

News Release

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Foster Care Month highlights how relative and kin connections keep families strong

(Salem) – Governor Kate Brown has proclaimed [May 2022 to be Foster Care Month in Oregon](#).

The theme this year is “Relative and Kin Connections: Keeping Families Strong.”

Foster Care Month is a time to:

- Recognize how resource families and relative caregivers support and strengthen families
- Honor the experiences of the children and young people in foster care
- Show gratitude for the contribution that resource and relative caregivers make to the well-being and safety of children and families throughout Oregon

The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS), Child Welfare Division, believes foster care should always be the last possible and temporary option for a child and family when there is a child safety concern. The trauma inflicted on a family by separating them during foster care needs to be carefully considered. If foster care is necessary, reunification should be the primary goal.

As of May 1, 2022, in Oregon, there are 5,245 children in foster care and thousands of resource families and relatives who step up to support them and their families.

[Resource families](#), formerly called foster families or foster parents in Oregon, are affirming and supportive to both the child and their family. Resource families ensure cultural and community connections for children and young adults. Relative and kin caregivers can also play a positive impact in these relationships by maintaining family and cultural ties for children and young people in foster care.

“We know that it is traumatic for a child to enter foster care and when families are separated. With reunification as the primary goal, finding ways to maintain a child’s connection with relative and kin can have a positive impact in achieving this goal,” said Child Welfare Director, Rebecca Jones Gaston. “Thank you to all our resource families and relative caregivers that have stepped up throughout Oregon to care for and support the children, young people and families who need it.”

One thing everyone can do to support families is to educate your friends, family, colleagues and community on resources and programs that can help stabilize the lives of children and families. Learn more about how you can help spread the word to make a difference in this [Foster Care Month Guide](#).

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About the ODHS Child Welfare Division

The Oregon Department of Human Services, Child Welfare Division is committed to transforming itself to better support the individual needs of families and to best serve Oregon's children and young people. [Learn more about the Child Welfare Division Vision for Transformation](#).

Report child abuse to the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline by calling 1-855-503-SAFE (7233). This toll-free number allows you to report abuse of any child or adult to the Oregon Department of Human Services, 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year.