

El Paso County Department of Human Services Kinship Unit Facts

Overview: Overview: El Paso County believes that children do better living with people they know and trust. This allows family relationships to be maintained and provides a safe home environment. El Paso County believes that keeping families together helps to create life-long family traditions and memories. El Paso County's unique integrated service model blends Child Welfare and TANF to provide for the needs of these special and unique families.

Did You Know:

- El Paso County has a dedicated unit of four child welfare caseworkers and one foster care specialist whose role is to determine if relatives and kin-like families are placement options for children entering the child welfare system. This unit conducts initial safety and permanency studies, home studies and classes to certify homes and home study requests through ICPC.
- The TANF unit is an integrated unit of four technicians, one caseworker, a relative advocate and supervisor with a background in child welfare. One technician is bi-lingual in Spanish.
- A monthly orientation is provided to kinship families who are interested in becoming a placement option. The orientation gives an overview of child welfare issues that result in placement and address the financial options for the kin providers.
- A Memorandum of Understanding between child welfare and the assistance payments units was developed three years ago to accelerate the application process in order for kinship families to get the needed services for the children.
- New caseworkers are given an overview of the Kinship philosophy and learn how TANF services can benefit kinship placements.
- A family going through the TANF child-only program has greater flexibility with services.
- There is a "warmline" available for caregivers to have their questions or concerns answered.
- The TANF caseworker follows up on child welfare hotline calls that does not result in an official investigation and involves a relative caretaker.
- Caseworkers from both units are available to attend Team Decision Making (TDM) or Child Placement Team (CPT) meetings regarding the safety and placement of the children.
- There are partnerships with two senior centers, Area Agency on Aging, Headstart, teen self-sufficiency program, mental health, domestic violence and child support agencies.