



Mission and Vision in Action

Learn how we are transforming the child welfare system through the power of kinship >

Every child has family. Finding them changes everything.

Kinnect is an Ohio-based nonprofit dedicated to ensuring permanent families for all children in the shortest time possible and connecting those families with individualized support to meet their unique needs. We do this through a two-pronged approach. Kinnect to Family programs focus on urgent family search and engagement to identify affirming caregivers for young people and put youth at the center of achieving permanent family. OhioKAN programs focus on connecting those families and youth with services and resources to meet their needs.

Permanency: Permanency means that a child is living within a loving family that is consistent throughout their life. It also means they are supported in efforts to maintain relationships with people who are important to them, whether or not they live together.

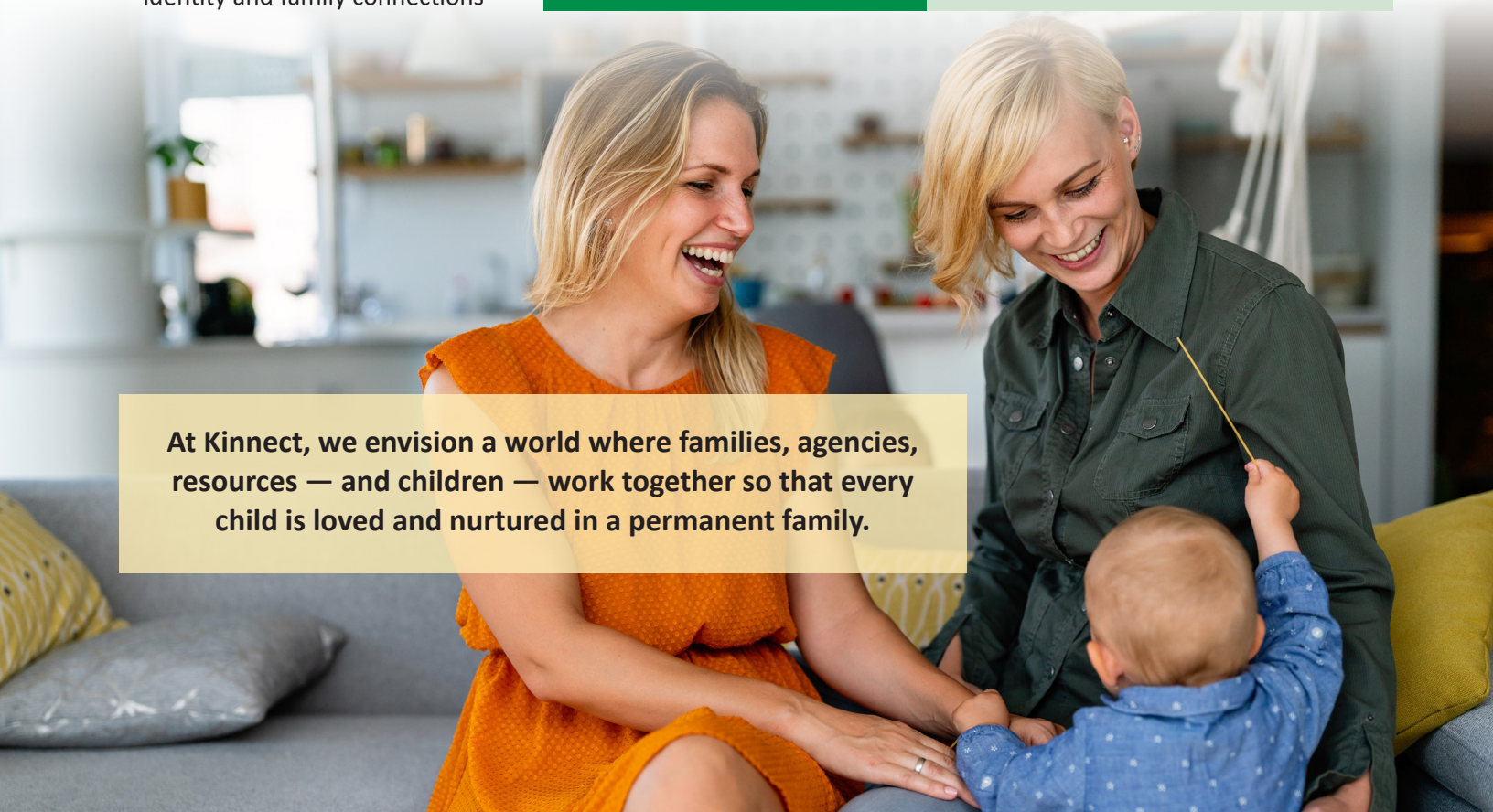
Children who grow up in foster care are more likely to experience:

