

What is the impact of a Title IV-E waiver kinship supports intervention?

WHEELER, C., & VOLLET, J. (2017). SUPPORTING KINSHIP CAREGIVERS: EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF A TITLE IV-E WAIVER KINSHIP SUPPORTS INTERVENTION. *CHILD WELFARE*, 95(4), 91-110.

What can we learn from this study?

Research has demonstrated benefits of kinship care, and many child welfare administrators consider it to be a best practice. This **study examined the impact of a Title IV-E waiver kinship supports intervention (KSI)** in Ohio. The KSI allows participating public child services agencies to create kinship coordinator positions, assess the kinship home for strengths and needs, and develop and implement caregiver support plans, which may include services, financial assistance, and tangible goods.

Study details:

- **Population:** Treatment group — 2,600 children in voluntary or public kinship care whose unlicensed caregivers received intervention services under a Title IV-E waiver; two comparison groups that received traditional IV-E services: 1) 2,365 children in nonrelative foster care; 2) 3,750 children placed with unlicensed kin without the Kinship Supports Intervention
- **Data source:** 8,715 children placed in out-of-home care within 32 counties in Ohio
- **Methodology:** Quasi-experimental design with propensity score matching
- **Dates:** Placements occurring between March 1, 2012, and April 31, 2015

What are the critical findings?

Children whose caregivers received services through KSI (the treatment group):

- **Were less likely to experience re-reports of maltreatment** within six, 12 and 18 months of the end of placement, and were three times **less likely to re-enter out-of-home care** compared to children in the non-relative foster care comparison group;
- **Experienced fewer placement moves and less time in placement** compared to children in non-relative foster care and children in traditional unlicensed kin care;
- **Were less likely to be reunified with their parents but more likely to achieve permanency overall** compared to children in the non-relative foster care comparison group.

Why is this important for our work?

Children placed with kin experienced a lower likelihood of subsequent maltreatment or re-entry to out-of-home care than those placed in non-relative foster care. Additionally, when kinship supports were available for families through KSI, placements were more stable and children spent less time in care. These findings underscore both the human and financial benefits of kinship programs, and the importance of shifting to a [“kin-first” culture](#) that prioritizes the development of policies and practices to support kinship caregivers.

This summary synthesizes the findings of a single research study. To learn more about kinship navigator programs in child welfare, please review the following resources: [Why should child protection agencies adopt a kin-first approach?](#) and [How did A Second Chance Inc. transform kinship care in Allegheny County?](#)

For additional information, [see the journal](#) or KMResources@casey.org.