



OhioKAN

Tennessee: Kinship Navigator and Post-Adoption Program

Research Summary

Title of Program: Adoption Support and Preservation Program and the Guardianship Support and Preservation Program (ASAP/GSAP) - Tennessee

Years of Operation: 2004-present¹

Number of families Served: 600-700 children served per year³.

Cost of Program: \$2-4M per year.¹ In 2017, \$2.1M was awarded to ASAP/GSAP and \$2M was awarded for the FOCUS program.³

Funding Source: The Tennessee Department of Children's Services administers funds to the contracted and subcontracted nonprofit agencies, using federal Title IV-B funds, savings from IV-E eligibility, and State of TN funds.³

Description of the Program: The Tennessee Adoption Support and Preservation Program and the Guardianship Support and Preservation Program (together known as ASAP/GSAP) is one of the only national programs created to address both adoptive and guardianship families' needs from initial contemplation to post-adoption/post-guardianship support services.² Adoption Support Services became available for Tennessee adoptive families in 2004, specifically for adoptive families who had declared intent to adopt in Tennessee and for those who had already finalized an adoption previously.² In 2008, ASAP services extended to include Tennessee families considering adoption as a way to build their families.²

While funding is provided by the state's Department of Children's Services (DCS), the program is operated out of two nonprofit agencies, Harmony Family Center, serving Eastern Tennessee, and Catholic Charities of Tennessee serving Western Tennessee¹. Adoption support services are available for any adoptive family residing in Tennessee who has adopted publicly or privately through Tennessee, another U.S. state, and internationally². Guardianship support services are available for any Tennessee family seeking legal guardianship of minor(s) in their care.

For minors still in the foster care system and not yet in permanent placement (guardianship or adoption) ASAP/GSAP offers a host of support services called FOCUS. The FOCUS program targets children and youth who have been in foster care longest; it serves 100-120 children per year.³ FOCUS youth have high needs and are often in residential treatment programs. Youth have access to up to 24 visits within any nine-month period.³ The program goal of FOCUS is permanency with the hope of continuing support services through ASAP/GSAP once youth transition out of FOCUS.³

Eight major components comprise the ASAP/GSAP program:

1. Pre-adoption and pre-guardianship training is available for families in Tennessee before finalizing an adoption or assuming guardianship.² The pre-training provides a comprehensive mental health foundation to parents in attachment theory, trauma-informed care, caregiver expectations, parental self-awareness, resilience and attachment, grief and loss, race and culture; it also covers building a relief team, and navigating emotional triggers.¹
2. Home based therapeutic services is available to families and is carried out statewide by Masters' level therapists who employ evidence-based approaches such as Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy the Attachment, Self-Regulation, and Competency Model, and the Trust-Based Relational Intervention in working with adoptive families.¹
3. Crisis intervention is offered to families when crises arise; ASAP/GSAP therapists are on call 24/7.¹ ASAP/GSAP staff helps families build their own supportive network known as a "relief network" that can provide support and respite as needed.
4. Staff facilitate support groups around the state in addition to planning informal social gatherings for adoptive and guardianship families.¹
5. For children whose adoption or guardianship has not been finalized, ASAP/GSAP staff work towards achieving permanency for that child. For example, staff help families create a community-based network for the child, which can include teachers, mental health professionals, parents, legal supports, and any other people involved in the child's life who may be able to support the child with the goal of maintaining a permanent placement.¹
6. Families have access to the ASAP/GSAP website with current updates and web resources available in Tennessee.¹
7. Families are invited to retreats, including the annual R.E.S.T (Respite Education Support, and Training) that allows parents a weekend of learning and relaxation with other adoptive and guardianship parents. Since 2012, ASAP/GSAP has hosted therapeutic summer camps for families that include individual and family therapy, equine therapy, and traditional summer camp activities.¹
8. ASAP/GSAP offers human service workers professional training to build up professional competency in working with adoptive and guardianship families.¹

Who benefits from the program? The ASAP/GSAP program supports any adoptive or guardianship family living in Tennessee.¹

What services/benefits do they receive? Families receive pre-adoption or pre-guardianship trainings, access to home-based therapy, 24/7 crisis intervention, support groups, informal social gatherings, help with creating natural support systems, advocacy, website resources, retreats, and family camps.

How do they receive the benefits/services? Families can call an 800 number or be referred by the public child welfare system or other community-based. Families receive services either as needed or as part of comprehensive case management.

Where are the services provided? Families are provided services at the contracted nonprofit agencies, in homes, and in various community locations.

Sources:

1. National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment: Adoption Support and Preservation program summary, March 2015 retrieved from: <http://www.nrcdr.org/develop-and-support-families/support-matters/adoption-support-preservation-tn>
2. TN Adoption and Guardianship Preservation program website <http://www.tnasap.org/>
3. ODJFS Post-Adoption Work Groups Notes 3/17 and 4/17