



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor

KODY H. KINSLEY • Secretary

LISA TUCKER CAULEY • Division Director, Human Services

December 19, 2024

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**ATTENTION: DIRECTORS, CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS, MANAGERS,
SUPERVISORS, AND SOCIAL WORKERS**

SUBJECT: KINNECT FAMILY SEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT TRAINING

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND: TO SHARE ABOUT TRAINING OPPORTUNITY FOR CHILD WELFARE STAFF

REQUIRED ACTION: Information Only Time Sensitive Immediate

We are excited to announce a new partnership with **Kinnect**, an Ohio-based nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing child welfare practices, to provide Family Search and Engagement training to our child welfare workforce. This initiative will prioritize equipping our workforce with the tools and strategies that promote a *KinFirst* culture to strengthen kinship connections and deliver lasting results for families and children. Beginning in 2025, Kinnect will offer 14 in-person training sessions across all seven regions of NC, fostering a shared commitment to meeting the needs of our communities.

Kinnect, with nearly 20 years of experience, has partnered with families, public agencies, and private providers to develop innovative strategies and deliver impactful programs that empower families and support children. Through their training branch, **KinnectU**, they will deliver their values-driven **S.E.E.K. (Search. Engage. Explore. Kinnect.)** course—an intensive six-hour training designed for professionals across child welfare and related systems. This interactive training will focus on diligent search techniques, meaningful engagement strategies, and skillset development for connecting and supporting kinship families. Thus, enabling participants to enhance their practice and align with the core values of family search and engagement.

Kinnect has successfully facilitated this training across Ohio, Colorado, and California, bringing their expertise to diverse regions. We are fortunate to leverage this valuable resource to enhance our kinship care efforts in North Carolina.

We are seeking county child welfare agencies in each region to volunteer to host these regional training sessions in early spring and late summer (space needed for 45-60 attendees). If your agency is interested, please contact Jessica.Frisina@dhhs.nc.gov.

Learn more at www.kinnect.org/kinnectu.

S.E.E.K. Learning Objectives:

By the end of this training, participants will be able to:

- Recognize how legislation supports keeping children connected to their families.
- Explain how the core values of family search and engagement can be incorporated into practice.

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LOCATION: 820 S. Boylan Avenue, McBryde Building, Raleigh, NC 27603

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- Describe the difference between outcomes related to children with kinship caregivers versus those who grow up in foster care.
- Utilize new search tools and strategies in practice.
- Recall strategies to engage with the immediate family being served, their extended family, other professionals, and partnerships with key stakeholders
- Identify barriers and solutions to quality family search and engagement.
- Assess where current practice does not align with core values of family search and engagement and explore areas of opportunity.

Please stay tuned for further communications in the coming weeks. For questions, please contact the NCDSS Foster Care Coordinator, Jessica Frisina at Jessica.Frisina@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,



Adrian W. Daye, MSW
Deputy Director for Child Welfare Practice
Division of Social Services, Child Welfare
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Cc: Lisa Tucker Cauley, Division Director, Human Services, Child, Family, and Adult, Regional Support
William "Ben" Rose, Lead Regional Director
Donna Fayko, Interim Deputy Director for County Operations
Kathy Stone, Section Chief for Safety and Prevention Services
Kimaree Sanders, Section Chief for Regulatory and Licensing
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Heather McAllister, Section Chief for Child and Family Services

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