	15%	
Total N for %		550	.	259	.	291	.	

Caseworkers and Other Staff

		Caregiver Type						
		All Caregivers		Foster Caregivers N=458		Kinship Caregivers N=884		Chi-Square
		N	%	N	%	N	%	p-value
Do the caseworkers listen to your input?	Always or Almost Always	587	45%	152	34%	435	50%	<.0001
	Usually	419	32%	183	41%	236	27%	
	Seldom	188	14%	78	17%	110	13%	
	Almost Never or Never	122	9%	37	8%	85	10%	
								0.2179
	Positive	1,006	76%	335	74%	671	77%	
	Negative	310	24%	115	26%	195	23%	
Total N for %		1316	.	450	.	866	.	
Are you treated like part of the team?	Always or Almost Always	452	35%	111	25%	341	40%	<.0001
	Usually	434	33%	172	38%	262	30%	
	Seldom	264	20%	114	25%	150	17%	
	Almost Never or Never	159	12%	52	12%	107	12%	
								0.0092
	Positive	886	68%	283	63%	603	70%	
	Negative	423	32%	166	37%	257	30%	
Total N for %		1,309	.	449	.	860	.	
Are you included in meetings about the child in your care?	Always or Almost Always	631	48%	166	37%	465	54%	<.0001
	Usually	446	34%	203	45%	243	28%	
	Seldom	159	12%	65	14%	94	11%	
	Almost Never or Never	80	6%	17	4%	63	7%	
								0.9888
	Positive	1,077	82%	369	82%	708	82%	
	Negative	239	18%	82	18%	157	18%	
Total N for %		1316	.	451	.	865	.	
Do you get adequate information about the needs of the children placed with you?	Always or Almost Always	550	44%	115	26%	435	54%	<.0001
	Usually	358	29%	163	37%	195	24%	
	Seldom	184	15%	99	22%	85	11%	
	Almost Never or Never	154	12%	66	15%	88	11%	
								<.0001
	Positive	908	73%	278	63%	630	78%	
	Negative	338	27%	165	37%	173	22%	
Total N for %		1,246	.	443	.	803	.	

Caregiver Licensing

		Caregiver Type						
		All Caregivers		Foster Caregivers N=458		Kinship Caregivers N=884		Chi-Square
		N	%	N	%	N	%	p-value
Did licensing staff treat you with respect?	Always or Almost Always	692	80%	246	77%	446	81%	0.2042
	Usually	126	14%	50	16%	76	14%	
	Seldom	30	3%	16	5%	14	3%	
	Almost Never or Never	22	3%	9	3%	13	2%	
	Positive	818	94%	296	92%	522	95%	0.0849
	Negative	52	6%	25	8%	27	5%	
	Total N for %	870	.	321	.	549	.	
Were licensing or home study staff knowledgeable about the process?	Always or Almost Always	652	76%	225	70%	427	79%	0.0058
	Usually	163	19%	74	23%	89	17%	
	Seldom	33	4%	19	6%	14	3%	
	Almost Never or Never	14	2%	5	2%	9	2%	
	Positive	815	95%	299	93%	516	96%	0.0477
	Negative	47	5%	24	7%	23	4%	
	Total N for %	862	.	323	.	539	.	

Training

		Caregiver Type						
		All Caregivers		Foster Caregivers N=458		Kinship Caregivers N=884		Chi-Square
		N	%	N	%	N	%	p-value
How adequately has the training prepared you to care for the needs of children and youth placed in your home?	More than adequate	332	40%	144	33%	188	47%	0.0013
	Somewhat adequate	399	48%	228	53%	171	43%	
	Somewhat inadequate	76	9%	45	10%	31	8%	
	Very inadequate	24	3%	13	3%	11	3%	
	Positive	731	88%	372	87%	359	90%	0.1820
	Negative	100	12%	58	13%	42	10%	
	Total N for %	831	.	430	.	401	.	

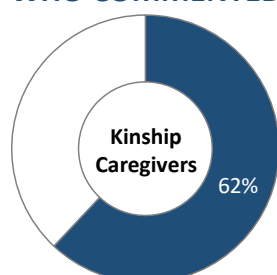
Qualitative Theme Pages: Support

Quality and Helpfulness

THEME | Overall Quality and Helpfulness of Support

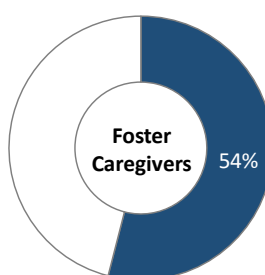
728 of the 1234 caregivers who commented (59%) addressed overall quality and helpfulness of support.

WHO COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC?



499 of 804 commented

312 Satisfied
109 Needs work
78 Mixed



229 of 426 commented

110 Satisfied
46 Needs work
73 Mixed

Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

"It feels like they have had our backs. We have so appreciated their desire for the best of the child."

"They looked out for the best interests of our grandson. They supported us so that we could support our grandson."

"Our courtesy social worker was exceptional."

"We've had a very good relationship with DCYF."

"They always do everything within their ability."

"Overall, everyone was appreciative of us and always made sure to thank us and tell us we were doing a good job. They always offered support and let us know that we could always reach out to them if we had any questions."

"They were willing to help with whatever I needed."

"I am supported well."

"They take care of my needs quickly."

"Very engaged, we have a good rapport. Everybody's been great."

"We had a mostly good experience. However, it depended on the caseworker that was assigned to us."

"They don't support us. We are on our own."

"Nearly nothing has been positive about this process."

"DCYF has not demonstrated the ability to support children, families, and caregivers."

"They could do anything and that would have been helpful. The line 'that's just how it is' got very old."

"I did their job for them, and they did not personally support me."

"I needed help, and they didn't help me at all."

Foster

"They listen to me and my kiddo when we need support, always there for when help is needed."

"Our case manager with our agency is super supportive. We are lucky with our agency."

"Caseworkers and GALs were very knowledgeable and communicative during one of our kid's cases – they were supportive of us, supportive of biological parents, and always available to answer questions or concerns."

"They have been an amazing support and have walked me through some very hard things."

"[Caseworker] was absolutely amazing. Always checked in, cared about the child and us."

"The best social worker we had told us 'thank you' every time he saw us and was supportive to us as a family."

"I've had really mixed experiences – some have helped a lot and some have been MIA."

"If you are clear on what you need, you can usually get that information or that level of support. If you don't know exactly what you need, sometimes it takes longer."

"I would say it is very dependent on the caseworker. Our current caseworker is awesome. I had a different experience with the last one."

"There is actually no real support for foster parents in my experience."

"I did not feel supported by most of our caseworkers."

"Every instance we have asked for help, we have been denied it."

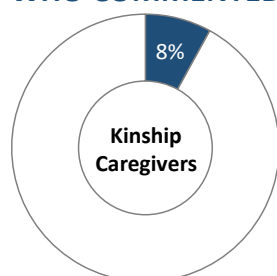
"I feel completely let down. I might be done doing this."

"They do what they are required to do, no more, no less."

THEME | Other Sources of Support

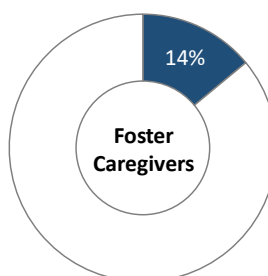
125 of the 1234 caregivers who commented (10%) addressed other sources of support.

WHO COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC?



66 of 808 commented

49 Satisfied
14 Needs work
3 Mixed



59 of 426 commented

37 Satisfied
15 Needs work
7 Mixed

Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

"We appreciated Treehouse. They paid for Driver's Ed. One of our kids needed soccer gear and they helped get that."

"Our CASA is great. She listens and provides me with answers."

"South Sound Parent to Parent was helpful with resources."

"They sign us up for Treehouse. The Care Alliance sets up events to connect us."

"The guardian ad litem made sure I never ran out of diapers. She would drop off things I needed without me asking."

"We also had tribal workers, and they were so much more helpful."

"They had the guardian ad litem meet us at the store so we could buy things for the child."

"I got most help from other parents."

"The GAL that we have now has been very understanding and on top of the situation."

"FPAWS [Foster Parent Association of Washington State] is a lifesaver."

"Synergy and Home Builders were very helpful. WISE [Wraparound with Intensive Services] was also very helpful. They educated me on what trauma response is. They acknowledged that my road was not easy. They gave me support when I felt like I was failing my girls."

"The attorney was very helpful with getting up to par with what is going on and keeping us updated on meetings."

"Our out-of-state tribal social worker and Chief have been most supportive."

"I think the GAL is supposed to come once a week and we've only seen her twice. I think it's important that they come more often as my granddaughter enjoys talking to them. The attorney is supposed to call weekly, but we've seen him twice and nothing since and he's supposed to be contacting her often."

"CASA could use more training. Judges should not make friends with bio parents."

"It would be nice to find a local group of foster parents to contact for a support group."

Foster

"Even after the adoption, the CASA worker gives me direction."

"One of the neat things they changed is that Treehouse is everywhere and not just King County."

"The GALs are the most supportive; they help get resources and answers and information when I need it. You can tell they care on a personal level."

"The WISE workers did home visits regularly."

"[Redacted] is amazing. He is a guardian ad litem. He has always called me to follow up on my case and goes above and beyond. I am so thankful he is part of our child's case."

"The CASA group really plays a vital role in the child's best interest."

"The best support was my Cares Alliance mentor with support and information."

"The CASA workers are very good about coming to us and getting to know the foster child."

"I had an amazing guardian ad litem, they should assign GALs to every family."

"The children in our home are part of a tribe, and the tribal social worker is incredibly supportive."

"The support groups have worked for me when I experience stress."

"I find all my support through my agency and other foster care families."

"Our child's GAL is kind and supportive, but ineffective in advocating for the child's needs."

"The attorneys and GALs could use more training."

"We had a GAL that met with the child one time for maybe 10 minutes, and knew nothing about him, but then she advocated in court to return home to a situation that nobody thought was a safe situation."

"The children have a child advocate that typically knows very little, has no voice, and isn't paid."

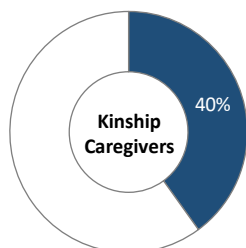
"Why aren't local foster parents given a regular in-person meetup time for mutual support and resource sharing, not a Facebook group or a phone number."

Caseworkers and Other Staff

THEME | Professionalism and Respect

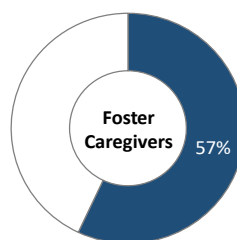
570 of the 1234 caregivers who commented (46%) addressed professionalism and respect.

WHO COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC?



326 of 808 commented

109 Satisfied
172 Needs work
45 Mixed



244 of 426 commented

69 Satisfied
119 Needs work
56 Mixed

Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

"They always talked to me with respect and kindness."

"My latest caseworker spent the time to get to know me and the child. It was really wonderful."

"They are very quick to respond to my inquiries or requests, and willing to work with me and my schedule."

"Social worker is very involved with my new baby. She made a point to be at the meeting with the PIC (developmental assessor) so we could discuss child's needs."

"They are always supportive in everything. [They] are always available to answer my questions and guide me in the process."

"They have tried. Where we have been tripped up is when there seems to be a lack of knowledge about programs and policies."

"Didn't feel as if anyone really cared. I was just someone to care for the children."

"The social workers need to be less judgmental and more open-minded about what is happening in the case."

"In the past I've had a social worker who made me feel judged or scrutinized as a caregiver."

"Never make assumptions. Some people have learning disabilities and are slower to understand."

"Be more honest, follow their own rules. Stop changing rules or ignoring them to suit their own needs."

"They make the caregiver feel inadequate or a criminal. Improve cultural competencies."

"Be on time for home visits."

"They scared me, and I didn't trust them, because they always twisted things."

"I think being honest with timelines, not over-promising, thinking about the family that has taken in the child instead of just thinking about the child and the biological parent, being prompt with information they promise to the caregiver."

Foster

"They all seem to be very professional. I feel that what I say is private and for the most part everything feels organized."

"Everyone we have worked with has been kind and professional. Seem to sincerely care about our needs and well-being as caregivers."

"They are always there to answer questions or provide guidance. They have been able to help guide us in the right direction."

"The social workers really care about everyone involved in the case."

"For the most part, they put our placement's needs first and foremost."

"It honestly depends on the worker, it can vary so much. We had one that was great and doing her best with what she had in her control and we had one that was awful and never available and talked down to us."

"The social workers need more training."

"They could follow up in a more timely manner with what is needed in the case."

"To be honest, we as foster parents are treated very poorly. We are treated as babysitters and with no respect."

"Don't make promises and then not follow through."

"My husband and I feel like the DCYF department has not been forthcoming and has been borderline dishonest with us regarding our current placement."

"Collaborate on a solution to visits that works for all parties and does not require us to be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with no regard to the other people in the family."

"Don't treat foster parents like the enemy."

"Treat us as though we matter, that we have feelings."

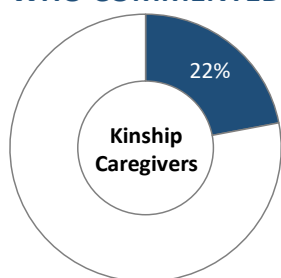
"Honest communication about a child's needs/situation prior to placement."

"Following through on what they say they are going to do."

THEME | Listening and Inclusion

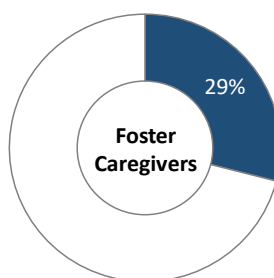
302 of the 1234 caregivers who commented (24%) addressed listening and inclusion.

WHO COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC?



