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**A** SECOND CHANCE<sup>INC.</sup>



# National Kinship Review

News, Networking & Information for  
Kinship Care Professionals & Advocates

# How ASCI Does Back-to-School



95%

OF ASCI YOUTH GRADUATE  
HIGH SCHOOL.

ASCI

CHILDREN IN

NEED

RECEIVE

FREE

SCHOOL

SUPPLIES

AND

BACKPACKS.

Our education program  
ASCIReads keeps kids engaged  
over the summer and enhances  
their reading comprehension.

OUR CASEWORKERS GO ABOVE AND BEYOND  
TO ASSIST FAMILIES IN ENROLLING KINSHIP  
CHILDREN IN SCHOOL AND AFTER-SCHOOL  
ACTIVITIES, AS WELL AS WITH EDUCATION  
PLANNING AND EVEN COLLEGE TOURS.

95%

of ASCI youth do not have to  
switch schools once in care.

ASCI transports  
hundreds of children  
to and from school  
each month.

Whether you're a caregiver, parent, caseworker or community supporter, ASCI's education liaison Dr. Christine White-Taylor has provided the following advice to help you ensure successful educational experiences for kinship children in the new school year.

## 1. Know Your School District

Know the district's board members and superintendent and when they have their meetings. They allocate tax dollars to worthy projects within the

school district, as well as lobby for support from the state legislature. Getting to know them and attending/participating in meetings is in your best interest.

Each district has a code of conduct, which dictates how everyone involved with the district's schools should conduct themselves. It may also contain the district's disciplinary structure. Familiarize yourself with this document, as it should detail specific infractions and—should a child in your care misbehave—provide a range of penalties based on the severity.

[Pittsburgh](#) and [Philadelphia](#) are Pennsylvania's largest school districts. Use them as a guide to find out about other districts in the state.

## **2. Get to Know the School Your Child Attends**

Meet with the principal first, then the child's teachers. Remember, for all it's worth, the teachers run the building. Make sure you get to know them and encourage them to contact you with both positive reports and issues of concern.

Each school usually has a student handbook detailing school policies and requirements of all students. This may include a dress code, school traditions, etc. Learn the school's procedures for getting assistance should your child need any educational supports.

## **3. Ask Questions When You Have Them**

Does the school have after-school activities? What about sports or interest groups/teams? Is there tutoring, if needed? If you have questions and have a teacher or school administrator in front of you, ASK.

## **4. Be Supportive of the School's Outreach Efforts**

Join associations. Join the PTA. Participate in and/or contribute to a Parent School Community Council. Attend community engagement events.

## **5. Get Ready for the Beginning of School**

Have your child practice going to bed early to get ready for school days. Stick to a bedtime that will ensure your child is well-rested. Also,

reinforce the importance of completing homework. Start practicing good habits the week before school starts!

## **6. If Your Child Is Struggling**

Call the teacher and the principal to ask for help. Check for tutoring assistance at local universities, colleges and public libraries. For example, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh offers tutoring services throughout the school year.

Also consider attending subject-help nights at school, where your child's teacher will help *you* be the tutor.

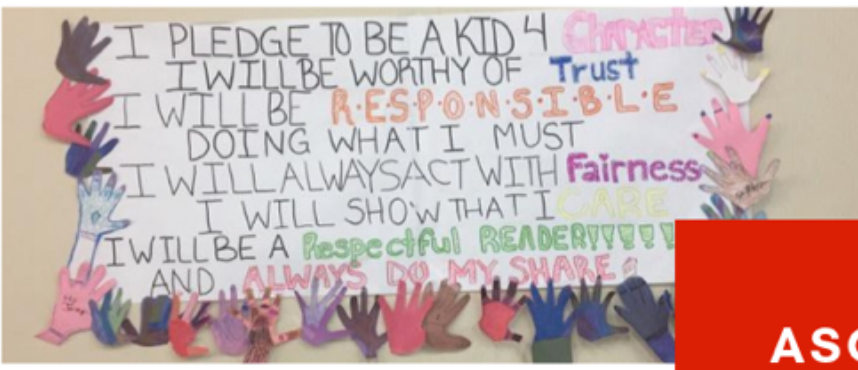
## **7. Take Advantage of Skill-Building Youth Programs**

For example, ASCI's youth programming provides a very good "real life" approach that can be applied to a child's academic career and overall school experience. Our kinship families should check out programs like Y.E.S. (Youth Empowerment Services) and Boys2Men.

