



## OhioKAN

### Ohio: Kinship Supports Program

#### Research Summary

**Title of Program:** Kinship Supports Intervention (KSI, Ohio)

**Years of Operation:** The initial grant and evaluation period for the intervention was 2011-2015. Since 2015, the Kinship Supports Intervention (KSI) program has operated in 15 remaining waiver counties due to the significant increase in positive outcomes for children. The waiver counties will continue to use the KSI through the end of the waiver in September 2019. The current waiver counties are considering how they may continue to use the KSI after the waiver ends.

**Number of Families Served:** 2,600 children were served in families that received the intervention during the initial grant period.<sup>1</sup>

**Cost of Program:** Initial and current program costs are currently unavailable.

**Funding Source:** The Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration project granted Public Children Service Agencies in 26 States flexible use of Federal Title IV-E funds.<sup>1</sup> Historically, IV-E funds were allocated for traditional foster care with a minimal amount of funding supporting non-licensed kinship homes and other informal family arrangements.<sup>1</sup>

**Description of the Program:** From 2012-2015, 16 Ohio county PCSAs utilized flexible funding through the Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration project to implement a Kinship Supports Intervention (KSI).<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the intervention was to make sure kinship caregivers had all the necessary supports to meet the needs of minors in their care.<sup>2</sup> The counties that implemented the KSI were part of a larger group known as the Protect Ohio consortium.<sup>2</sup> The primary goal of Protect Ohio's Kinship Strategy is to use Title IV-E funds flexibly to "change service utilization patterns" to produce better outcomes for Ohio children.<sup>2</sup> KSI services are offered to kinship families with open PCSA cases "regardless of custody status or supervision orders".<sup>2</sup>

Seven program components comprise the Kinships Supports Intervention (KSI):

1. Kinship coordinators are housed in the public child welfare agency.<sup>2</sup> Kinship coordinators serve as experts on the needs of kinship families within the child welfare agency and in the larger community.<sup>2</sup>
2. Kinship coordinators implement standardized practices for identifying, locating, and engaging potential kinship caregivers within the PCSA to increase the placement of children with kin instead of in traditional foster care.<sup>2</sup>

3. After receiving a referral, the kinship coordinator completes a Home Assessment, Needs Assessment, and Support Plan with caregivers.<sup>2</sup> The Home Assessment examines the readiness of a potential kin caregiver to have children placed in the home. The Needs Assessment determines the specific services and supports the caregiver will need to support the children in the home. Most importantly, the Needs Assessment highlights strengths already present in the home with the potential kinship caregiver. Next, the kinship coordinator drafts a Support Plan with the caregiver that corresponds to the needs identified in the Needs Assessment. The Support Plan is updated quarterly to reflect how needs change over time for youth and families.<sup>2</sup>
4. At the initial home visit from the kinship coordinator, kinship caregivers are given an official PCSA Kinship Care handbook.<sup>2</sup>
5. Kinship coordinators utilize local Family Team Meeting (FTM) providers to use with kinship families either when guiding kinship families to permanency or when facilitating reunification with the birth parent(s).<sup>2</sup>
6. In addition to direct service, kinship coordinators provide education and training on the unique needs of kinship families to local community partners. Kinship coordinators keep community resource lists up-to-date for families.<sup>2</sup>
7. During the initial implementation period, kinship coordinators collected data for evaluating the intervention

**Who is benefiting from the program?** The KSI targets unlicensed kinship caregivers in Ohio, especially, voluntary kinship placements (where custody was not held by the State) and public kinship placements (where custody was held by the State).<sup>1</sup>

**What services/benefits do they receive?** Kinship families receive coordinated case management including a home assessment, needs assessment, and a written support plan for caregivers. The families have ongoing home visits from kinship staff. Additionally, families receive financial assistance (e.g. for clothing, food, rent, utilities, furniture, and transportation), information and referral for services, and training. Optional services included legal services, child care, and formal/informal respite.

**How do they receive the benefits/services?** Families receive services through phone calls, emails, face-to-face home visits, and visits to community agencies.<sup>2</sup>

**Where are the services provided?** KSI services are provided at homes, child welfare agencies, and other community locations.

#### **Sources:**

1. Wheeler, C. & Vollet, J.W. (2017). Supporting Kinship Caregivers: Examining Impact of a Title IV-E waiver kinship supports intervention. *Child Welfare, Special Issue 95(4)*, pp. 91-110.
2. Practice Manual for Protect OHIO Kinship Intervention (July 2011) pp. 1-25.