177 of 808 commented

78 Satisfied
86 Needs work
13 Mixed



125 of 426 commented

51 Satisfied
61 Needs work
13 Mixed

Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

"They are always there to listen to my concerns."
"I call them and they call right back and we work as a team."
"They listen to us and do frequent check-ins."
"Sometimes I need someone to talk to and they have always been there for me."
"Our social worker has always listened to our needs."
"They include me in all the hearings and make sure I know I have a say in what goes on."
"Listened to my concerns about the child returning home."
"I can discuss important issues with them."
"They included me in all of the decisions about the needs of the foster child."
"As a caregiver I don't have much say, but I feel my input is heard."
"I have been included in meetings, however they do not acknowledge anything that I have to say."
"Our insight and observations are disregarded and minimized."
"Kids who are close to being an adult. They act like my sibling is a child and they don't treat him like his age. He has his own opinion and should have more say in what he does."
"Acknowledge family input more."
"There were multiple court meetings that I have not been included in."
"They have been the caseworker for the child longer than I have had her, so they think they don't need to listen to new information from me."
"I didn't get notice about court dates, and my caseworker said, 'you don't need to be there,' and I said, 'well, I'm caring for the child.'"
"They need to listen to what the foster parent has to say about the case. Trying to understand where the foster child has been and what the foster parent is trying to do."
"Listen to the kids. When they turn 13 or older they have a lot more to say."

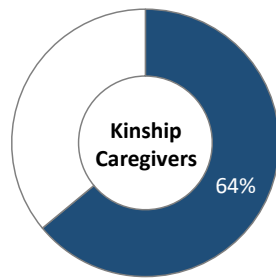
Foster

"I have been blessed with three caseworkers that support me and my family well by keeping us up to date on resources, appointments, events. Listening to my experiences and taking them seriously and keeping me in the loop with my boys and what's happening."
"I feel they listen when we tell them what is going on with the child."
"They do well making sure that we are included on any meetings about the children in our care."
"I feel like we have two really good social workers now. They really listen to us and come to us first. They make us feel like they really want to work with us."
"I feel that they hear my concerns and value my input."
"They listen empathetically and take time to understand the needs of the child and our family."
"Our social worker now makes me feel heard regarding child placed with us, but in the overall picture we are not taken into consideration at all when it comes to the well-being of the child and what is best for the child."
"I wish I could have a bigger role in decision planning."
"Allow us to give feedback on child's need and ways to support them related to visitation, etc."
"Stop ignoring us and not acknowledging our suggestions."
"Listen to what I have to offer on a child's needs and how they're doing. I am with the child 24/7 and in contact with all the agencies involved. Please listen to what I'm seeing every day!"
"Consider our input more, we know the child best."
"Hard to sometimes feel like we care the most but get the littlest say."
"Listen to what is being shared from the foster families, share court dates, and take input from families."
"We are often not informed of important court dates and very rarely are we asked to talk in court."
"It often seems that we are the last to be listened to, responded to, or considered. And I don't need to be number one – but as the person taking full-time care of these kids, I should at least be heard out."

THEME | Communication and Access

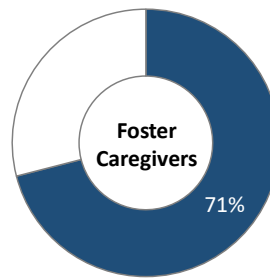
826 of the 1234 caregivers who commented (67%) addressed communication and access.

WHO COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC?



521 of 808 commented

231 Satisfied
189 Needs work
101 Mixed



305 of 426 commented

94 Satisfied
112 Needs work
99 Mixed

Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

"They respond to my questions and provide me with the information requested. They respond to my emails and texts in a timely manner. They always do home visits each month."

"Our caseworker is as quick as a text away."

"They come to the house. Anytime I need anything I call the caseworker, and they are right on the ball with everything."

"We communicate well, anytime I have a question or concern my caseworker responds quickly."

"My caseworker answers my questions to the best of her ability. Sometimes she will need to ask her supervisor and get back to me, but she always does that in a reasonable time."

"They were available to answer questions, and I received frequent phone calls to ensure we felt supported and informed."

"The caseworker was always available to talk or email, and he got back to me quickly as well."

"I am very happy with how informative and accommodating [they are], but sometimes a deeper explanation of their role and how specifically to take advantage of resources available to me."

"I had to ask a lot of questions. Information is not provided upfront. I got a new social worker in the fall, and she was helpful and gave me information that my first caseworker should have given."

"My caseworker never calls me. I have to call her, and it takes a week at least if she chooses to get back to me."

"Be sure we have the information we need to provide care and meet needs, like for medical health and school issues."

"I thought it was crazy that I never met the social worker in four months, and no one ever checked out our house."

"Be way more transparent and honest, providing us with all information and explaining the process."

"I know that it's not okay to share what the child went through, but that gives me no clue about the child's trauma. Not knowing the child's individual needs is what brought our fostering to an end."

Foster

"We've had amazing caseworkers this year, they call or email me before I even need to reach out to them, or if I do call them, they almost always answer immediately or reply quickly."

"They did monthly visits and responded to my phone calls, emails, and texts."

"They get back to any questions or concerns I have in a very timely manner and never make me feel bad for reaching out."

"They answer my texts, emails, and phone calls quickly."

"It varies caseworker to caseworker. Sometimes I get answers and help quickly, other times I feel like I am badgering them for help."

"We always feel like we are only getting part of the picture when a child comes into our care."

"There is a HUGE lack of transparency and communication."

"Sometimes there is information missing or delayed in getting information about a child's medical or social needs until later in a placement."

"My caseworker assumes that I already know how everything in the system works and doesn't explain processes or give clear instructions."

"Communicate more clearly. Respond more quickly to our questions."

"MORE INFORMATION! Would love more information about what is going on in child's case so that I can manage their expectations instead of just always saying 'I don't know.' The kids want more information, and they deserve to know what's going on."

"There was no communication for the first 10 days of placement, possibly because it was before Christmas, but that should not have been an excuse."

"Tell us they don't know the answer but will work hard to figure it out. I hate being told wrong information especially with new social workers."

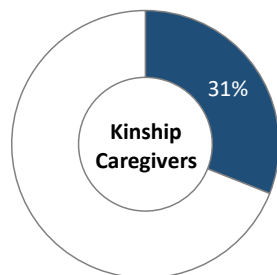
"Getting updates on the cases more than once a month would ease a lot of the frustration. When big decisions are made, they are not communicated to us."

Organizational Processes and Policy

THEME | Legislation, Policy, and Processes

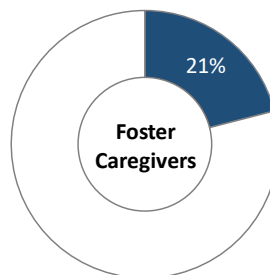
352 of the 1234 caregivers who commented (29%) addressed legislation, policy, and processes.

WHO COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC?



216 of 808 commented

5 Satisfied
199 Needs work
12 Mixed



136 of 426 commented

6 Satisfied
123 Needs work
7 Mixed

Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

"They keep the child's interest in mind first and foremost."

"They gave us our two nieces instead of sending them to another foster home."

"I don't think they look out for the welfare of my grandson. They are so worried about the parents that they don't worry about the child enough."

"They could look more at the big picture and make decisions in the best interests of the child."

"The welfare of the child seems like it comes second to the progress of the parent. Provide a binder of information regarding how the system works and what to expect at what stages when a child is first placed into a family's care."

"We had several caseworkers, and it would have been nice to stay with just one."

"The best way to support me is to keep the same staff and stop changing them out with other people because then I feel like I'm starting all over again."

"Process paperwork in a timely manner so things are not delayed."

"Our paperwork kept getting lost so it would be good to have a better system about paperwork."

"Getting access to healthcare needs and school information took too long when action needed to happen immediately."

"They haven't completed the home study at my home yet, this has been going on for the last six months. So, I haven't had any financial help at all."

"It would be nice if they had a better after-hours way to reach someone for these kinds of emergencies."

"They need to move the case to the county where the placement is so the foster parents can meet the social worker face to face."

"I was never contacted by DCYF for placement of my grandchildren and when I found out about them being in the system, I asked for them and had all kinds of issues and had to get an attorney."

Foster

"They are really good at keeping siblings connected with each other."

"Intake line was responsive when after-hours help was needed."

"It's very clear that the #1 goal of foster care is to prevent lawsuits. It has nothing to do with the child."

"HB1227 is so troubling to me, and it's causing issues in our case and in other cases. I wish the state would be able to look at the whole thing and make the best decision for the child, and not be hamstrung by this new law."

"I think that they should support the bio parent better. I know the parent and she is homeless and trying to survive. If the goal is reunification, they should support her and get her back on her feed."

"It took us 2 ½ years to go through an adoption that was uncontested, and it shouldn't take that long."

"More continuity in caseworkers."

"When placing a child in a home, a risk assessment should be made to evaluate the actual needs of the child placed in the home, along with the need of every child in the home as well."

"More consistency (social workers change too quickly) and more reasonable timelines that we can all follow through."

"For first-time foster homes, pair them with a caseworker or mentor that specializes in new families."

"I can't reach someone over the weekend, so that would help."

"CHIPRs [Child Information and Placement Referrals] themselves should undergo another round of quality control before being sent to foster caregivers. I have read several placement requests that put the child in two different schools/grades within the same form."

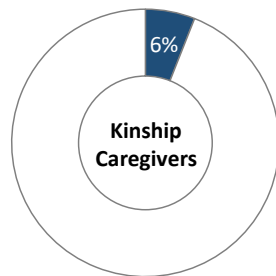
"We had three different case workers. It was hard to transition among them. It was challenging for both me and the child to adjust."

"Unfortunately, the Department is too busy to be proactive, they are more reactive."

THEME | Coordination

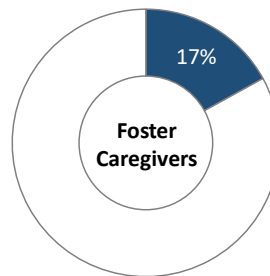
88 of the 1234 caregivers who commented (7%) addressed coordination.

WHO COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC?



51 of 808 commented

6 Satisfied
44 Needs work
1 Mixed



37 of 426 commented

11 Satisfied
25 Needs work
1 Mixed

Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

"With my first, caseworker was in Western WA and I have a local caseworker and they communicated well."

"They even helped our interactions to bridge gaps with Treehouse and other organizations."

"Be on the same page! We've had multiple caseworkers for the same child. Information changes each time the caseworker changes."

"There are times when it seems that the agency doesn't know what is going on amongst themselves."

"I got caught off guard by people from different agencies that contacted me. Often one person didn't know what the others were doing. The system doesn't seem organized."

"They have so many people involved, the right hand doesn't know what the left one's doing. Shameful."

"When they transfer caseworkers, some things fell through the cracks, and we lost TANF. We still are not eligible for additional assistance."

"Our case is in Yakima, and we live in Spokane, and it would be great if the two offices communicated better."

"We have a well safety person who comes and doesn't communicate to our caseworker."

"Communication between departments was horrible. Very overwhelming to have so many duplicate visits. Various caseworkers did the same thing over and over and the case got moved to new caseworkers often. No one seemed to pass the previous information along."

"Because there have been so many different social workers, important information does not seem to be passed on correctly, misplaced, left undone, etc."

"The social workers all need to work together and be on the same page."

"Answers to the questions I ask are different from each caseworker."

"More assistance with connecting to other agencies such as DDA."

"Turnover is really high and lots of times information is not passed on."

Foster

"I feel as though our caseworkers in our city do very well at communicating. I'm thankful for consistency with licensors and caseworkers."

"They do well at teamwork most times to help our teen in care."

"Our (private) agency is fantastic. They are happy to run interference to follow up when the state does not respond."

"We don't really know where the issues are but there is some sort of breakdown between the caseworkers and their superiors. It makes it look like the caseworkers are making empty promises, but we don't really know if that was the case."

"Have better communication between departments in DCYF and with the courts to speed up processes."

"[We need] consistency on the rules. Social workers give different answers on what they can do to support us."

"More communication between all participants in the system."

"We got differing information regarding support for the adopted child."

"The social workers need to communicate better with [private agency] so that we are all on the same page."

"Better communication between the caseworkers involved in the case."

"More standardized interactions with social workers. They sometimes have different expectations."

"I should not have to have five of the same conversations with five different people every month about the child's needs, experiences, health, interactions, etc. There should be a portal where you all can go to get this information one time. I should not have to spend HOURS and HOURS every month having the SAME conversations over and over."

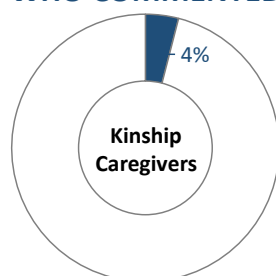
"There seems to be a conflict with what is okay with our private agency and DCYF. The private agency is stricter on most things, and they don't communicate."

"Better coordinated care."

THEME | Need More Staff

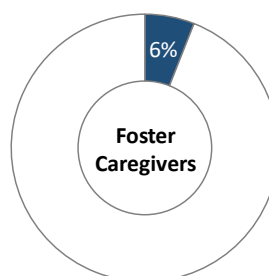
83 of the 1234 caregivers who commented (7%) addressed needing more staff.

WHO COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC?



51 of 808 commented

0 Satisfied
51 Needs work
0 Mixed



32 of 426 commented

0 Satisfied
32 Needs work
0 Mixed

Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

"I don't feel like the caseworkers don't care. They are just overloaded, and they aren't really hearing us."

"Caseworkers are understaffed and need more help so they can help foster parents."

"One issue is maybe more staffing. Caseloads are outrageous."

"Hire and train more staff – caseworkers and supervisors."

"Caseworkers can be hard to reach – unit is understaffed, they try hard but there are human limits."

"Because she [case manager] had a large caseload, she wasn't always available."

"The people are always leaving, and it is hard to catch up the new team without impact to the child."

"They are having staffing issues like a lot of agencies. When they work out the staffing issues, there may be a little less pressure on the individuals."

"Have more staff. There could be more of them. Every single individual was doing their best, but there isn't enough man power."

"Make sure the caseworkers didn't have an overload of the kids they are assigned. I know that they are extremely understaffed but sometimes it can make it seem like they do get looked past or just not enough time for them to get back to everyone."

"The turnover of caseworkers is bad. We had four caseworkers in five months."

"There aren't enough workers to do things in a timely manner."

"The turnover rate in social workers greatly impacts the well-being of the children. Children are unable to build trusting relationships because they have to rebuild trust every time a new social worker is assigned."

