



New York State  
Office of  
Children & Family  
Services

# News

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**Relatives and Other Nonparent Caregivers Have Choices  
When Opening Their Homes to Children**

*New York State Handbook for Relatives Raising Children Now Available in Spanish*

The state Office of Children and Family Service (OCFS) and the state Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) today announced the availability of a Spanish version of a comprehensive, user-friendly handbook for relatives and other nonparent caregivers who are either providing a nurturing environment to children in need of permanency or are interested in caring for children who may need a stable environment. The handbook, *Con Voz y Voto*, is the Spanish version of the *New York State Handbook for Relatives: Having a Voice & a Choice*, first published in December 2008 and recently revised.

The handbook, now available in English and Spanish, answers many of the questions relatives and other nonparent caregivers may have about caring arrangements, to help them fully understand their options and rights.

“A child’s removal from his or her home is a time of crisis,” said OCFS Commissioner Gladys Carrión. “Relatives often need to make quick decisions. This handbook provides all the pros and cons of each care arrangement in easy-to-read language, so that prospective caregivers can make informed decisions based on standardized information.”

“Caretakers, who are often grandparents, need to know there are a range of benefits and services available to help them in supporting the children in their care,” said Kristin Proud, Deputy Secretary for Human Services, Technology and Operations, who is currently overseeing OTDA. “This handbook is a valuable tool that makes this information accessible, allowing the caretakers to avoid frustration when seeking assistance.”

“Our tradition of kin becoming caregivers for children is strengthened when there is clear guidance on their legal and service choices. This handbook supports our family values by providing comprehensive information,” said Gerard Wallace, Esq., Director of the New York State Kinship Navigator and Co-chair of the New York State KinCare Coalition.

This handbook was the product of an OCFS and OTDA interagency workgroup convened to improve assistance and support for children in the care of relatives. The workgroup was charged with seeking input from local social services districts and making recommendations on kin care issues. It included representatives from Niagara, Madison, Tompkins, Chautauqua, Nassau, Westchester, Rockland, Schenectady, and Oswego counties and New York City (the Administration for Children’s Services and the Human Resources Administration).

A supply of the English and Spanish versions of the handbook has been sent to local social services districts, where relatives considering caring for children may obtain a copy. Others may read the handbook online or print out a copy. Both versions are on the OCFS and OTDA websites -- [www.ocfs.state.ny.us](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us) (under “publications/adoption and foster care”) and [www.otda.state.ny.us](http://www.otda.state.ny.us) (under “news and public information/publications/child only”) or at these links: [www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/publications/Pub5080.pdf](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/publications/Pub5080.pdf) (English) and [www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/publications/Pub5080-S.pdf](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/publications/Pub5080-S.pdf) (Spanish).

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