



Arizona Grandparent Ambassadors

2019 AZGA Summit Summary

Thank you for a great Summit!

Arizona Grandparent Ambassadors is a statewide coalition of aunts, uncles, fictive kin and grandparents who stepped up to care for children who for a variety of reasons could no longer remain in their own home. We are the reason children are not in foster care, group homes, or other non-familial settings.

Our mission is to support, mobilize, educate, and advocate for better laws and policies to help us care for and raise strong, resilient children.

Have you registered for the 2020 AZGA Kinship Day at the Capitol?

REGISTER ONLINE:

www.azga.org

Kinship Day at the Capitol

A day for kinship caregivers and their stories to be seen and heard by Arizona lawmakers. We will have meetings with elected officials and staff. Breakfast & Lunch included. FREE!



“Kinship placement should not be a financial hardship.”



The Summit was a day of networking, education, advocacy training for kinship caregivers of all types from around the state. Together, we heard from educational and motivational speakers. We learned about how to be our own best advocates, and we also heard directly from state senators and state representatives about their feelings on kinship care.

This year we welcomed over 200 participants. The children had a great day playing at the Kroc Center through the structured day camp program. We also had a great time with the teenagers in the interactive “planning for the future” workshop brought to us by Sam Garman at Bridging Success. Families learned how to work with your child’s IEP from Jenny Gibbons at Raising Special Kids, and Meghan Arrigo with Foster Ed taught kinship caregivers “How to be an education advocate.”



Additionally, we would like to thank [Elaine Cauley](#) for her talk on “Safety Planning” for the future, Tasia Grzecka from DCS who gave us an overview of the [DCS kinship program](#), our keynote speaker Eddie Sissons, kinship caregiver and staffer to Phoenix Councilman Carlos Garcia [Jacqueline Garcia Hernandez](#), and our legislative panel—Senator [Kate Brophy McGee](#), Rep. [Diego Rodriguez](#), and Senator [Lela Alston](#).

One of our favorite parts of the day was the afternoon session, when we broke up into small groups and discussed the issues facing kinship families throughout the state. Together, we identified the top 5 issues facing kinship caregivers in Arizona:

- #1 Financial support
- #2 Securing extra educational support & after school care
- #3 Accessing appropriate behavioral health services
- #4 & #5 Two-way tie: Respite care, legal support services

What’s next? AZGA Leaders will be working with state lawmakers to develop legislation to serve kinship families and meet the needs identified by our caregivers. Specifically, we will be looking at restoring child-only TANF for non-DCS families and making it easier for DCS families to access the TANF funds the children are already eligible for.

Your next steps are to sign up for our “Kinship Day at the Capitol” to be held on February 10, 2020, and be sure you are on our email list so you can receive our action alerts.

More Information About Arizona Grandparent Ambassadors: www.azga.org