"We went through six social workers before termination and two before we finally ended up with our adoption social worker. It was confusing, anxiety inducing, and created issues that shouldn't have been there simply because of the turnover."

"The social workers are so busy it just blows my mind."

Foster

"Better staffing. They do the best they can but are struggling."

"They are all overworked, stressed, and too busy to be effective at supporting foster parents."

"Make retention of social workers a top priority – having so many different workers over the life of a child's case was incredibly frustrating."

"The turnover of caseworkers was difficult. We would get to know one caseworker and then they would change, and we would have to start over."

"Social workers are so busy with so many cases that they don't have the time to come and meet the child or even listen to their needs."

"Most of the time I feel like they are just checking boxes they need to show their supervisors themselves. I feel like they themselves have too much of a load so we shouldn't add to it."

"The caseworkers are very busy and overworked. They never really have time."

"DCYF staff turnover and turnover of cases creates more harm to our children in care, bios, and caregivers trying to support them, than some of the kids experience prior to entering care."

"I understand they are short staffed. I could not do their job. The caseworkers struggle so therefore the foster parents struggle and that leaves the children struggling."

"I know they aren't all bad, but I think they need more education and training and less caseload because they are not helpful."

"DCYF is understaffed. I appreciate that the DCYF staff is working very hard and has the best intentions. Yet, they are not able to provide the support needed for the child and caregivers as they do not have enough hours in the day."

"It feels they are over worked and each child they are trying to move off their caseload ASAP."

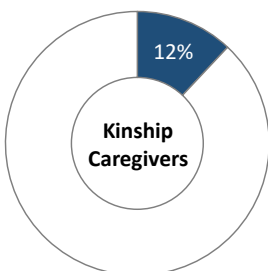
"I do think they truly care for the kids that are in care. Their hands are really tied, and they are stretched thin."

Resources

THEME | Resources

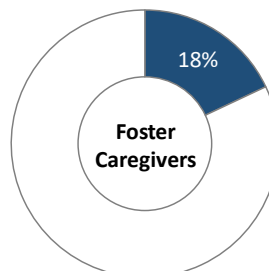
515 of the 1234 caregivers who commented (42%) addressed resources.

WHO COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC?



351 of 808 commented

164 Satisfied
117 Needs work
70 Mixed



164 of 426 commented

70 Satisfied
53 Needs work
41 Mixed

Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

- "They did fairly well with getting us items for the kids when we needed it."
- "They offer resources or solutions I may not think of or remember."
- "They were good about getting me the help that I needed for the child's medical needs."
- "We got our second child at a week old, and we immediately got gift cards and diapers."
- "When they are able to provide transportation, that is very helpful. They have people that specifically do that."
- "They help with diapers and also helped me to get childcare."
- "I have the ability to get medical, dental, and mental health care for the kids without problems, and I did get one clothing voucher this summer."
- "There are so many resources for material things for the kids, which is really reassuring to know that there will always be a place to go grab some new clothes or shoes."
- "They help with the day care of my foster child."
- "I like that they make sure he gets the services he needs. And they have helped get him to appointments when my work interferes."
- "They gave me food vouchers and helped with my rent once because of the child's issues."
- "When I needed behavior help, they were very good at recommending and sending me a list of support clinics to get into a counselor. This worked very well. When we needed help with schooling, they got me into Treehouse. If I ever needed a clothing voucher, after about 2-3 times emailing them I would get the voucher."
- "Although I do get resources, I have not received financial support yet."
- "They've done well directing me where to go for the baby's needs, but they're dragging their feet on getting him a helmet."
- "Very good at monetary help, and things."

Foster

- "If I ask for something, they are good about connecting me with resources."
- "We have had caseworkers who are absolutely amazing and go above and beyond to get services for kids and not just leave it for us to navigate."
- "They are good at offering resources and options when I reach out for them."
- "The private agency will provide day care for when I have to go to an appointment. They also provide monthly respite for two nights a month."
- "Sports and camp fees are often paid for."
- "They provided transportation and that was a huge relief."
- "I work with after-hours for emergency placement. They are the best. They make sure baby arrives with food and diapers."
- "The adoption unit has been great to work with. They do a very good job at making sure you know what resources are available to you and helping you when needed."
- "They offer financial assistance, that is greatly appreciated."
- "BRS [Behavioral Rehabilitation Services] case manager is in close contact and so helpful, also transporting [child] to numerous appointments in another county and paying for some of his meals, clothes, extras."
- "They are good at Christmas presents."
- "I am able to get reimbursed for things the insurance company doesn't cover."
- "Our caseworkers were helpful numerous times in finding needed resources. Particularly in finding a mental health counselor that connected with our kiddo."
- "When there were issues with transportation, DCYF worked to find consistent transportation. We have never had a problem getting day care or other referrals."
- "We were offered many resources, but unfortunately they weren't applicable to our scenario."

Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

"They are quick to get medical and therapies started for the kids, but they need to provide the same for the caregivers and their families."

"I don't think they can [improve] because there is such disparity, and resources aren't available to everyone."

"Could be more resources. They're great at what they have but should be a wider variety of resources they can provide."

"I think it would be cool if they could have more resources for families that are non-licensed caregivers."

"Tell about resources up front instead of waiting for us to ask for them."

"Inform me on day one of resources available. Make the process easier for day care options."

"I didn't find out about the voucher system until two or three months ago, and it's been almost two years since I had the child. So, I think those kinds of resources should be right up front. As kinship caregivers we're not always in the 'know'!"

"Listing resources on paper sometimes helps when stressors make you distracted with everyday life. It would be good to look back on and not have to remember."

"I still have a kid who can't get out of the teens in their performance on standardized tests, but there are no resources for helping her make up for years of lost learning."

"Offer resources for things the kids need. Give a list of programs that will provide the help rather than me having to research them myself. Offer more support services and clothing help as the children grow. Be knowledgeable of summer camps, programs, and recreational activities available to the children to foster physical and emotional growth."

"I paid for my own child care. I was not informed that I could receive monetary support through DSHS until month two. I had asked for items in the beginning and was told that items were ordered, but did not receive them until the child was almost ready to leave my home."

"It would be the resources. To give me names and numbers of all the resources I might need. You have to drag it out of them for each situation. When we have yearly meetings, I find out about things that I think should be given at the beginning. Things like mental health services and insurance is specific to foster care so I run into dead ends trying to find specialty services."

Foster

"[I liked] when there were services accessible. They tried. Because we are in a remote area, many services are not available."

"While I feel like there are a lot of resources for your child while in foster care, after the adoption resources specifically for adopted kids felt limited."

"DCYF workers have asked me if there is anything I need, but they aren't always able to provide what is needed. It isn't in their power, or they don't know how to. For instance, I asked for a clothing allowance for a placement I have had placed with me for over two years. Because I received one at the beginning of the placement two years ago, I was denied another one, even though the child obviously doesn't wear the same size clothes."

"Everything they offer comes with more hoops to jump through, and it's not worth the hassle."

"It would be nice if things like reimbursement for mileage was a bit easier to obtain. It took about six months to get mine sorted."

"My two diabetic kids need supplies, and they are not covered under their insurance. Why can't we get insulin or test strips? They've sent the prescription to the wrong pharmacy, and it's taking me months and I can't get it."

"It would be nice if respite care was more available."

"More in-home support or funds for special needs child[ren]."

"Our greatest frustration at this time is that it can feel like a guessing game to access information and resources. We feel that if we do not know what exactly to ask for it is not offered."

"Help us get access to needed therapies."

"Send a clothing voucher or 'care box' with the necessities when placing children."

"I would like to be paid for damages in my home. It shouldn't be at my expense, and I am hesitant to take in the next child if I haven't got repairs done from the child before."

"When we ask for support they typically tell us they don't think they can get the resources and then the child doesn't receive the support they need."

Caregiver Licensing

THEME | Reasons for Not Being Licensed

288 kinship caregivers provided reasons for not being licensed.

Caregivers speak . . .

"I tried to get a kinship license, and they said I was not eligible."

"Completed my application back in November 2023, but still waiting for it to be processed."

"I was not aware I could be licensed for kinship only."

"I have a temp license and I'm working on the kinship license. They changed the worker, and I have to start over. The new worker wants their own data."

"I was in the process but lost placement of the child due to loss of housing."

"Wasn't able to finish my home study because the worker would not return my calls."

"It's because getting the license would have taken too long, and my brother would have turned 18 before it was final."

"It seems very time consuming and invasive."

"I wasn't aware how important it was and wasn't guided to get it done first."

"I am caring for my granddaughter and am not interested in any other children coming into my home."

"I just wanted to have my granddaughter with me and the judge gave custody already."

"We applied for guardianship instead."

"As a grandparent I didn't feel that it was necessary."

"My husband is on the road and out of state three weeks out of the month, and no time for classes needed to be licensed."

"I don't want to go through any more classes to take care of my grandson."

"It has never been necessary to get my license."

"I am a single mom with five kids of my own."

"Foster system is broken, and I want no part in destroying children's futures."

"I have some health problems."

"I take care of my mom as well, and it was too much for me."

"I don't intend to continue taking in foster children."

"The system is corrupt! They aren't interested in the best interest of the children."

"Didn't want to receive financial help from the state."

"The foster system was too stressful for our family. Not caring for children but dealing with DCYF staff."



DCYF 2023 We Are Family Day <https://dcyf.wa.gov>

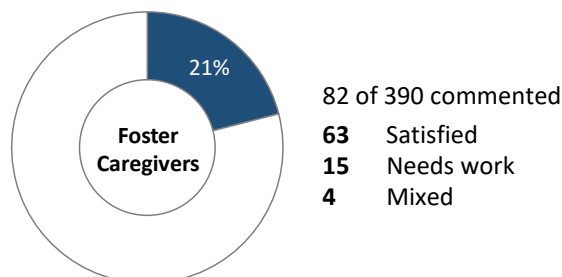
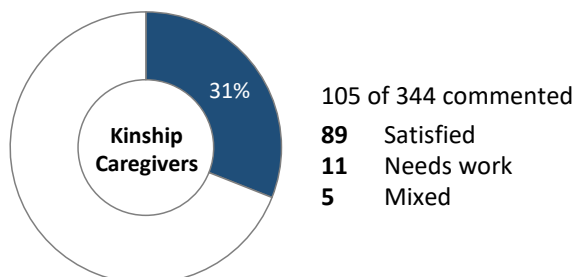
Qualitative Theme Pages: Training

Training Quality and Helpfulness

THEME | Overall Quality and Helpfulness of Training

187 of the 734 caregivers who commented (25%) addressed overall quality and helpfulness of training.

WHO COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC?



Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

"It gave me the tools I needed to help these kids."

"[Training] allowed more empathy and understanding for all of those involved."

"Gives you a good mindset to cling to."

"The training was thorough and helpful."

"All the information was helpful."

"I learned a lot."

"I did all of the Alliance training. I thought all of them were really helpful, and I believe I learned something from each module."

"I enjoyed the training very much, especially the one-on-one with the foster care Alliance."

"We knew most of what they provided already, but we learned some useful things."

"The trainings have been more than helpful."

"Provided reassurance I was on the right track."

"Not knowing anything about fostering and going into this the first time, it was quite adequate."

"I've done caregiving for aging adults, as I'm licensed to care for elders as well, so my trainings have been helpful for both of my roles."

"All the information was helpful because I was new to being a foster care provider. So, everything is helpful."

"The child I have doesn't have extraordinary needs, so the classes were adequate."

"I am kinship, so I don't really use most of the trainings."

"It is pretty basic. I'm a mom, too, so I found it was pretty easy."

"I am a caregiver, too. A lot of the stuff I already knew."

Foster

"I thought the trainings I attended were very helpful and thorough."

"We have had lots of training over the years. It has all been very well done."

"The Alliance is excellent. I am well educated and always learning new things."

"Keeps us accountable to continually learn how to be better caregivers."

"Training through Alliance is good. It's concise and applicable."

"I find every opportunity to take extra classes that are not mandatory, but just because I like to keep learning new things or refresh on old skills."

"The training explained a lot of things I did not know before becoming a foster parent."

"I liked the University of Washington trainings. They were interesting."

"I believe training opportunities are abundant in WA state and am very impressed."

"There was some that was helpful. But I didn't find it overly helpful."

"I take a lot of classes. Some are boring, but I always build something on the knowledge I have."

"The training we got was very generic."

"Alliance was helpful but probably only 10% for new information and more just to connect with other caregivers."

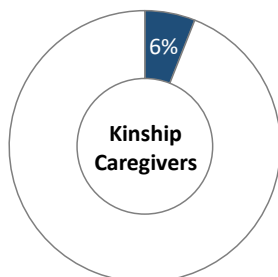
"We have taken care of children for a long time, so nothing was new. We just had to go through the motions to satisfy the requirements."

Training Access and Requirements

THEME | Training Location and Schedule

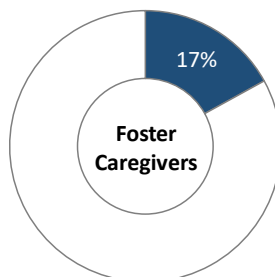
86 of the 734 caregivers who commented (12%) addressed training location and schedule.

WHO COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC?



21 of 344 commented

5 Satisfied
15 Needs work
1 Mixed



64 of 391 commented

14 Satisfied
44 Needs work
6 Mixed

Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

"They [trainings] work well with our schedules."

"[I like] doing it on your own time on the computer. At least I can do it when the child is asleep."

"It is convenient to my schedule."

"The classes are open enough to where I can schedule one for the time slots that I have available."

"The Alliance is wonderful, and the classes are great, but I work full-time and the classes are almost always daytime."

"More after work hours stuff. I'm doing this alone."

"More online work, less meetings that are at specific times."

"Make training available on weekends and evening in my area."

"More classes available during school hours. I can't do evenings and watch my kids too!"

"I traveled to a training that was focused on the county where the training took place but there was no information for my county, and no training available in my county."

"For me, it has been hard to get into certain trainings because of my schedule or they are full. There is a lot of different training but limited timeslots. Hard to get in sometimes, should make them available with more frequent timeslots."

"More in-person training available on weekends and evenings."