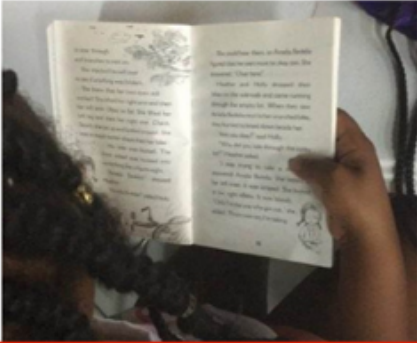
## **8. What You Can Do at Home**

Create opportunities to talk to your student about what each day is like at school. Cut off the electronic games, cable TV and cellphones. Be involved simply by listening. This is how you will find out about your child's relationships with peers, problems they're having and apprehensions they may have about school.

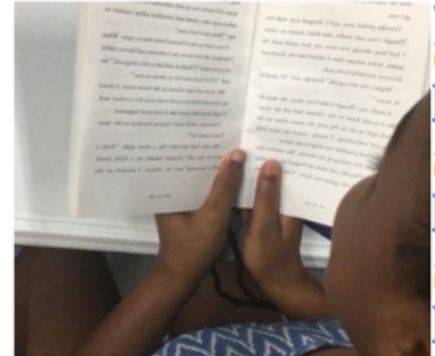
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## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT ASCIREADS 2019 RECAP



## SUMMER LEARNING AND FIELD TRIPS!



ASCI Reads is a summer program that enhances children's reading comprehension skills and keeps them engaged while off from school. During the program, children ages 6-11 read books like *I Got Rhythm*, *Where the Wild Things Are* and the *Harry Potter* series. This year, ASCI Reads had roughly 30 children participate, and staff took them on field

trips to the Pittsburgh Zoo, PPG Aquarium, a Pittsburgh Pirates game, Idlewild and more. Each trip was designed to teach the children life skills like problem-solving and team-building.

***Communications assistant Vania McClendon, who assists with the program each year, shares some of this summer's highlights.***

The theme of this year's program was "Where the Wild Things Are," based on the book written by Maurice Sendak. Many of the field trips, like Idlewild, Wildwood and the Pittsburgh Zoo, were centered around this theme, and the children even created their own "monsters" with art supplies.

The children also made yearbooks and drew pictures of their favorite field trips and best friends from the program. The children were excited to see their friends and counselors every day.

Reading Is Fundamental—a Scholastic program that motivates children to read by working with them, their parents, and community members to make reading a fun and beneficial part of everyday life—also paid a visit to ASCI Reads, and the children got to take home books like *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *A Wrinkle in Time* and *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*.

We played games like Twister, 7-Up and Cup Toss, but the children's favorite game to play was volleyball. The games were competitive, but the children also learned that there is no I in team. They learned how to be patient and to cheer for one another.

Many of the children who were shy in the beginning of the program opened up by the end. On the last day, ASCI Reads hosted a talent show where the children danced, sang, rapped and did gymnastics.

Overall, ASCI Reads was an amazing experience for all the children. Seeing youth come back reading better than they did last summer is very rewarding. It gives them confidence and helps them know that they can conquer anything they put their minds to.

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# ASCI Staff

FAMILY BACK-TO-SCHOOL PHOTOS



Left photo: L'Tesha Gamble-Pettis' sons Jonathan, now 4, and Marcellus, now 7. Jonathan loves arts and crafts, while his big brother Marcellus' favorite subjects are math and science. L'Tesha is ASCI's Managing Director of Child and Family Services, SWAN and ECDI in Pittsburgh.



Right photo: Ashley Jones' daughter Riley, now 7, loves reading. Ashley is a Quality Assurance Specialist in ASCI's Philadelphia office.



Left photo: Kinship Navigator Allison Andiorio's son Anthony is 1 and loves music.



Right photo: ASCI Communications assistant Vania McClendon at age 6. While in school, Vania enjoyed phys ed.





Left photo: Samantha Marino at age 7, when her favorite subject was science. Samantha is now an RMD/Intake administrative assistant at ASCI in Pittsburgh.

