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**BCDSS Announces Soft Opening of New Kinship Support Center**

1 message

**BCDSS Director** <bcdss.director@info.maryland.gov>

Tue, Feb 1, 2022 at 5:30 PM

Reply-To: bcdss.director@info.maryland.gov

To: lisa.mathias@maryland.gov



A message from  
Director  
Brandi Stocksdales

FEBRUARY 1, 2022

Dear BCDSS Staff:

BCDSS continues to make great strides in becoming a Kin-First agency. If children need to be separated from their homes, we seek to make every child's first — and hopefully only — placement with kin. Yet we know some kinship providers lack the resources and tools needed to successfully raise the children in their care.

Today I'm pleased to announce a soft-opening for our long-planned **Kinship Support Center** at the Biddle Street office complex. Staff who visit the BCDSS Kinship Support Center will be connected with **Tracie Cook-Thomas**, our Kinship Navigator, who is knowledgeable about community resources and available services. Tracie can offer information, referrals and follow-up services to workers to share with kin providers raising children to link them to the benefits and services that they or the children need. Most importantly, the Kin Navigator acts as an advocate for the kin provider by helping them navigate various support systems.

**The BCDSS Kinship Support Center is located at 2923 E. Biddle St. and is currently open to staff only Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** All employees should use the [2921 E. Biddle St.](#) entrance. To contact the center, call 443-423-5442 or send an email to [bcdss.kinshipnavigator@maryland.gov](mailto:bcdss.kinshipnavigator@maryland.gov).

Our vision is to begin providing services to the public Monday-Friday beginning this summer. Staff can visit or contact the Kinship Support Center to learn more about kin providers becoming restricted foster parents and custody/guardianship. Additional support for kin families is available 24/7 on our [Kinship Support Center Website](#).

We need your help to spread the word and make good use of this incredible new resource for staff that work with both formal and informal kin families. **Would you like to join our planning team** and help grow the center? We are seeking volunteers to serve on workgroups to support the shift of our agency and practice to a kin-first culture. We need to hear from you! Your input is critical to improving services and support to our kinship families. To express your interest, please email Syreeta Williams at [Syreeta.williams1@maryland.gov](mailto:Syreeta.williams1@maryland.gov).

I am grateful for the support of the many individuals who helped us reach this important milestone, including **Terri Alston, Jennifer Berry, Syreeta Williams, Tiffany Allen** of ChildFocus, and our partners at Annie E. Casey for supporting these efforts.

#### **Did you know?**

Our new Kinship Support Center is located next to the new office space for the Center for Adoption Support and Education™ (C.A.S.E.). C.A.S.E. is a non-profit provider dedicated to helping economically challenged adoptive, foster and kinship families overcome their mental health challenges through free specialized individual and family therapy, case management, education and training.

The trauma of entering foster care presents many challenges for both children and the families who open their hearts and homes to them. C.A.S.E. offers services to children and parents preparing for permanency and support for post-adoptive families.

The important counseling and educational services C.A.S.E. provides will ensure that foster parents, relatives, children and teens in care receive the treatment they need to heal, grow and thrive. C.A.S.E. is now accepting our referrals. I encourage you to stop by on Tuesdays, meet the C.A.S.E. team and learn more about the services they can provide.

Warm regards,

Brandi Stocksdale, LCSW-C  
Director



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Baltimore City Department of Social Services 1910 N. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21213

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2/23/22, 10:33 PM

State of Maryland Mail - BCDSS Announces Soft Opening of New Kinship Support Center

Case 1:84-cv-04409-ELH Document 663-5 Filed 03/18/22 Page 3 of 3

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