"There are classes that are offered on the same day, which I can't attend, so having trainings with variable times to choose from would give me the chance to take those classes."

"If you had to be in a group at a certain time, could that be recorded for you to watch it later? There were a few interesting topics I've seen but there were dates and times that I couldn't attend the seminar. I would have liked to view it, say at midnight, when I've finally got the baby asleep."

Foster

"I liked doing classes online at my own pace when I can fit it in."

"Being able to do it online, so that I could give it my full attention at a time that works for me was helpful."

"Accessibility to online trainings was extremely helpful and holding them at a variety of hours to help those who have tight schedules."

"Most helpful when trainings can be virtual and not need to be live, so I can fit them in with my schedule."

"For those of us who have compromised health issues, I wish there were more virtual with more self-paced trainings."

"More online training for people that live rurally."

"More spaces available. The good trainings fill up fast."

"More evening live classes."

"More flexible online courses that can be done on our own time. With multiple children and jobs, it is hard to make it to trainings in the day or at bedtime."

"More classes online self-paced versus web/live."

"Make more trainings available to do as self-paced rather than a specific date that the training is available."

"It's too hard to access a class in the small community."

"More accessible to working parents! So much is available midday or on weekdays. Weekends and evenings would be wonderful."

"Better and more convenient locations. I feel like a lot have moved across the water. Would like to see more on the Puget Sound side."

"Have more on-demand trainings. We're forced to take classes but what's available isn't necessarily what I need."

"More availability of in-person classes."

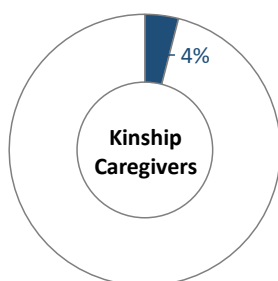
"[I want] a variety of times offered for courses."

"In-person or virtual live trainings that take place after bedtime or during lunch hours (I'm a single parent, so I can't participate after child care/school or before bedtime)."

THEME | Finding Trainings

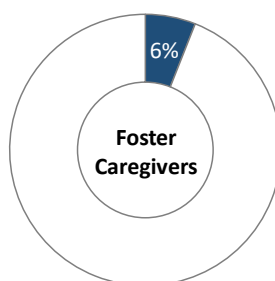
36 of the 734 caregivers who commented (5%) addressed finding trainings.

WHO COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC?



13 of 344 commented

3 Satisfied
9 Needs work
1 Mixed



23 of 390 commented

4 Satisfied
18 Needs work
1 Mixed

Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

"[I like] being able to go through a whole catalog and pick and choose my trainings. So convenient."

"I was very impressed with the training. It was easy to navigate and helpful."

"They told us to do training modules at Alliance CaRES but they didn't tell us about the website and all of the other things they offer."

"Make training easier to find. Send out newsletters on trainings."

"I get an email every month about the classes being given by Alliance but the website is not user-friendly and needs improvement."

"I had to go through a catalog, and it was hard to navigate."

"I didn't know about the specific trainings until months into my foster care. That said, I think the training catalog is very important and extensive, and definitely beneficial to any caregiver!"

"It can be improved by being easier to navigate the programs."

"Get the website easier to use for us people who aren't computer savvy."

"Website could be improved. Not very intuitive."

"Easier login format at training website."

"Make it easier to sign into and get credit."

"[I want] assistance in going through the online process."

Foster

"[It was] easy to find classes."

"[I like the] information regarding classes on Alliance."

"[I want an] index by keyword for information on training."

"State has very specific category of classes that we must take for our license, but the classes do not indicate what category they are considered."

"For licensing, we need training from certain categories. The trainings should be organized this way."

"It isn't easy to find what trainings meet the category requirements for re-licensing, and there aren't many or any available in the categories I need."

"Better communication about available trainings and updates (e.g., I just found out this morning there was a webinar yesterday on the Keeping Families Together Act). I get some emails from the department but not others."

"Having online classes planned and offered more than one month in advance."

"Provide more straightforward resources for training. There's still lots of confusion about how to get the training done."

"Finding the training online could be a little easier."

"More information on when and where classes are."

"Signing up for classes is a real issue. It needs to be simplified to find and sign up for them."

"Make it more accessible and easier to understand the process to access it."

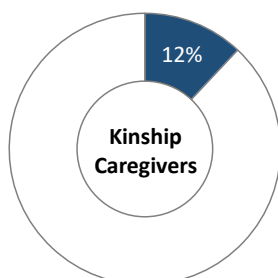
"The Alliance website might be the least user-friendly training website left on middle earth."

"The website is atrocious. Locks up, hard to navigate."

"I was annoyed that last time I went to log in to do a training, the entire system had been changed. I had problems logging in, due to some bugs in the program and inability to reset passwords, but I was able to get help from someone from Alliance CaRES. I can imagine that these online training systems and glitches are a huge turnoff for some less tech savvy foster parents."

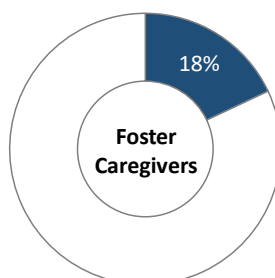
114 of the 734 caregivers who commented (16%) addressed training curriculum.

WHO COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC?



42 of 344 commented

15 Satisfied
24 Needs work
3 Mixed



72 of 390 commented

22 Satisfied
43 Needs work
7 Mixed

Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

"[I like the] variety of training types."

"Help refresh when I used to care for young kids. Times have changed."

"[I like that] there are so many options available from Alliance."

"There are a ton of classes available."

"[I like that] you can get involved as little or as much as you want."

"More options are available now to get training and allow those to work including allowing more books to read and workbooks if caregiver is working together with a youth."

"A lot of information since this was my first time dealing or being involved with kinship care."

"[I want] quicker trainings."

"It's very long, a lot to do, but it's probably necessary."

"More to read on."

"The length of the trainings are prohibitive for me. If some of the longer trainings could be broken into shorter pieces, I would be able to complete more."

"The trainings are too dull, they should be livened up. We received too much training all at once."

"Provide printed documentation of procedures that we can refer to."

"Maybe co-educating with the school district would help educators and care providers be on the same page."

"A lot of the training is common sense and generalization. If you have taken care of kids before, you might need more. It would be okay for someone who hasn't been around children ever."

"Honestly, I feel that as much training as possible should be done ASAP before and after placement."

"Online courses read to me that they're targeted toward people who have less experience providing foster care. My parents were foster care providers for years while I was growing up."

"I think the trainings could be more in-depth."

Foster

"It keeps my knowledge fresh and gives me tools in my tool belt to help support the children in my care."

"Getting better through Alliance. They are finally offering more variety for those who have required hours to cover and have taken many of the courses."

"Caregiver training was helpful with some scenarios that were brought up and opened my mind prior to placement. This allowed me to process things in a slower and methodical way. It got us thinking ahead of time."

"Continued training keeps us accountable & connected, whether it's refreshers on what we know or diving deeper into understanding kids and families from hard places."

"I feel like a lot of what I'm learning I already know, but for someone who hasn't been around a lot of kids, it's adequate."

"It is mostly info that is redundant. They need new trainings, updated ones, more selection, useful trainings. Maybe add some peer groups. Our kids need MORE."

"If we didn't have to do so much training because then people end up doing a bunch of training that isn't really relevant to them or their kids just to have enough hours."

"Have more variety of training topics. More advanced topics."

"They used to offer many documentaries and things on Netflix that you could get credit for that were really good and helpful. But they cut that off. So, every Monday night my kids would get ignored while I was on Zoom for training."

"I think the overall load is overwhelming. It's a lot of classes. It felt like 24 hours of busy work."

"Make the training short and to the point."

"A lot of the trainings are the same ones. I think they are relevant, just redundant. It would be nice to have training for caregivers that have been doing this for a long time. More advanced."

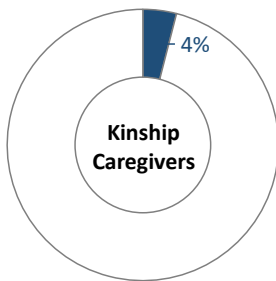
"Allow group support meetings to qualify as training."

"More online classes that count as credit for license."

THEME | Other Comments About Access

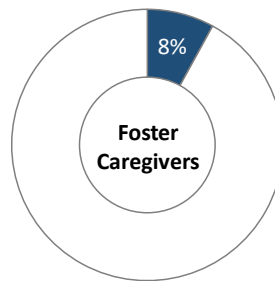
47 of the 734 caregivers who commented (6%) made other comments about training access.

WHO COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC?



14 of 344 commented

3 Satisfied
10 Needs work
1 Mixed



33 of 390 commented

12 Satisfied
20 Needs work
1 Mixed

Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

"It is easily accessible."

"I appreciated that it was all online. I did not have to go anywhere or arrange for child care."

"I received my caregiving training in college and community. There was not training offered to me additionally through the agency. It was more than adequate but it would be nice if training was offered and available."

"Offer babysitting so we could have time to do the training."

"Provide child care during training."

"It was very easy using the computer for me, but maybe some people would have trouble with accessing the training if they did not have computer experience."

"Make sure there is tech support when you can't get into the system."

"[I want] easier access. Understanding what's expected and needed."

"The trainings were good if you could get them up and running on the computer."

"Make the website work better. It took forever to get through an online training."

"If they have some videos or programs to understand their necessities better in Spanish, because sometimes they recommend programs and there is no option besides English."

"Offer the training in multiple languages, and more in depth. I had to redo some sections several times because it was confusing."

"More online training in Spanish."

"Free CPR classes! They don't offer anymore."

Foster

"The accessibility of the course was the most helpful."

"It's [training] pretty great. Readily available."

"I think they are set up well and accessible."

"We just asked for training for our nonverbal kid and they are helping us get funding for it and it's awesome that it's approved and that it's offered."

"All my training has been through Alliance. It is very accessible."

"Continued easy access as we are already busy caring for kids and working and it's a lot to fit in."

"Binti was the program I had to use and it took three of us to figure out how to use it, so improvement needs to be made."

"Make the advanced training available at lower cost."

"More training in Spanish."

"They need to offer day care during training and hours that are after 6:00 and on weekends."

"More in-person with child care."

"Having multiple children makes in-person events a challenge."

"Provide day care during training."

"More in-person training available and also day care provided during the training."

"[I want training] in person and child care provided."

"Make trainings in person with child care."

"Sometimes, as a working parent, it could be more accessible!"

"I got my own training or book clubs because the Zooms offered by Alliance don't work for working parents."

"[They] need to offer free First Aid and CPR again."

"Offer CPR at no charge to parents."

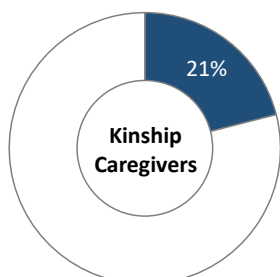
"CPR should be something offered to us for free since it's a requirement."

Training Format

THEME | Training Methods

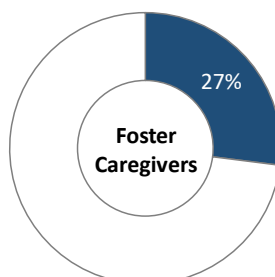
175 of the 734 caregivers who commented (24%) addressed training methods.

WHO COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC?



71 of 344 commented

27 Satisfied
37 Needs work
7 Mixed



104 of 390 commented

44 Satisfied
46 Needs work
14 Mixed

Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

"I enjoyed the town hall like setup. Plus, they served food!"
"[I like training that] gives you hands on learning."
"A lot of videos and reading to reference back to."
"I really enjoy the website and the online format so that I may take classes at my leisure."
"[I like the] scenarios, what to do in situations."
"The online training is very good."
"I like that there is a lot offered online. It is very helpful."
"The videos were helpful. Hearing the kids' point of view were very well done."
"[I like training that] provided different scenarios."
"Zoom training was good."
"[I like] the convenience of being online."
"[I like] in-person, not on Zoom."
"[I want] training to be a few weeks with homework done and discussed the following week."
"Mine was online, and I would have preferred in person."
"I guess I would like more in-person training, not just online."
"More online training available."
"More condensed training videos."
"More hands-on. You don't even have to pay attention to the online classes. More in-person classes would be good."
"More online training."
"Maybe hands-on for those that do not learn well with just visual or audio."
"All my training was online so hard to get questions answered."
"Do more webinars."

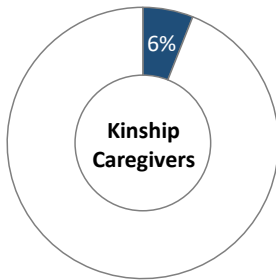
Foster

"I like the ones where you can ask questions and get feedback during the class."
"[I like] Zoom trainings where I can ask trainers questions."
"There are lots of courses offered and options to complete training. Doing individual hours on a call with a mentor has been super encouraging."
"I loved the videos we watched in our classes, especially from the point of view from adults who had been in the foster system."
"Private coaching sessions were most valuable."
"Having online options has been so helpful! This is a must!"
"I found that the testimonies, video testimonies, were very in touch with some of the nuances of the personal experiences. It wasn't as textbook as some of the training pieces. The videos brought that to light."
"Face-to-face trainings have more effect on me than online. There should be a beginner program and then refresher classes on new regulations and changes, sort of like a round table discussion."
"This is how all the webinars go: Introduction with how to use the platform. Basic questions to 'get you thinking' and everyone responds to questions that aren't really helpful. Short teaching on topic, the last 5 minutes starts to be helpful information. Oh, we're out of time, any questions? We think, oh we need to do the advanced/second one. Not any better, no more advanced information than the first."
"More in-person support groups or book clubs."
"Ditch all of the preamble and actually teach on the topic and give more examples of how to apply the tools with the kids in different situations. For example, we did the emotion coaching one, and we were not even shown an example of emotion coaching until the last 5 minutes of the webinar. We were shown two situations. I wanted to see more examples, have time to ask questions about our specific situation, answer questions like what if the child doesn't respond well, etc."