Right photo: Jeremiah Burton, age 7, loves math class. His mom, Jacquelyn St. John, is pictured below.

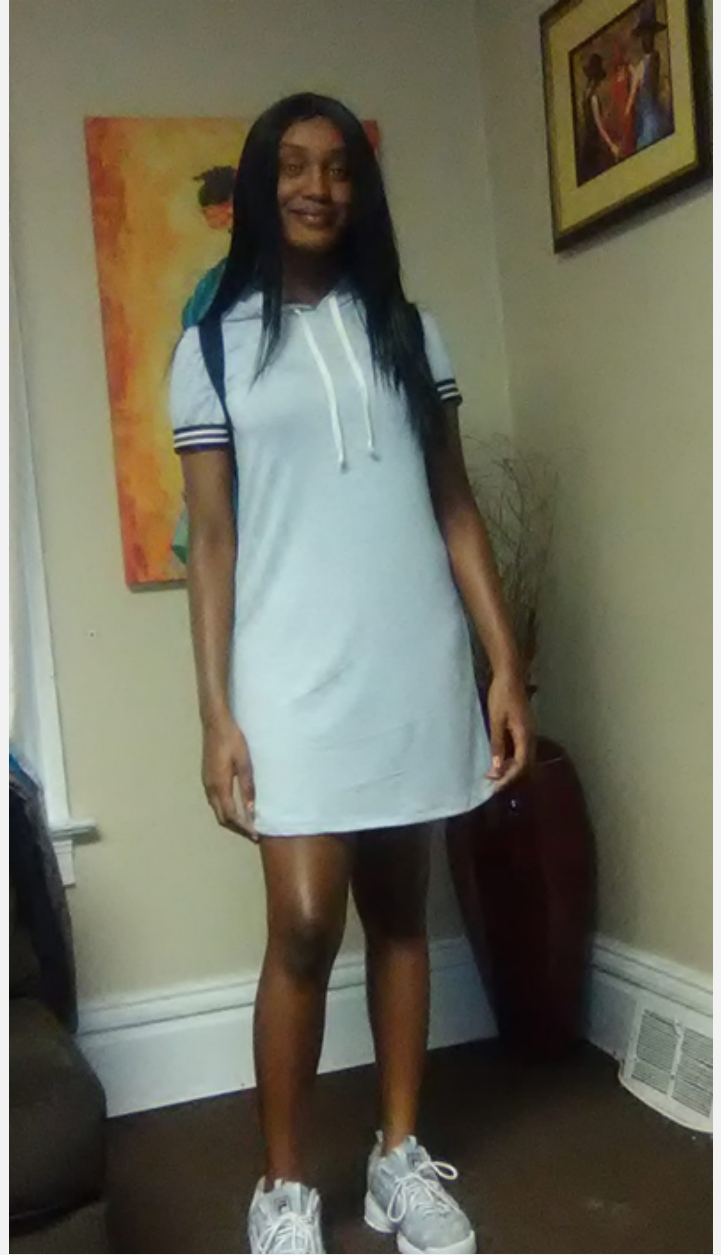


Left photo: Jacquelyn St. John (in blue; maiden name Mitchell) at age 5 and Angelique Rodgers (in white) at age 6. Jacquelyn's favorite subject was math, while Angelique's was reading. Today, Jacquelyn is Administrative Assistant III to the VP of Child & Family Services. Angelique was recently promoted to Content Marketing and Public Relations Manager.

Right photo: ASCI Kinship Navigator Lisa Marino at age 11, when her favorite subject was history.



