

## About Center For Family Connections

At a fundamental level, Center For Family Connections' (CFFC) mission is to help children feel safe, seen, and valued, and to help them adjust to the challenges of being, or having been, moved from one family to another. Many of the children CFFC serves have spent years in countless foster homes, orphanages, residential centers, or hospitals. CFFC constructs families, reconstructs families, refurbishes and restores families. The experienced clinicians understand the interactions and needs of complex families and provide the skills, tools and talent required to build stronger and healthier family units.

*CFFC believes that the need to honor connections is an essential part of family life.*

CFFC is an educational and clinical resource center that addresses the developmental, structural, and systemic issues related to adoption, foster care, kinship care, divorce and other complex blended families. CFFC serves individuals and families affected by adoption and foster care, as well as the people with whom they are connected, by offering training, education, advocacy, and clinical treatment.

CFFC serves a broad and diverse constituency nationally and internationally as well as in Greater Boston. From its founding, the staff has grown from 2 to 15, enabling CFFC clinicians to help more individuals and families. In the past year, CFFC served about 1,500 people on-site, and about 5,000 parents and professionals in national and international trainings and seminars. About 30% of CFFC's clients were low income; 30% were African American, 10% Latino, 15% Asian, and 45% Caucasian. CFFC's pro bono services to low-income clients are valued at approximately \$100,000 annually. Many of CFFC's clients reside in areas in DSS's Greater Boston and Metro regions.

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Center For Family Connections  
presents

a Family Network Service

for

The Department of Social Services

# Keeping Kinnections

*Clinically Supervised Visitation*



## About Keeping Kinnections

Children/youth in foster care and their birth parents often worry that, if an adoption is finalized, it will mean the end of these primary relationships.

Many assume that they will be better able to maintain contact if the child/youth remains in foster care!

Some may attempt to disrupt a placement—either directly or indirectly—if they believe that relations will be permanently severed.

Keeping Kinnections helps adoptive, foster and kinship families maintain permanent connections with the birth parents, siblings, and when indicated, other birth family members.

## Keeping Kinnections: Program

All relevant parties in the young person's "extended family of adoption" (EFA) are identified. The EFA includes birth, foster and adoptive parents, kinship caregivers and guardians as well as children and youth of all ages who are siblings by adoption, foster care or kinship to a focal sibling.

Individual meetings are held with each adult member of the EFA to ensure that each understands the purpose and protocols of the clinical visitation as well as his or her role and responsibilities—with a focus on the wellbeing of the young person above all else.

Individual meeting with the youth help him/her prepare for the visit. Providing children with the knowledge and preparation for what to expect is comforting and reduces anxiety.

Within the supportive visit setting, with a structured opening and closing ritual, the participants are offered the opportunity to explore each other's interests, experiences, and feelings. Clinicians make every effort to encourage real conversation and sharing of concerns as a vehicle for opening communication and for healing old wounds.

CFFC believes that cooperative relationships can be developed by facilitating meetings between the adults. This provides adults with the skills to maintain contacts on their own.

## Keeping Kinnections: Outcomes

- Strengthens opportunity for permanency by increasing family involvement in services.
- Helps to stabilize families with a child at risk of placement.
- Focuses on the needs of adolescents and their families.
- Provides supportive clinically supervised visitation services.
- Creates a network of services, which helps to reduce the number of placements children experience and promotes placement stability.
- Supports family and other important relationships before and after placement; provides relationship-building services to foster parents and kin which expands their capacity to deal with some challenging teens.
- Fosters permanent connections.