THEME | Building Community in Training

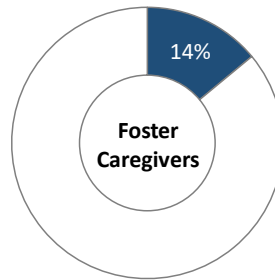
75 of the 734 caregivers who commented (10%) addressed building community in training.

WHO COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC?



22 of 344 commented

8 Satisfied
13 Needs work
1 Mixed



53 of 390 commented

25 Satisfied
23 Needs work
5 Mixed

Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

"Having the testimony from children who have been in the system helps tremendously and knowing what could be going through a child's mind during this hard time."

"They have you talk to an individual that has done foster care and that was really helpful. We talked to three different people, from very experienced to fairly new."

"[I like] seeing testimony from other caregiver's experiences and hearing about the experience from the parent perspective."

"Sharing about other people's issues going through this process. It felt supportive."

"I think it would be helpful to have volunteers get together, like a questions class for people that have gone through it and parents new to it. Nice to talk through it. Would be a good way to get info. An overview session in the beginning to help new foster parents navigate through the process."

"More focus on connections with other caregivers."

"[I want] outreach from support groups."

"Make it an option to be in a live group setting so everyone can share and interact, ask and answer questions."

"I wish in-person trainings were happening again. I miss the interaction with other foster homes and the ability to ask questions and converse with trainers."

"More in-person training with former foster parents."

"I really liked the ones in person more than the ones online. If there could be more in person now that COVID is not as much as an issue. In person is much better, there is usually a talk, and you can talk to other parents going through the same thing. There is more conversation."

"I believe the first training should be accompanied by narrative from an experienced caregiver that can say it like it REALLY is."

"I think if they did like in-person training it would give caregivers an opportunity to network and build a community."

"Somehow create support groups of foster parents in the same situation. I think that would be really helpful."

Foster

"The interaction with other foster parents is very helpful."

"Having the bio parents and kids in the training talking about experiences. I think that was so helpful to hear that perspective."

"Hearing perspectives from kids who were actually in care has been really valuable."

"[I like] connecting with other caregivers to learn from them and gain additional insight, support."

"One of the trainings we did was with a group of other caregivers and being able to support each other in areas where some of us were stronger and others weren't. Each caregiver has a different set of circumstances and being able to see how other caregivers apply what they are learning gives us new ideas and how to apply what we are learning. It's almost like a class and a support group combined. That was great."

"We started licensing pre-COVID and then finished during COVID. It was a night and day difference in retaining it with in-person meetings. We have friends that we met with our very first training and their help is so valuable with our experience as caregivers. Virtual is not as effective."

"In-person trainings. Better for discussions and dynamic learning opportunities."

"Reinstate monthly in-person support meetings."

"I think it could be neat to see foster parents have a training that is more mentorship based, where you are meeting with someone who has experience that can give you real life examples on how they have parented in different situations. More of a mentorship program that would be considered training as opposed to just lectures. I know there are some through CaRES, however I don't believe there are in-person meetings like this in our area."

"We need a ton more support groups for foster parents to connect with one another, to bounce ideas off each other, and just build community. That's where the real learning happens in my opinion."

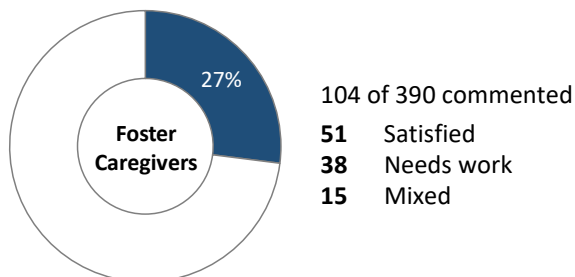
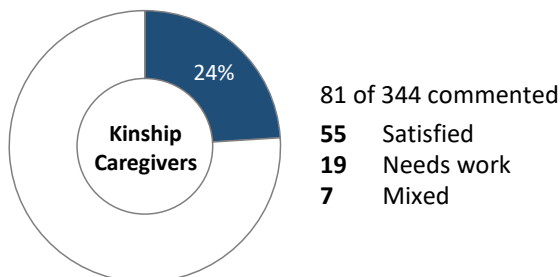
"They need to group caregivers with other caregivers in the same situation, so it doesn't seem so isolating."

Training Content

THEME | General Content

185 of the 734 caregivers who commented (25%) addressed general training content.

WHO COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC?



Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

- "I could take specific classes based on the needs of the child placed in my care."
- "Training has helped me expand my existing 'tools' I use to help my kids. It also gave me a better idea of what children placed in out of home care may be experiencing, and how I can approach that in my family."
- "[I like] recognizing the point of view of the kiddos coming into care."
- "I did the parenting training which was extremely helpful."
- "[I like that training] relates to the age I'm caring for."
- "Things have changed since I was raising kids, and this helped me with some of the new things that are being used now."
- "The parenting classes were helpful."
- "Understanding the needs of the child to be sure they are cared for in the best possible way with love and support in every aspect."
- "Taught me to be patient and understanding."
- "It's pretty comprehensive."
- "It provides a better framework going in what to expect from the children and department."
- "Having some of the questions that you were anticipating answered becoming a parent overnight."
- "More relevant to individual child needs."
- "Being more down to earth about what really happens in family."
- "Give the caregivers more knowledge on their particular personal circumstance."
- "Making it structured to the child in your care."
- "Breaking it down into more laymen's terms would be beneficial to more people."
- "Really none of it relates to our case."
- "If possible, ensuring the training is geared towards the individual caregiver vs. a standard training with courses/information the caregiver doesn't need."

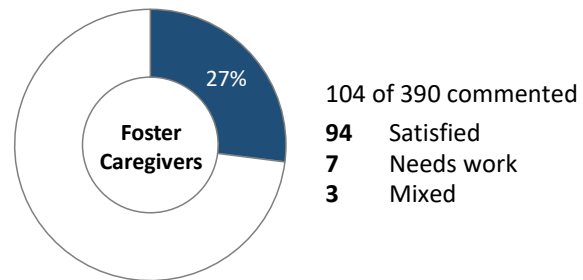
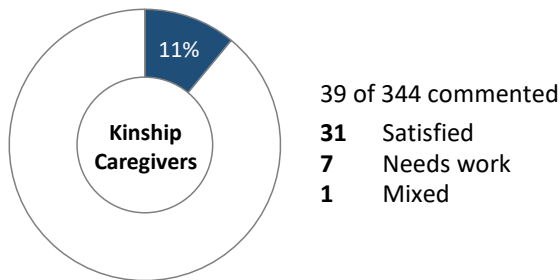
Foster

- "Introduced me to new parenting concepts and new perspectives."
- "It was comprehensive."
- "It has covered basic topics applicable to a wide range of children."
- "Great foundational trainings on common experiences for youth and foster parents, great examples to learn from."
- "It was very informative and helps us to look at problems in other ways."
- "Helping us understand what the children and their biological parents may be feeling and ways to help connect with them all and support their reunification."
- "A lot of the statistics and tricks you can use to help these kids, extremely helpful. Even after doing this for so many years, there is never a training that I haven't learned something new."
- "[I like] learning about the different needs of children in care and how to best address them."
- "Relevant to the types of children we have in our home."
- "It prepares you for the basics of caring for kids in care. It tells you exactly how to get started and what steps to take."
- "Trainings themselves vary greatly in terms of functional or concrete takeaways that support care."
- "It almost always is some picture-perfect hypothetical situation which is wildly easier and different than when the problem is right there happening in real time throwing curve balls that no one considered in 'training.'"
- "More current scenarios about kids in care."
- "Some of it seems outdated considering how much the laws have changed."
- "A lot of the training sessions need to start or end, at least, with a statement that recognizes that real situations are often a lot more complicated, often involve a multitude of factors, and often occur at speeds that make it difficult to even try to implement the recommendations in the training."

THEME | Trauma-Informed Care

149 of the 734 caregivers who commented (20%) addressed trauma-informed care.

WHO COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC?



Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

"Learning about trauma and how to best help the children and understanding their strong emotions and teaching them tools to cope."

"I learned how the same issue traumatizes some kids and not others. The training helped me understand children and their different needs."

"Being able to see things from a trauma-informed lens and be able to better support mental health."

"Trauma-informed care (TBRI [Trust Based Relational Interventions])."

"Understanding more about the effects of trauma."

"[I like the] info about emotional trauma."

"Helping to understand the kids and how they are perceiving their trauma."

"I think the classes help us in dealing with trauma; it taught me to think about where the kids are coming from and not jump to judgment on why they are acting as they do."

"Good baseline knowledge of kids with trauma."

"Helped me with the insight into what is going on with the child's trauma."

"I believe the training helped tremendously. Learning how to cope in those different aspects that might occur. Because of the training and videos, they have helped me understand trauma responses. Whether it was giving a bath that my foster child was afraid to take. Even being target of outbursts, kicked, hit, bit, the training was so helpful to understand these responses and get beyond them. They asked if I would consider adoption of this child, and I was able to say yes due to the training that has made such a difference."

"TBRI [is] amazing!!!!"

"More training on TBRI. More trauma training for the foster parents when a child with trauma is placed in the home."

"We should have more mental health classes dealing with trauma and teenagers."

"Provide me with training on behavior and trauma."

"Do more trainings that help caregivers whose children have complex trauma."

Foster

"Learning about trauma and the effect it has on the children's brains has helped me entirely reshape the way I think and parent."

"TBRI is the main thing. SO useful."

"Trauma-informed care is really enlightening."

"We took the TBRI training which was really helpful in providing shared language and giving tangible tips for supporting children experiencing trauma."

"The trauma ones that were broken up into age groups were really good."

"The training teaches you that the behaviors are not coming from the heart of the children, it's coming from instinct and the trauma. It was helpful to know that when a child is screaming, it's because they don't know how to respond to the situation."

"I think any of the pieces that touch on what trauma looks like. Having a better understanding on how trauma manifests and how to support kids through those struggles."

"[I like] explanations about trauma and bonding."

"Helping you understand the levels and trauma that can come from all sides."

"All our initial training helped us understand the severity of trauma."

"I think learning about the effects of trauma on the body and brain. Therefore, the reaction a child has given certain circumstance and how trauma affects them, that is critical. A child having a complete meltdown may not be due to something on the surface but rooted in trauma. So to parent as if they are just disobedient doesn't work, it could be they don't feel safe, loved or that they feel they matter."

"They could have even more about trauma. I don't think they could have too much because these kids see a lot. More about how to identify and address."

"There needs to be as much trauma training as possible."

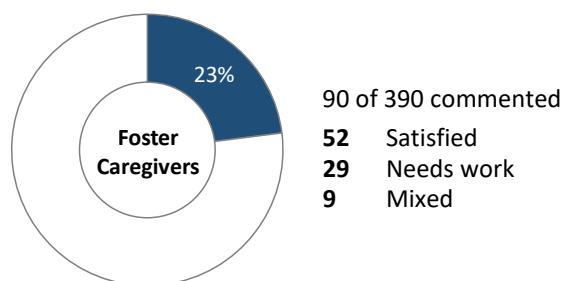
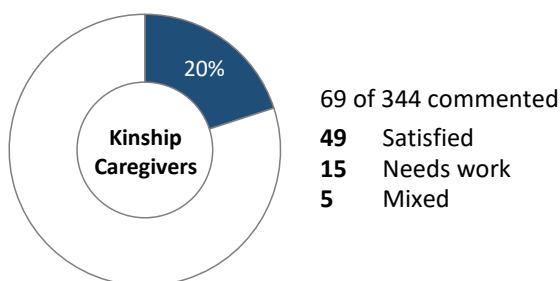
"Fresh engaging material on trauma-informed care would be amazing."

"Would love training for trauma-informed potty training."

THEME | Child Development and Behavior

159 of the 734 caregivers who commented (22%) addressed child behavior and development.

WHO COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC?



Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

"My youngest has been diagnosed on the autism spectrum and the training I received has been very helpful."

"[I like] learning how to deal with outbursts."

"[I like] the training on understanding the needs of children affected by drugs."

"It is wonderful to learn about the emotional needs a foster child may have."

"[I like] learning about behaviors and emotions tied into situations they are facing."

"There was one training about fetal alcohol syndrome that helped me with my kiddo."

"[I like] learning about placing boundaries."

"[I like] the training on hands on dealing with BRS [Behavioral Rehabilitation Services] children."

"[I have a] better understanding of their emotional needs."

"The focus was on parenting tactics and that was good in regard to discipline."

"[I like] understanding how to parent children with different behaviors."

"My grandson has temper tantrums, and the parenting classes helped me manage it."

"Just opening eyes to different behaviors and why they exist in certain children."

"[I like training] dealing with children on the spectrum."

"It did help with some of the training as this child has ADHD and that training helped."

"Could use more work on boundaries."

"[I want training on] how to deal with emotional need or to find a middle ground with the child."

"Add classes to take care of kids with autism or other special needs."

"If I had taken a child that had more severe needs (neurodivergent) the training would not be adequate."

"Not much in training about providing emotional support to the child."

"More spectrum information."

Foster

"[I like] understanding and education on child development, brain, trauma, and attachment."

"[I like] learning how to be patient and understand how kids react."

"Training on how to deal with anger has been helpful."

"Aggressive behaviors training was especially helpful."

"[I like] the training on how to deal with children that lie."

"Positive parenting has probably been the most useful."

"[I like training on] RAD [Reactive Attachment Disorder] and sensory regulation."

"We attended a training provided by [private agency] that helped identify how our child's brain was working. This helped us know how to better parent her."

"One of the big trainings was children and aggressive behavior and how to handle the situation; how to integrate kiddos from different backgrounds into your home and routine without overwhelming them. Both very helpful."

"[I like] learning how to deal with escalations."

"A really nice autism class was helpful."

"I really needed training about boundaries. And not just theoretical 'boundaries are so important because X, Y, Z,' but training about different things to set boundaries about (phone usage, mealtime, breaking curfew) and how to hold to them and different ideas of what to do when they push them."

"Teach caregivers about practical solutions and skills to work with the most prominent mental health concerns that children in care experience. Children who have ADHD, autism, RAD, depression, anxiety, self-harm, self-esteem, anger issues, etc. would benefit from caregivers who understand and know how to work with these disorders."