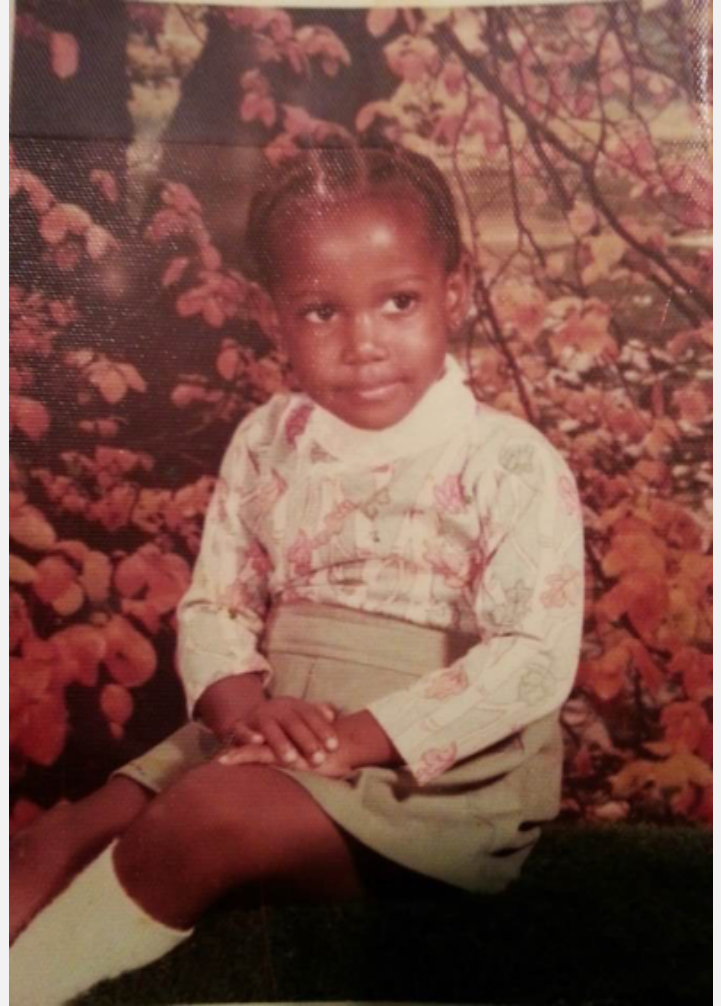
Left photo: Brynn Grimes is 13, and her favorite subject is Consumer Living. Her mother, Tiffany Grimes, works at ASCI as a receptionist and Child and Family Services administrative assistant.



Right photo: Brynn's older sister Brooklyn, 14, loves singing in the Honors Choir.



Left photo: Lamont Grimes Jr., 17, enjoys African-American Studies.



Right photo: Cansa Jay, ASCI Family Service Transportation Supervisor I, is pictured here at 5, when her favorite time of the school day was lunch.



Left photo: Zier Patterson, 12, loves math class. His mom, Misty Patterson, is the Senior Director of Family Service Transportation at ASCI.

Right photo: Passion Coker at age 3—when she loved naptime—with her mom Misty Patterson. Passion is now a compliance worker in ASCI's Human Relations department.



Left photo: Raysean, now 8, enjoys math, and so does his big sister Derayah, 10, who loves science, too. Their mom Desirae Johnson is an administrative assistant III at ASCI.

Right photo: Kayla Ford in her graduation photo at age 22. Her favorite class in college was Fashion Buying. Kayla now works for ASCI in Family Service Transportation.