- » Homelessness
- » Unemployment
- » Justice system involvement
- » An unplanned pregnancy
- » Physical and mental health challenges
- » Separation from their cultural identity and family connections

Family: We embrace family to be defined as biological, adoptive, foster, and all other kin and persons who have meaningful relationships with the child and the family of origin, such as neighbors, coaches, and life-long friends.

Children who are cared for by family:

- » Experience less trauma and better physical and mental health
- » Demonstrate better overall well-being
- » Do better in school
- » Are more likely to reunify and remain connected with their birth families

A photograph of two women and a young child sitting on a couch in a bright, modern living room. The woman on the left is wearing an orange dress and is smiling broadly. The woman on the right is wearing a dark green shirt and is also smiling, looking down at the child. The child is wearing a blue shirt with white polka dots and is holding a thin stick. The background shows a kitchen area with shelves and a window.

At Kinnect, we envision a world where families, agencies, resources — and children — work together so that every child is loved and nurtured in a permanent family.



Our Programs

Kinnect utilizes unique, data-driven approaches to achieve permanency for young people in the shortest time possible.



Kinnect to Family is an intense, specialized program that is implemented in over 25 Ohio counties. Kinnect to Family Specialists engage in urgent, diligent family search and engagement. They work alongside traditional caseworkers with the goal of identifying at least 80 extended family members for each child. They find 150 people on average! The goal is not only to identify kin who can care for the child, but also to support them by creating with them a network of connections. For example, some family members may not be able to care for a child in their home full-time, but they may be able to transport them to school, activities, or appointments, provide childcare, offer support through relationships, or give financial help.



Youth Centered Permanency Roundtables is a program that sets up a framework putting youth at the center of a series of important meetings designed to lead to permanency. It is operating in over 10 Ohio counties. Youth actively participate and help to drive the process. They are empowered to invite the important people in their lives to participate in this process and help them set up a network of supports. Kinnect works to design, implement and support the program in county children services agencies. Agencies either run the program with ongoing support from Kinnect or utilize our Statewide Facilitator to offer this service to young people they are serving.



SEEK (Search, Engage, Explore, Kinnect) is a Kinnect statewide training series that focuses on intense family search and engagement values and strategies.

These strategies equip children services staff to support families and produce lasting results by connecting young people to their kin.

Affirm me

Affirm Me was a grant-funded program to help LGBTQ+ young people in foster care create an affirming family network and a chosen family that will provide support, belonging, unconditional commitment, and permanency. From 2017-2021, Kinnect partnered with the Cuyahoga County Division of Children Family Services, Case Western Reserve University, Family Builders by Adoption and A Place for Me to develop the Chosen Affirming Family Finding and Youth Acceptance project models. This LGBTQ+-specific programming is being woven throughout all Kinnect efforts.





OhioKAN is a statewide program that provides free navigator services to Ohio's kinship and adoptive families. Kinnect sought out the opportunity to design and manage OhioKAN for the state of Ohio in order to meet the needs of families and youth. Families receive one-on-one help getting connected with basic needs, childcare, health care, social and emotional support, educational support and legal aid and services. They can call, email or arrange to text with a navigator. OhioKAN is divided into ten regions.

PASSS

OhioKAN also administers the Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy (PASSS) program, which is designed to assist families with the costs of services to address the child's physical condition, developmental disability, mental health, or emotional condition that either existed prior to the adoption or has developed. Navigators help families complete the application, and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services processes them.



The Youth Navigator Network is a navigator program for young people with past or present children services involvement. Like OhioKAN, the Youth Navigator Network will provide one-on-one navigation services to youth.

Support Our Mission

All children deserve to remain connected to their culture, community, and kin.

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