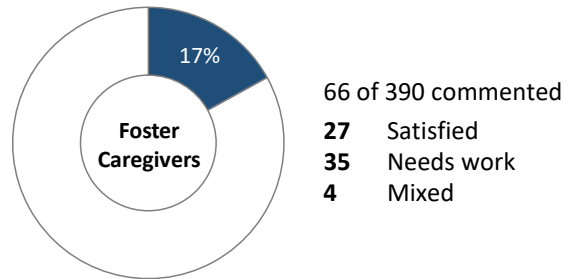
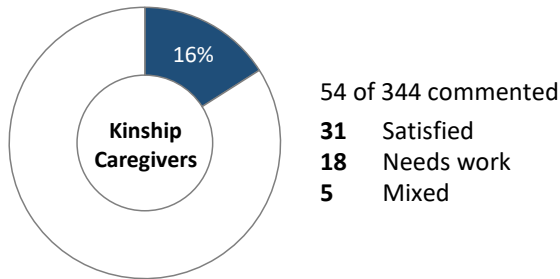
"Emphasis on special needs. When our child couldn't speak it was so difficult and needs special training."

"I feel like I could have been more prepared for behavioral and behavioral medical. If a kid has never had their teeth brushed, how can you make that happen? Care tasks. I think people take that for granted, but it is hard to brush a 3 year old's teeth if they don't want them brushed."

THEME | Navigating the Foster Care System

120 of the 734 caregivers who commented (16%) addressed training about navigating the foster care system.

WHO COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC?



Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

"[I like] the training that explains DCYF processes."
"[Training is] giving us insight into how the system works."
"Helps me understand the foster care system a lot better."
"[I like] knowing the rules."
"The training on getting guardianship and made it clear on my responsibilities."
"It helped me understand the basic rules in caregiving."
"[I like] the session I did that showed us how to complete necessary paperwork and how to document and journal."
"The training helped me understand some of the rules."
"The training was insightful as to a lot of the rules, for example, not being able to simply go and get hair done unless it's maintenance. It was also helpful to understand some of the language that is used, like guardianship, and dependency and the difference between the social worker and the GAL."
"[I like] being aware of law changes."
"The training related to state regulations/guidelines was somewhat helpful, but the timelines provided have never been in track."
"Helped me know the rules of media and what information is appropriate to talk about."
"Actually cover the WAC, RCWs, DCYF policies, and what judges usually decide."
"More information regarding CASA and their role in the process."
"More on ways to communicate with the caseworker."
"More training on the legal actions."
"More about the potential legal steps and guidelines for cases. I understand they cannot share specifics to parental services, but knowing the next steps and potential timeline for this could have helped my teenagers better understand and process the situation."
"[I want training on] what the caseworker can do for you and what they can't."

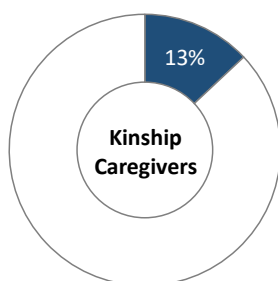
Foster

"[I like] understanding the overall process of foster care to reunification or termination of parental rights."
"It helps with the process. Learn what the steps are for legal matters."
"We just did the one on Adoption Assessment (doing the paperwork) that was good."
"[I like the] explanation of the court process."
"[Training is] giving me info on steps to take when reporting."
"[I like] the training for the adoption and what to expect."
"Some of the videos have a lot of insight into the program and how it works."
"[I like] understanding around the 'why' children enter foster care."
"[I like] general preparation on how the system works."
"The course about preventing investigations and good procedures to put in place was beneficial and should be required before a placement."
"Explain in detail how court scheduling and proceedings work. I've been a foster parent for over 5 years and only a month ago did someone actually explain the basics. I've just had to be along for the ride."
"A breakdown of all the different acronyms used by the department. (It's extremely overwhelming when you first start and made me feel like an outsider)."
"There should be more information in the training when you get an investigation on what to expect. More information in the training about the law and new laws."
"More about the labels, titles, meetings, etc. We are in our first placement, and we feel properly trained to care for kids but navigating this system is very confusing. We are just in the dark most of the time."
"More relevant issues to all aspects of fostering - the new House bill and the many changes as it relates to placement of children and efforts the department is making to keep kids safe."

THEME | Health and Safety

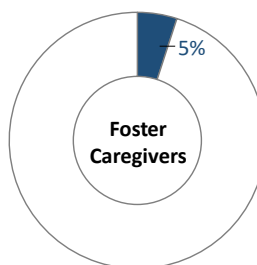
62 of the 734 caregivers who commented (8%) addressed training about health and safety.

WHO COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC?



44 of 344 commented

41 Satisfied
2 Needs work
1 Mixed



18 of 390 commented

10 Satisfied
8 Needs work
0 Mixed

Caregivers speak . . .

Kinship

"We had to make an emergency plan, that was helpful."
"The CPR training was great, I actually saved a life. A woman was choking outside my business. I was able to use my training to help her breathe."
"The First Aid class is beneficial and helpful."
"I only took the infant CPR so I don't have a lot to say about the training but that class was really great. They even let you take the doll home to practice."
"[I like] the CPR training. They provide examples of problems and solutions."
"Right Response training, CPR and First Aid Training, Bloodborne Pathogens Training and Appropriate Reporting helped me feel informed and prepared."
"[I like the] First Aid class."
"The CPR class is great. The allergies and medical training was very very useful."
"[I like] the training on safety for the foster child."
"[I like the training on] emergency medical preparation."
"Health and safety training was most helpful."
"I did complete the Basic Life Saving class."
"There was one that I went to that was interesting about issues with kids. It also had good nutritional information."
"Having the CPR training was good."
"[I like] the training on CPR and First Aid."
"[I like the training on] Bloodborne Pathogens and CPR."
"I already had Bloodborne Pathogen class previously and found there was info that I didn't remember, so it was a good refresher."
"[I like the] recap on CPR for infants."
"CPR training was amazing."
"I learned how to perform first aid on a child in need."
"[I want] in-person CPR, not on computer."
"The CPR is good but they should not do it online. That's silly."

Foster

"First Aid and related training inspires self-confidence in the event of an emergency."
"I find value in the First Aid and Bloodborne Pathogen training."
"CPR was really great."
"CPR was very informative and helpful."
"[I like training on] health and safety concerns."
"[I like] the training on the medical services available."
"CPR/First Aid is free and offered frequently."
"[I like] First Aid and CPR training."
"[I like] CPR/First Aid necessities."
"[I like the] health and safety concerns."
"[I want training on] how to install a car seat."
"More basic health care/medical training, how to navigate the health care system."
"The First Aid/CPR. I think that the older children should take it too and not just the foster parents."
"Offer more options for CPR/First Aid."
"The training was during COVID time. It was tough because facilities were not open. Like CPR class. We would have to get a dummy shipped to us. It was weird do this over Zoom."

THEME | Additional Training Content

Caregiver Core Training

34 of the 734 caregivers who commented (5%) addressed Caregiver Core Training.

Kinship

"The Core Training was helpful."

"We did the Core Training and some online classes to get our license. That training was helpful."

"[I like] Caregiver Core Training."

"Maybe educating on how to navigate the system. Add it to the Core Training."

Foster

"The basic CCT [Caregiver Core Training] is great."

"[I like] Caregiver Core Training."

"I believe behavior and how to properly discipline workshops should be added to the Core Training."

"There's no need to provide specific slurs, stereotypes, etc. in the examples given during CCT. It would be sufficient just to say, 'your sister made a racist comment.' One CCT example has you in a store when the child gets upset and screams 'THIS IS NOT MY DAD' to draw a security guard. The training says we should not identify the child as a foster child. However, we were advised by experienced foster parents and licensors that if we do not explain that we are the child's foster caregivers, the situation is likely to escalate. This specific example needs to be updated."

Infant and Toddler Care

31 of the 734 caregivers who commented (4%) addressed training about infant and toddler care.

Kinship

"[I like] the training on PURPLE cry which is about newborn drug babies."

"Learning about PURPLE crying was very helpful, and I think it saves a lot of children."

"[I like] the knowledge of how to react to babies and toddlers. What to look for and how to work with your own emotions with being a caregiver."

"[I like] training on babies born with drugs."

"[I like] the safe sleeping and PURPLE crying videos because we took in a 10-month-old. Also, the different tactics to help soothe her after becoming extremely overwhelmed after visits and change of schedules."

"More training online on how to deal with babies with drugs."

Foster

"Both my placements came to me as newborns, both were drug exposed. The trainings helped me understand what withdrawals for infants were like and how to help them."

"[I like] the training on infants and what to do."

"Probably educating me on drug and alcohol affected infants. Learning how to care for them."

"I would say the PURPLE crying video is a really good training. Getting the training makes a world of difference. I personally have experienced more of the drug affected children. It is a whole different type of needs. Babies cry all day long, can't suck on a bottle, missing and delayed milestones. You really have to understand their little brains and the trauma that occurred before they met the world. This training is so important."

"Initially the specific training for NAS [Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome] babies was informative."

"Best [training] was on drug exposed newborns."

"More training on younger children and how to handle behaviors. A lot of the training is geared towards older children."

"I didn't need to learn how to diaper a baby. Leave out the monotonous stuff for people who have already had kids."

"[I want] drug withdrawal in toddlers training (had a toddler who was still nursing while mom was using opiates and had withdrawals at our home)."

"[I want] more information on newborn and toddlers."

"Include more specific training on special needs such as behavioral needs of children especially early in life as toddlers, etc."

Resources in Training

27 of the 734 caregivers who commented (4%) addressed training about resources.

Kinship

"They have given me resources that would be helpful when I needed the help."

"It gave me a sense of who I need to call should I have any questions or needs."

"They let us know what resources are available."

"[I like] finding out about what resources are available."

"More info on available resources."

"More resources when it comes to medically fragile children. If I didn't have the supports in place I would be somewhat in the dark when it comes to follow up appointments, supply ordering, and what it means to have a kiddo with special needs in the school system."

"More information about resources."

Foster

"This is where I have found out about resources. Especially around adoption/adoption support and special needs things for kids. This is where I have gotten this information. If I did not take the course, I would not have figured it out."

"[I like] the training involving medical services available."

"Sometimes good links to other resources."

"More training on where to get resources."

"I would love more community resource information. Other foster care parents tell me stuff, but I get little from the state."

"[I want] to have more knowledge on resources for kids."

"How to work and find out more things that can help the kids. Like programs and counseling. I feel especially for the newer foster parents. They don't know anything about all these things out there to help the kids."

Caring for Teens

18 of the 734 caregivers who commented (2%) addressed training about caring for teens.

Kinship

"[I like the] tips on handling adolescent behavior."

"Moving from child to teenage years and how to handle that helped a lot. All those trainings regarding that. There were four different trainings that were helpful."

Foster

"[I like training about] teen parenting."

"The ones I recently did 'How to parent teenagers.' I had a couple of teens, and it was rough. I did the courses, and it was very helpful."

"[I] only [like] the live/sharing parenting teens classes where we could all talk to each other. The PowerPoint classes are dreary."

"I found training specifically about teens helpful. The specific examples were best. One class, I remembered the part being consistent with punishment. 'Even if it's small, like only pulling one weed, be consistent.' This was useful. I literally used weeding as the punishment for skipping class and it worked (until she met a boy)."

"[I want training on] how to teach teens empathy."

"I do think there needs to be more training on cell phones for teens. Like the need for contact with friends, dangers of social media, and what ways to balance the two. A lot of foster parents are either way too strict or have no protections at all. Streamlined advice on how to use cell phones would be great."

"I could use more specific training, like how to motivate a 14-year-old."

"More specific training for working with teens and substance abuse—within DCYF policies and with other children in the home—would be helpful."

Inclusive Care

16 of the 734 caregivers who commented (2%) addressed training about inclusive care.

Kinship

- "I did take one that was helpful. A skin and hair class, as I have biracial kiddos."
- "I guess one of the training modules that talked about cultural ties and keeping in touch with family members so they don't lose their cultural ties. It helped me find a therapist for one of the kids from the same culture. Otherwise I might not have even thought about that."
- "[I like] the training on Black hair care."
- "The cultural training was helpful. A braiding class on hair would be amazing."
- "[I want training] more personalized to the LGBTQ community."
- "I think more cultural diversity classes are needed."
- "Need classes on sign language or reading Braille for our medically challenged children with handicaps."

Foster

- "[I like] classes honoring diversity and honoring the bio parents and traditions of the child's birth family."
- "I have done most of my training through the school district, and it has helped me culturally support my kiddo!! Which we needed, for our kids this year have been other ethnicities than us!!"
- "[I like] cultural training - African American skin care."
- "The part we found helpful was information on how to help the child keep in touch with his heritage."
- "I was a foster parent 25 years ago and what has changed is the training to work with marginalized populations. That is a great improvement."
- "One of our girls is biracial, and I took a class on how to take care of African American hair. It was so helpful."
- "[I like training about] caring for African American hair and skin."
- "I want in-person classes for caring for Black hair, as a white foster parent with a Black foster daughter."
- "More trainings about intercultural competency, how to support specific cultures or connect with specific cultural groups in the area, in-person training on Black hair and skin care."

Kinship Caregiving

8 of the 734 caregivers who commented (1%) addressed training about kinship caregiving.

Kinship

- "The training on The Inherent Strengths of Kinship Families was excellent and well presented."
- "I did the kinship core classes which I found them to be helpful. There was information in there that I didn't already know but they were pretty much just common-sense stuff."
- "The University of Washington special training for kinship caregivers done over Zoom was very well done."
- "It was an online course and VERY long. So, I took the Kinship classes. It was a little confusing, but they let me know what I needed to do next."
- "I wish there were more trainings geared toward kinship. Sometimes it is great, others it is hard to navigate."
- "[I like] the extra classes kinship offers every month."
- "[I like] kinship caregiver [training]."

Other Specific Training

46 of the 734 caregivers who commented (6%) mentioned “initial training” or other specific training topics.

Kinship

“[I liked] learning about the parent's point of view and that the process is about reunification.”

“Having a different perspective on the biological parents' struggles and points of view help us maintain a neutral ground in keeping the connection between child and parents.”