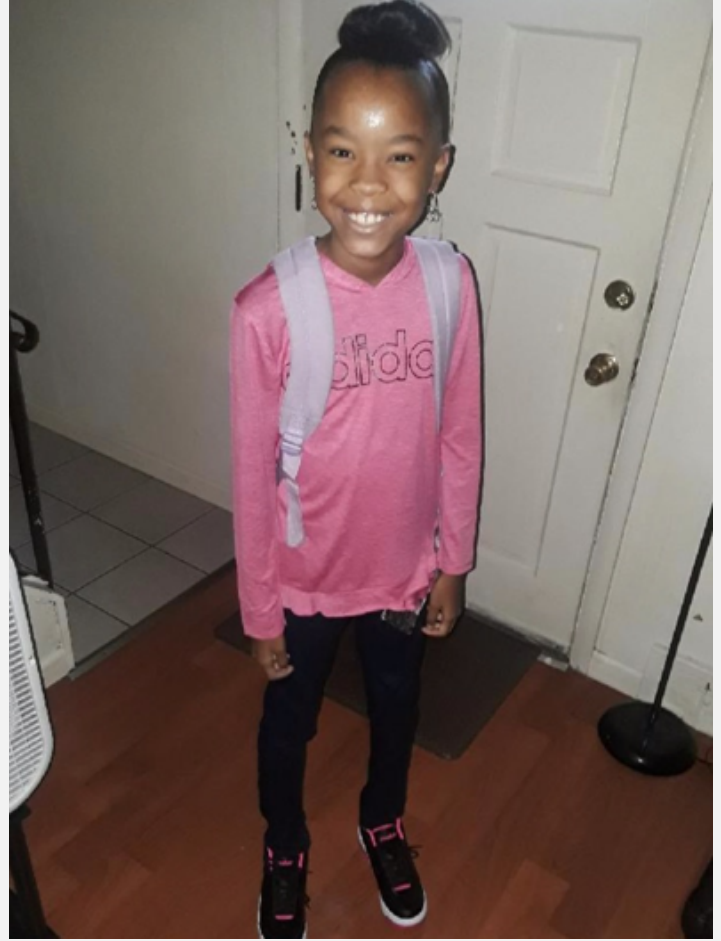


Left photo: Moriah Love, pictured here at 21, loved studying Consumer Behavior and International Business. She is now ASCI's Human Relations Supervisor III.

Right photo: ASCI administrative assistant LayAnn Allah's oldest son Isaiah is 11 and loves swimming and lunch.



Left photo: LayAnn's younger son Jibril, 10, loves math.



Right photo: The baby of the family, Ariell Allah, is 8, and her favorite subject is science.



Left photo: Brandon Hughes, 17, with his sister Madison, 16. Brandon prefers study hall, while Madison enjoys taking college-level courses. She'll enter college as a sophomore! Their dad William is ASCI's Director of Fiscal Operations.

Right photo: Brianna Hughes (left), 9, loves gym and recess, as she is very active. Ariana (center) is 8, and her favorite subject is art. Alazaye (right), 10, enjoys math and reading.

The kids bring gift bags full of classroom supplies for their teachers every year on the first day of school.



Left photo: Sayge Newton, 7, just started 2nd grade, and her favorite subject is math. Her mom, Antoinette Newton, is a transportation case assistant at ASCI.

Right photo: Devon Newton, 12, loves math just like his little sister.



Left photo: VP of Fiscal Sarah Garase-Cuomo's son Santino is 7, and his favorite subject is math.



Right photo: Sarah's daughter Isabella is 12 and loves writing and science.





Left photo: Janae Hassim, 16, enjoys her science courses. Her mom Toni Wagner is ASCI's Sr. Director III of Organizational Accreditation & Evidence-Based Strategies, Systems Improvement/Knowledge Management

Right photo: Kathleen Gima at age 5, when her favorite part of the school day was story time. Kathleen is Sr. Director of Content and Brand Management at ASCI.



Left photo: Skylar Dior Jenkins, 3, has started pre-K. She loves drawing and writing. She tells her mom, FST worker Jazmine Lindsay, that she wants to be a police officer so she "can write everyone a ticket."

Right photo: Kaiden Coles, 5, loves recess! His mom, Kashmire Moore, is a Program Supervisor at ASCI's Philadelphia office.

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# ASCI's Dr. David Brock Leads Discussion on Grandfamilies



2ND ANNUAL CASEY CONFERENCE ON AGING

On August 27, Senator Bob Casey held his second Casey Conference on Aging at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, PA. Dr. David Alan Brock, VP of Family and Community Engagement at ASCI, served as a moderator between Senator Casey and a Pennsylvania grandparent to discuss the challenges faced by grandparents raising their grandchildren.



Dr. Brock with Charlotte Stephenson, grandmother, kinship caregiver  
and grandfamily advocate.

The discussion was an opportunity to highlight the resources and services available to grandfamilies and the work being done by Senator Casey on a federal level to support them. Charlotte Stephenson, who is raising her 7-year-old grandson due to the opioid epidemic, shared the struggles of her "new normal" after going from grandparent back to parent and taking care of a child: going to school, PTA meetings and looking for medical assistance and supplemental income.

Charlotte now serves as a member of the Grandfamilies Resource Council.



Marva Allen, Senator Casey and Marietta Johnson.

Senator Casey highlighted the [Grandfamilies Act](#), which he introduced in May and is cosponsored by senators from Ohio, Wisconsin, New Hampshire and New York. According to the Senate Special Committee on Aging, of which Casey is a member, the act aims to "increase access to Social Security child's benefits and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families cash assistance program, incentivize states to create temporary guardianship laws for grandparents who need to step in quickly to help a grandchild and provide support for services in grandfamily housing."



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