

“What’s Up?”

Philadelphia School District Policy on Kinship Care

An estimated one in six children in Philadelphia live with kinship caregivers, i.e. relatives or family friends who assume full-time care, nurturing and protection of children. In response to this growing phenomenon, the Philadelphia School District has developed policy amendments that allow a parent to delegate parental responsibility to the kinship caregiver. The kinship caregiver may apply to enroll the child in the neighborhood school closest to the kinship caregiver’s home as long as the child lives there full time and not merely for the school year. Once the child is enrolled in the neighborhood school, the kinship caregiver is entitled to assume all rights of a parent toward all school matters. This includes enrollment, reviewing records, decisions about the child’s education and requests for specialized education for exceptional students.

To apply to enroll the child, the kinship caregiver and parent must go to the neighborhood school and fill out a Delegation of Parental Responsibility Form. (If the parent’s whereabouts are unknown, the kinship caregiver may still apply for enrollment of the child). The kinship caregiver will need proof of her residency in the school’s neighborhood, such as a deed, lease or utility bill. She may also be asked to provide the child’s birth certificate and proof of immunizations. The kinship caregiver will be asked to sign a sworn statement that she resides in the school’s neighborhood, will be supporting the child free of charge, will assume all personal obligations for the child relative to school requirements and will keep and support the child full time. A school administrator will meet with the family and review the application. The administrator will make a determination as to whether the child is actually living with the kinship caregiver and whether the transfer is primarily an attempt to evade desegregation requirements. If the administrator is satisfied, the child will be enrolled.

If the enrollment is denied, appeals may be filed with the Office of the Associate Superintendent for Standards, Equity and Student Services. Appeals are “endeavored” to be heard within seven (7) school days of receipt, and all decisions rendered by the Associate Superintendent’s Office are final with respect to the school district.

The Support Center for Child Advocates helped make this important change happen through its Kinship Policy Project, with support from The William Penn Foundation, Samuel S. Fels Fund, The Abington Foundation and The Whitney Houston Charitable Foundation.

Santa's helpers (aka Child Advocates' staff and volunteers) pause from their preparations for toy delivery. Each year, a fleet of volunteer drivers delivered more than 3000 toys to our clients and their families.