“Darkness into Light was helpful in raising awareness for our entire family around sexual behavior, grooming, keeping children safe, and supervision.”

“You must start training caregivers on how to advocate for the educational needs of their children.”

“More information on how to support bio parents.”

“Go into more detail about kids with parents who are deceased or do not want any interaction with their child.”

“I would suggest ways to introduce the bonding of sibling to sibling or a child to other children.”

“It would be helpful to have some insight for kinship caregivers that want to support their kids, but the kids don't want to return to bio parent they want to stay with the caregiver. Navigating that is so hard. I want to support my kid, but I also want to respect the case workers but sometimes it seems like they just care about reunification. It would be nice to have an idea of how I can manage to be respectful while also fighting for the wants and needs of my kid.”

“[I want training on] caregiver burnout and support for the burnout.”

Foster

“The basic training gave a pretty good pictures about foster care.”

“Well, the movie Instant Family should be shown to all new foster care parents, and it was really good.”

“Sometimes I feel like the trainings don't understand how hard foster parenting is. I think the RISE [Rise with the Alliance] training addresses that.”

“When my health changed, I was worried I couldn't foster anymore and then I found a training that was specific to my health, so that was really helpful and gave me some relief.”

“I think there could be updates made to focus on parenting kids in a very technologically advanced world.”

“Maybe add more on how to have a good relationship (if possible) with bio family. How to manage when different parts of the child's team have different thoughts or opinions.”

“Needs some training on loss.”

“[I want training on] how to supervise electronic devices that youth bring with them.”

“A training on how to tell a child their parent has died.”

“Perhaps resources for navigating extended family relationships. Also how to determine, set, communicate, and hold helpful, healthy boundaries with the state, bio families, extended bio families.”

“More trainings based on self-care.”



DCYF 2023 We Are Family Day <https://dcyf.wa.gov>

Narrative Comment Summaries

Support: All Caregivers

1342 Respondents (1234 made comments about Support)

Themes and Subthemes	Number of Comments ¹				Percent of All Comments ²			Percent of Each Theme by Sentiment:		
	Total	Good work	Needs work	Mixed	Good work	Needs work	Mixed	Good work	Needs work	Mixed
General Helpfulness & Support from DCYF, Staff, and Partners	776	444	149	183	36%	12%	15%	57%	19%	24%
Helpfulness and Support	728	422	155	151	34%	13%	12%	58%	21%	21%
Other Sources of Support	125	86	29	10	7%	2%	1%	69%	23%	8%
Caseworkers & Staff	1,080	345	335	400	28%	27%	32%	32%	31%	37%
Professionalism and Respect	570	178	291	101	14%	24%	8%	31%	51%	18%
Communication and Access	826	325	301	200	26%	24%	16%	39%	36%	24%
Listening and Inclusion	302	129	147	26	10%	12%	2%	43%	49%	9%
Organizational Processes and Policy	442	20	393	29	2%	32%	2%	5%	89%	7%
Coordination	88	17	69	2	1%	6%	0%	19%	78%	2%
Legislation, Policy, and Processes	352	11	322	19	1%	26%	2%	3%	91%	5%
Need more staff	83	.	83	.	.	7%	.	.	100%	.
Resources	515	234	170	111	19%	14%	9%	45%	33%	22%
General	244	160	63	21	13%	5%	2%	66%	26%	9%
Medical	99	45	46	8	4%	4%	1%	45%	46%	8%
Transportation	45	24	18	3	2%	1%	0%	53%	40%	7%
Child Care	37	14	20	3	1%	2%	0%	38%	54%	8%
Respite Care	24	7	16	1	1%	1%	0%	29%	67%	4%
Stipends and Cash Benefits	83	13	59	11	1%	5%	1%	16%	71%	13%
Vouchers & Material Items	141	71	49	21	6%	4%	2%	50%	35%	15%
Other Resources	61	19	39	3	2%	3%	0%	31%	64%	5%

¹ The number of caregivers who made any mention of each theme. Multiple comments on the same theme by a single person are only counted once in that theme row, e.g., a caregiver who made comments in both "Child Care" and "Respite Care" is counted only once in the "Resources" row. A caregiver with both "Satisfied" and "Needs Work" comments on the same theme is counted in the "Mixed" column.

² Respondents who commented on this theme as a percentage of the total number of respondents who answered the open-ended questions about support.

Support: Foster Caregivers

458 Respondents (426 made comments about Support)

Themes and Subthemes	Number of Comments ¹				Percent of All Comments ²			Percent of Each Theme by Sentiment:		
	Total	Good work	Needs work	Mixed	Good work	Needs work	Mixed	Good work	Needs work	Mixed
General Helpfulness & Support from DCYF, Staff, and Partners	253	120	45	88	28%	11%	21%	47%	18%	35%
Helpfulness and Support	229	110	46	73	26%	11%	17%	48%	20%	32%
Other Sources of Support	59	37	15	7	9%	4%	2%	63%	25%	12%
Caseworkers & Staff	389	94	108	187	22%	25%	44%	24%	28%	48%
Professionalism and Respect	244	69	119	56	16%	28%	13%	28%	49%	23%
Communication and Access	305	94	112	99	22%	26%	23%	31%	37%	32%
Listening and Inclusion	125	51	61	13	12%	14%	3%	41%	49%	10%
Organizational Processes and Policy	171	11	146	14	3%	34%	3%	6%	85%	8%
Coordination	37	11	25	1	3%	6%	0%	30%	68%	3%
Legislation, Policy, and Processes	136	6	123	7	1%	29%	2%	4%	90%	5%
Need more staff	32	.	32	.	.	8%	.	.	100%	.
Resources	164	70	53	41	16%	12%	10%	43%	32%	25%
General	78	48	18	12	11%	4%	3%	62%	23%	15%
Medical	41	15	21	5	4%	5%	1%	37%	51%	12%
Transportation	16	10	4	2	2%	1%	0%	63%	25%	13%
Child Care	14	6	7	1	1%	2%	0%	43%	50%	7%
Respite Care	14	6	8	.	1%	2%	.	43%	57%	.
Stipends and Cash Benefits	14	3	10	1	1%	2%	0%	21%	71%	7%
Vouchers & Material Items	28	12	10	6	3%	2%	1%	43%	36%	21%
Other Resources	21	5	15	1	1%	4%	0%	24%	71%	5%

¹ The number of caregivers who made any mention of each theme. Multiple comments on the same theme by a single person are only counted once in that theme row, e.g., a caregiver who made comments in both "Child Care" and "Respite Care" is counted only once in the "Resources" row. A caregiver with both "Satisfied" and "Needs Work" comments on the same theme is counted in the "Mixed" column.

² Respondents who commented on this theme as a percentage of the total number of respondents who answered the open-ended questions about support.

Support: Kinship Caregivers

884 Respondents (808 made comments about Support)

Themes and Subthemes	Number of Comments ¹				Percent of All Comments ²			Percent of Each Theme by Sentiment:		
	Total	Good work	Needs work	Mixed	Good work	Needs work	Mixed	Good work	Needs work	Mixed
General Helpfulness & Support from DCYF, Staff, and Partners	523	324	104	95	40%	13%	12%	62%	20%	18%
Helpfulness and Support	499	312	109	78	39%	13%	10%	63%	22%	16%
Other Sources of Support	66	49	14	3	6%	2%	0%	74%	21%	5%
Caseworkers & Staff	691	251	227	213	31%	28%	26%	36%	33%	31%
Professionalism and Respect	326	109	172	45	13%	21%	6%	33%	53%	14%
Communication and Access	521	231	189	101	29%	23%	13%	44%	36%	19%
Listening and Inclusion	177	78	86	13	10%	11%	2%	44%	49%	7%
Organizational Processes and Policy	271	9	247	15	1%	31%	2%	3%	91%	6%
Coordination	51	6	44	1	1%	5%	0%	12%	86%	2%
Legislation, Policy, and Processes	216	5	199	12	1%	25%	1%	2%	92%	6%
Need more staff	51	.	51	.	.	6%	.	.	100%	.
Resources	351	164	117	70	20%	14%	9%	47%	33%	20%
General	166	112	45	9	14%	6%	1%	67%	27%	5%
Medical	58	30	25	3	4%	3%	0%	52%	43%	5%
Transportation	29	14	14	1	2%	2%	0%	48%	48%	3%
Child Care	23	8	13	2	1%	2%	0%	35%	57%	9%
Respite Care	10	1	8	1	0%	1%	0%	10%	80%	10%
Stipends and Cash Benefits	69	10	49	10	1%	6%	1%	14%	71%	14%
Vouchers & Material Items	113	59	39	15	7%	5%	2%	52%	35%	13%
Other Resources	40	14	24	2	2%	3%	0%	35%	60%	5%

¹ The number of caregivers who made any mention of each theme. Multiple comments on the same theme by a single person are only counted once in that theme row, e.g., a caregiver who made comments in both "Child Care" and "Respite Care" is counted only once in the "Resources" row. A caregiver with both "Satisfied" and "Needs Work" comments on the same theme is counted in the "Mixed" column.

² Respondents who commented on this theme as a percentage of the total number of respondents who answered the open-ended questions about support.

Training: All Caregivers

1342 Respondents (734 made comments about Training)

Themes and Subthemes	Number of Comments ¹				Percent of All Comments ²			Percent of Each Theme by Sentiment:		
	Total	Good work	Needs work	Mixed	Good work	Needs work	Mixed	Good work	Needs work	Mixed
Overall Quality and Helpfulness	187	152	26	9	21%	4%	1%	81%	14%	5%
General Training Helpfulness	159	136	16	7	19%	2%	1%	86%	10%	4%
Nothing	36	23	13	.	3%	2%	.	64%	36%	.
Training Format	229	92	102	35	13%	14%	5%	40%	45%	15%
Training Methods	175	71	83	21	10%	11%	3%	41%	47%	12%
Building Community	75	33	36	6	4%	5%	1%	44%	48%	8%
Trainers	24	13	8	3	2%	1%	0%	54%	33%	13%
Training Access	231	52	142	37	7%	19%	5%	23%	61%	16%
Schedule and Location	86	19	60	7	3%	8%	1%	22%	70%	8%
Curriculum	114	37	67	10	5%	9%	1%	32%	59%	9%
Finding Trainings	36	7	27	2	1%	4%	0%	19%	75%	6%
Other Comments about Access	47	15	30	2	2%	4%	0%	32%	64%	4%
Training Content	563	341	68	154	46%	9%	21%	61%	12%	27%
General Content	185	106	57	22	14%	8%	3%	57%	31%	12%
Core Training	34	31	3	.	4%	0%	.	91%	9%	.
Trauma-Informed Care	149	131	14	4	18%	2%	1%	88%	9%	3%
Child Development & Behavior	159	101	44	14	14%	6%	2%	64%	28%	9%
Navigating the System	120	58	53	9	8%	7%	1%	48%	44%	8%
Infant/Toddler Care	31	19	9	3	3%	1%	0%	61%	29%	10%
Parenting Teens	18	5	12	1	1%	2%	0%	28%	67%	6%
Kinship Caregiving	8	6	1	1	1%	0%	0%	75%	13%	13%
Inclusive Care	16	10	5	1	1%	1%	0%	63%	31%	6%
Health and Safety	62	51	10	1	7%	1%	0%	82%	16%	2%
Resources	27	14	12	1	2%	2%	0%	52%	44%	4%
Other Training Topics	46	20	24	2	3%	3%	0%	43%	52%	4%

¹ The number of caregivers who made any mention of this theme. Multiple comments on the same theme by a single person are only counted once in that theme row, e.g., a caregiver who made "Satisfied" comments in both "Schedule and Location" and "Curriculum" is counted only once in the "Training Access" row. A caregiver with both "Satisfied" and "Needs Work" comments on the same theme is counted in the "Mixed" column.

² Respondents who commented on this theme as a percentage of the total number of respondents who answered the open-ended questions about training.

Training: Foster Caregivers

458 Respondents (390 made comments about Training)

Themes and Subthemes	Number of Comments ¹				Percent of All Comments ²			Percent of Each Theme by Sentiment:		
	Total	Good work	Needs work	Mixed	Good work	Needs work	Mixed	Good work	Needs work	Mixed
Overall Quality and Helpfulness	82	63	15	4	16%	4%	1%	77%	18%	5%
General Training Helpfulness	68	55	9	4	14%	2%	1%	81%	13%	6%
Nothing	15	9	6	.	2%	2%	.	60%	40%	.
Training Format	142	58	58	26	15%	15%	7%	41%	41%	18%
Training Methods	104	44	46	14	11%	12%	4%	42%	44%	13%
Building Community	53	25	23	5	6%	6%	1%	47%	43%	9%
Trainers	16	8	5	3	2%	1%	1%	50%	31%	19%
Training Access	152	34	91	27	9%	23%	7%	22%	60%	18%
Schedule and Location	65	14	45	6	4%	12%	2%	22%	69%	9%
Curriculum	72	22	43	7	6%	11%	2%	31%	60%	10%
Finding Trainings	23	4	18	1	1%	5%	0%	17%	78%	4%
Other Comments about Access	33	12	20	1	3%	5%	0%	36%	61%	3%
Training Content	301	163	49	89	42%	13%	23%	54%	16%	30%
General Content	104	51	38	15	13%	10%	4%	49%	37%	14%
Core Training	14	12	2	.	3%	1%	.	86%	14%	.
Trauma-Informed Care	104	94	7	3	24%	2%	1%	90%	7%	3%
Child Development & Behavior	90	52	29	9	13%	7%	2%	58%	32%	10%
Navigating the System	66	27	35	4	7%	9%	1%	41%	53%	6%
Infant/Toddler Care	21	11	8	2	3%	2%	1%	52%	38%	10%
Parenting Teens	15	3	11	1	1%	3%	0%	20%	73%	7%
Kinship Caregiving ³	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Inclusive Care	9	7	2	.	2%	1%	.	78%	22%	.
Health and Safety	18	10	8	.	3%	2%	.	56%	44%	.
Resources	8	3	4	1	1%	1%	0%	38%	50%	13%
Other Training Topics	28	11	16	1	3%	4%	0%	39%	57%	4%

¹ The number of caregivers who made any mention of this theme. Multiple comments on the same theme by a single person are only counted once in that theme row, e.g., a caregiver who made "Satisfied" comments in both "Schedule and Location" and "Curriculum" is counted only once in the "Training Access" row. A caregiver with both "Satisfied" and "Needs Work" comments on the same theme is counted in the "Mixed" column.

