



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

JOSH STEIN • Governor

DEV DUTTA SANGVAI • Secretary

LISA TUCKER CAULEY • Division Director, Human Services

November 6, 2025

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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

SUBJECT: KINNECT FAMILY SEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT TRAINING – YEAR 2 OPPORTUNITIES

**PURPOSE/BACKGROUND: TO SHARE TRAINING OPPORTUNITY FOR CHILD WELFARE STAFF AND
SOLICIT TRAINING SPACES**

REQUIRED ACTION: ☒ Information Only ☐ Time Sensitive ☐ Immediate

We are excited to continue our partnership with [Kinnect](#), an Ohio-based nonprofit dedicated to enhancing child welfare practices, to provide Family Search and Engagement training to our child welfare workforce. This furthers our prioritization to equip our workforce with the tools and strategies that promote a *KinFirst* culture and strengthen kinship connections and deliver lasting results for families and children.

2025 Training Recap:

In 2025, Kinnect delivered 14 in-person training sessions across all seven regions to 346 state and county child welfare employees, including case workers and leaders from Intake through Permanency. Over 90% of participants found the training engaging, relevant, and worth recommending. Here is what some participants said they will do differently:

- “Exploring family members and their relationships to identify more than just immediate caregivers—**building networks of support.**” (Case worker, 1-5 years’ experience)
- “**Start earlier** during the in-home process, looking for connections before crisis occurs.” (Supervisor, 6-10 years’ experience)
- “Implement resources for workers to use online and in the community to **better engage families.**” (Supervisor, 6-10 years’ experience)

2026 Training Preview:

In 2026, Kinnect will offer 14 in-person regional trainings to counties. This six-hour interactive course “S.E.E.K.” (Search. Engage. Explore. Kinnect.) focuses on diligent search techniques, meaningful engagement, and skills for connecting and supporting kinship families. *Kinnect will offer 14 one-hour, virtual post-training coaching sessions after each in-person training. Participation in the S.E.E.K. course is required to join these sessions—this includes those who have attended in 2025.* We are also working with Kinnect to provide family search and engagement trainings to private child placing agencies and court partners throughout NC.

Call For Hosts:

We are seeking county child welfare agencies in each region to volunteer to host these regional training sessions that will occur between January and August 2026. Spaces must accommodate up to 60 attendees and include

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LOCATION: 1915 Health Services Way, Raleigh, NC 27607

MAILING ADDRESS: 2410 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2410

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technology to support laptop connection, PowerPoint display, and audio playback. If you hosted last year and are willing to host again, please let us know. We appreciate each of the counties who have hosted thus far. If your agency is interested, please contact Jessica.Frisina@dhhs.nc.gov and casie.burke@kinnectohio.org.

KinnectU

[KinnectU](#), the training branch of Kinnect, offers comprehensive training, consulting, and program replication services designed to strengthen families and promote a KinFirst culture. These are additional courses county child welfare agencies can pursue on their own if they wish, supplementing the S.E.E.K. training provided by the state, such as:

- Engaging Fathers: Enhancing Family Connections
- Unpacking the "No": Navigating Family Resistance
- Social Media Use in Child Welfare: Privacy, Protection, and Ethics and Engagement

Counties can reach out to schedule these at a time that works for their staff. For questions, please contact KinnectU@KinnectOhio.org.

Please stay tuned for further communications in the coming weeks. For questions, please contact the NCDHHS DSS 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
Donna Fayko, Deputy Director for Child Welfare Operations
William "Ben" Rose, Lead Regional Director
Kimaree Sanders, Section Chief for Regulatory and Licensing
Kathy Stone, Section Chief for Safety
Heather McAllister, Section Chief for Child and Family Services

CWS-77-25

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