² Respondents who commented on this theme as a percentage of the total number of respondents who answered the open-ended questions about training.

³ The Kinship Caregiving code under Training Content does not apply to Foster Caregivers.

Training: Kinship Caregivers

884 Respondents (344 made comments about Training)

Themes and Subthemes	Number of Comments ¹				Percent of All Comments ²			Percent of Each Theme by Sentiment:		
	Total	Good work	Needs work	Mixed	Good work	Needs work	Mixed	Good work	Needs work	Mixed
Overall Quality and Helpfulness	105	89	11	5	26%	3%	1%	85%	10%	5%
General Training Helpfulness	91	81	7	3	24%	2%	1%	89%	8%	3%
Nothing	21	14	7	.	4%	2%	.	67%	33%	.
Training Format	87	34	44	9	10%	13%	3%	39%	51%	10%
Training Methods	71	27	37	7	8%	11%	2%	38%	52%	10%
Building Community	22	8	13	1	2%	4%	0%	36%	59%	5%
Trainers	8	5	3	.	1%	1%	.	63%	38%	.
Training Access	79	18	51	10	5%	15%	3%	23%	65%	13%
Schedule and Location	21	5	15	1	1%	4%	0%	24%	71%	5%
Curriculum	42	15	24	3	4%	7%	1%	36%	57%	7%
Finding Trainings	13	3	9	1	1%	3%	0%	23%	69%	8%
Other Comments about Access	14	3	10	1	1%	3%	0%	21%	71%	7%
Training Content	262	178	19	65	52%	6%	19%	68%	7%	25%
General Content	81	55	19	7	16%	6%	2%	68%	23%	9%
Core Training	20	19	1	.	6%	.	.	95%	.	.
Trauma-Informed Care	39	31	7	1	9%	2%	0%	79%	18%	3%
Child Development & Behavior	69	49	15	5	14%	4%	1%	71%	22%	.
Navigating the System	54	31	18	5	9%	5%	1%	57%	33%	.
Infant/Toddler Care	10	8	1	1	2%	0%	0%	80%	10%	10%
Parenting Teens	3	2	1	.	1%	0%	.	67%	33%	.
Kinship Caregiving	8	6	1	1	2%	0%	0%	75%	13%	13%
Inclusive Care	7	3	3	1	1%	1%	0%	43%	43%	14%
Health and Safety	44	41	2	1	12%	1%	0%	93%	5%	2%
Resources	19	11	8	.	3%	2%	.	58%	42%	.
Other Training Topics	18	9	8	1	3%	2%	0%	50%	44%	6%

¹ The number of caregivers who made any mention of this theme. Multiple comments on the same theme by a single person are only counted once in that theme row, e.g., a caregiver who made "Satisfied" comments in both "Schedule and Location" and "Curriculum" is counted only once in the "Training Access" row. A caregiver with both "Satisfied" and "Needs Work" comments on the same theme is counted in the "Mixed" column.

² Respondents who commented on this theme as a percentage of the total number of respondents who answered the open-ended questions about training.

Licensing: Kinship Caregivers

418 Kinship Caregivers Said They Were Not Licensed (288 answered this question)

Themes and Subthemes ¹	Is there a reason why you haven't chosen to become licensed?	
	Number of Comments	Percent of All Comments ²
Application	61	21%
Applied/In-progress	18	6%
Denied	3	1%
Qualification Issues	5	2%
Information	40	14%
Placement	128	44%
Relative	60	21%
Guardian	6	2%
Adoption	24	8%
Short-term	41	14%
Processes/Requirements	34	12%
General Processes	32	11%
Training Requirements	3	1%
Personal Reasons/General Disinterest	115	40%
Personal Reasons	47	16%
General Disinterest	75	26%
Other	8	3%
Other	6	2%
Don't Know	2	1%

¹Major themes (in bold) are deduplicated rollups of the subthemes listed below, i.e., a caregiver who mentioned more than one Process reason for not being licensed is counted only once in the "Process/Requirements" row.

²Respondents who commented on this theme as a percentage of the total number of kinship caregivers who made comments about why they were not licensed.

Technical Notes

Methodology

Population and Sampling

Surveys were completed by 1,342 kinship and foster caregivers between September 29, 2023 and September 6, 2024. In August 2023, November 2023, February 2024, and May 2024, caregivers were selected at random from a list of all kinship and foster caregivers who had a child in care within the previous six months. Excluded from the sample were caregivers who participated in the previous year's survey and those whose only placements were fewer than four days. The sample is representative of all kinship and foster caregiver homes in Washington with a child in care within the six months preceding the quarterly sampling date.

For the 1,648 eligible homes selected to complete the survey, the *response rate* was 81%. For the 1,515 homes where we were able to speak with a caregiver, the *cooperation rate* was 89%. The 95% sampling error for the survey is ± 2.7 percentage points.

Mode of Data Collection

To maximize opportunities for each caregiver to participate, the survey was available both over the phone or online. All caregivers with available email addresses were sent an email with a link to the online survey through Survey Monkey. Caregivers who did not complete the survey online were called and invited to complete the survey over the phone. In 2024, 684 surveys were completed by telephone interview (51%) and 658 surveys were completed online (49%).

Because respondents choose whether to complete the survey online or by telephone, we examined whether the mode of data collection affected the responses. This is important for two reasons. First the characteristics of respondents who choose to complete the survey online might differ from those who complete it over the phone. Second, existing research on survey methodology demonstrates that telephone respondents are more likely than online respondents to provide socially desirable responses on sensitive items; this may affect trends in positive responses over time. To address this, we tested for the effect of survey mode on changes between 2023 and 2024 in positive responses to the 11 standard questions. There were no items for which the gap between online and telephone responses changed significantly in 2024 relative to 2023 for either foster or kinship caregivers. This is consistent with trends over the last three years, where the gap between online and telephone responses has narrowed.

Caregiver Groups

The 2024 survey consisted of 34% foster caregivers (n=458) and 66% kinship caregivers (n=884). This is proportional to the eligible population of caregivers, which consisted of 32% foster caregivers and 68% kinship caregivers according to the *Home Type* indicator from FamLink (see below).

To classify caregivers as foster or kinship caregivers for the analysis, we cross-referenced DCYF-provided data fields (*Home Type* and *Relative Kin Flag*) from the FamLink database with caregiver-provided survey fields. This combination of information provided further detail regarding prior relationships with the children in placement, as well as caregiver licensing status. In the case of inconsistencies in the response classifications, we examined free text responses for additional context. Caregivers who were kinship providers for any of the children placed with them in the previous 12 months were classified as kinship, even if they also cared for unrelated children.

Criteria Used to Classify Caregivers as Kinship or Foster

	Kinship	Foster
Home Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Specific Foster Home • Child Specific Private Agency Foster Home • Full Child Specific Foster Home • Full Child Specific Private Agency Foster Home • Initial Child Specific Foster Home • Not Licensed Foster Home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster Home • Private Agency Foster Home
Relative Kin Flag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relative/unlicensed placement resource • Relative placement resource • Unlicensed placement resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unrelated/non-kin placement resource
Survey Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregiver indicated that they were related by blood, adoption, marriage, or tribal custom to any of the children placed with them in the past 12 months. • Caregiver indicated that they were not related to any children placed with them in the past 12 months, but they or someone in their family had a relationship with the child before placement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregiver indicated that they were not related to and did not have a prior relationship with any of the children placed with them in the previous 12 months.

Statistical Significance Testing: Comparisons by Caregiver Group and Survey Year

For the 11 structured questions, statistical significance tests were calculated to assess differences in the percent of positive responses (More than/Somewhat Adequate or Almost Always/Usually) between foster and kinship caregivers and between the 2023 and 2024 survey years. The criterion for statistical significance was set at $p < .05$. Differences were assessed using the chi-squared test of independence.

Rounding

Results described in the narrative report are rounded to the nearest whole number. Due to rounding, some percentages reported as whole numbers may not add to 100%.

Survey Script and Survey Questions

INTRODUCTION

I'm calling on behalf of the Washington Department of Children Youth and Families, which is a state agency focused on the well-being of children. I'm talking with caregivers of children and young adults about the support and training they receive. We sent you a letter explaining this survey – did you get it?

- The results of this survey will help DCYF measure how well caregivers are supported and trained.
- It will help DCYF make improvements if they are needed.
- We will not ask about any case-specific details; this is only about the support you've received.
- Your survey answers will in no way affect your status as a caregiver.
- Your participation and answers are confidential.
- DCYF staff are not provided the names of survey participants nor are they provided information that attaches caregivers' identities to their responses. The researchers combine all the survey answers into one report, and your name will not be used.
- Your participation is completely voluntary but is very important to us. We want to make sure the sample represents all caregivers.
- If you tell me about any abuse or neglect to a child, I am required to report it to the authorities.
- Please feel free to ask questions at any time. If I come to any question that you prefer not to answer, just let me know and I will skip over it. Please be honest. We want to know how you really feel.

Throughout the survey, I will refer to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families as DCYF.

Have you had a child or youth age 21 or younger placed by DCYF [or while working with a private agency] living in your home at any time in the past twelve months?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

SUPPORT QUESTIONS

1. Please answer the following questions about your experience with staff from DCYF [or from Private Agency]. For each of the statements below, tell us how often the statement was true in the past year.
 - A. Are you treated like a part of the team?
 - B. Can you get help when you ask for it?
 - C. Do the caseworkers listen to your input?
 - D. Are you included in meetings about the child in your care?
 - E. Do you get adequate information about the needs of the children placed with you, such as medical, behavioral, developmental, and emotional needs?
 - F. Did DCYF staff offer you resources or ask if you needed support?
 - G. Do you feel personally supported by DCYF staff?

Response Options for Questions 1A-1G:

- ☐ Always or Almost Always
- ☐ Usually
- ☐ Seldom
- ☐ Almost Never or Never
- ☐ Not Applicable

2. Now think about all the partners in Washington’s child welfare system, including DCYF, private agencies, and your caseworkers and licensors ... What do they do well to support you? [open text]
3. Still thinking about the entire child welfare system, including DCYF, private agencies, and your caseworkers and licensors ... What could they do better to support you? [open text]

TRAINING QUESTIONS

4. Have you had any training related to your caregiving role in the past three years?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Not sure
5. *If yes on question 4:* Overall, thinking about ALL the training you have had in the last three years, how adequately has it prepared you to care for the needs of children and youth placed in your home?
 - ☐ More than adequate
 - ☐ Somewhat adequate
 - ☐ Somewhat inadequate
 - ☐ Very inadequate
6. *If yes on question 4:* What about caregiver training has been helpful? [open text]
7. *If yes on question 4:* How could caregiver training be improved? [open text]

LICENSING QUESTIONS

8. In the past 12 months, have you had any contact with the LD Licensing Division, such as a license application, home study, license renewal, or licensing investigation?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Not sure
9. *If yes on question 8:* Did licensing staff treat you with respect?
 - ☐ Always or Almost Always
 - ☐ Usually
 - ☐ Seldom
 - ☐ Almost Never or Never
 - ☐ Not Applicable
10. *If yes on question 8:* Were licensing or home study staff knowledgeable about the process?
 - ☐ Always or Almost Always
 - ☐ Usually
 - ☐ Seldom
 - ☐ Almost Never or Never
 - ☐ Not Applicable

11. Thinking about all the children placed with you in the past 12 months, were any of these children related to you by blood, adoption, marriage, or tribal custom?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
12. Thinking about all the children placed with you in the past 12 months, were any of these children not related to you, but had a relationship with you or someone in your family before placement?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
13. As you may know, DCYF has a new license called a “kinship license” that they issue to a relative or other known person to care for a specific child and their siblings. Caregivers with this kinship license meet requirements that are similar to the requirements for unlicensed caregivers, and they receive financial payments from DCYF to assist in the child’s care.
- Before today, were you familiar with this new kinship license (also called a child-specific license) that DCYF started offering in 2022?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Not sure
14. *If yes on question 13:* How did you first hear about the kinship license? Select all that apply.
- ☐ DCYF caseworker
 - ☐ Other DCYF staff
 - ☐ Private agency staff
 - ☐ DCYF website
 - ☐ Friends or relatives
 - ☐ News coverage
 - ☐ Social media
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
15. Do you currently have a license to provide foster care? This may include a general foster care license, kinship license (child-specific license), or initial license.
- ☐ Yes, general foster care license
 - ☐ Yes, kinship license (child-specific license)
 - ☐ Yes, initial license
 - ☐ Not yet, but I am in the process of applying for one
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Not sure (explain)
16. *If no on question 15:* Is there a reason why you haven’t chosen to become licensed? [open text]
17. Thinking again about all the children placed with you in the past 12 months, did you care for a child or youth who was not related to you and had no relationship with your family before placement?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No

SUPPORT FROM ALLIANCE CARES

18. As a caregiver, have you received support from the Alliance CaRES Program (Caregiver Retention, Education, and Support)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

19. *If yes on question 18:* How helpful was support from CaRES?

- ☐ Very Helpful
- ☐ Somewhat Helpful
- ☐ Slightly Helpful
- ☐ Not At All Helpful
- ☐ Not Applicable

CAREGIVER DEMOGRAPHICS

These last two questions will help DCYF meet its goals to promote racial equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice, so each and every child, youth, and family in Washington can thrive.

20. Please let me know the amount that comes closest to your total household income last year, including everyone in your household.

- ☐ Under \$10,000
- ☐ \$10,000 to \$24,000
- ☐ \$25,000 to \$49,000
- ☐ \$50,000 to \$74,000
- ☐ \$75,000 to \$99,000
- ☐ \$100,000 to \$149,000
- ☐ \$150,000 or more
- ☐ Prefer not to say

21. What race or ethnicity do you consider yourself? Select all that apply.

- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Middle Eastern or North African
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- ☐ White
- ☐ Another race or ethnicity
- ☐ Prefer not to say

2024 DCYF Caregiver Survey Report Data Supplement



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