

Chapter 3 : Theory of Change

Theory of Change Overview

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The OhioKAN Theory of Change was developed in partnership with stakeholders representing both public and private service providers and advocates who serve kinship and adoptive families in urban, rural, and suburban settings across Ohio. The document is designed as an overview of how the activities of the OhioKAN program are expected to lead to positive outcomes for communities and families. The primary audience is staff and stakeholders who can use this document to understand the overall design of the program and as a quick desk reference for how activities contribute to the program's goals.

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Theory of Change

Roadmap to Support for Families and Communities

THE CHALLENGE

Communities and systems don't consistently have awareness of the unique needs of kinship caregivers and adoptive parents or the capacity to appropriately and equitably serve them

There are insufficient human services and material resources to meet the needs of kinship caregivers and adoptive parents

Stigma for seeking resources, services, and supports prevents families from asking for and receiving what they need

Discrimination, racism, and systemic inequities create additional barriers for people marginalized by systems based on race, gender, class, sexual orientation, geography, religion, and other aspects of a person's identity when engaging with public and private resources, services and supports

Insufficient dissemination of information to kinship caregivers and adoptive parents about existing resources their family could benefit from and programs they may be eligible for and lack of inclusive and equitable resources

Kinship caregivers and adoptive parents are adapting to new roles and expectations while coping with trauma, changing family dynamics, and systemic inequities or may simply need additional resources, services, and supports to meet the needs of their children, themselves, and their families

THE CHANGE

OhioKAN partners with families and systems to:

Develop collaborative strategies to address awareness and capacity gaps for serving kinship & adoptive families within systems like education, health, mental health, housing, legal, and judicial while naming and confronting racism, discrimination, and systemic inequities

OhioKAN co-creates solutions with families through:

- Individualized information and referrals, to meet all kinship & adoptive families' needs
- Family driven, equity-oriented, trauma responsive navigation services, benefits coordination, and advocacy to address the unique and diverse situations families experience
- Access to material resource to care for their children, themselves, and their families

Families Build Confidence and Connections

- Build awareness of and access to the resources, services, and supports they identify to improve caregiver, child, and family outcomes.
- Understand all their options and feel confident, supported, and committed to providing a stable home
- Connect and build community with other kinship & adoptive families, and they have the continuous support they need

Communities and Systems Build Capacity

- Develop awareness of kinship & adoptive families' experiences and build inclusive and equitable strategies and capacity to better support them
- Promote awareness of available and accessible connections and resources to meet the needs of all kinship & adoptive families across Ohio
- Increase their service array and develop sustainable solutions to support all kinship & adoptive families

Figure 1. The first page of the OhioKAN theory of change documents the challenge that Kinship and Adoptive Families face and the change that OhioKAN wishes to see in support of Families and communities.

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DOWNLOAD THEORY OF CHANGE

The OhioKAN theory of change seeks to address the following problem statements:

- Kinship caregivers and adoptive parents are adapting to new roles and expectations while coping with trauma, changing family dynamics, and systemic inequities or may simply need additional resources, services, and supports to meet the needs of their children, themselves, and their families
- Insufficient dissemination of information to kinship caregivers and adoptive parents about existing resources their family could benefit from and programs they may be eligible for and lack of inclusive and equitable resources
- Stigma for seeking resources, services, and supports prevents families from asking for and receiving what they need
- Discrimination, racism, and systemic inequities create additional barriers for people marginalized by systems based on race, gender, class, sexual orientation, geography, religion, and other aspects of a person's identity when engaging with public and private resources, services and supports
- Communities and systems don't consistently have awareness of the unique needs of kinship caregivers and adoptive parents or the capacity to appropriately and equitably serve them
- There are insufficient human services and material resources to meet the needs of kinship caregivers and adoptive parents
- Communities and systems don't consistently have awareness of the unique needs of kinship caregivers and adoptive parents or the capacity to appropriately and equitably serve them
- There are insufficient human services and material resources to meet the needs of kinship caregivers and adoptive parents

Two Pathways of Change

OhioKAN's theory of change has two distinct complementary pathways for change. The two pathways include: direct services with families to build confidence and connections and capacity building support for communities and systems. Macro-level systems change is designed to support and reinforce the family pathway while the network of partnerships involved in systems change efforts are expected to benefit families because a more connected system that is aware of the unique needs of kinship and adoptive families will be better equipped to meet their needs. To represent this concept, the two pathways intersect.

The following sequence outlines key milestones and activities expected to contribute to the program's overall impact. The higher-level milestones are associated with key activities that contribute to the next milestone. This chain can be best understood in an if-then sequence.

For example, **if** OhioKAN promotes community knowledge of OhioKAN by launching a statewide public awareness campaign with targeted regional/county level campaigns and educates public system partners about the unique needs of K&A families and how they can be best supported, **then** local human service systems become more knowledgeable and better equipped to serve K&A families. **If** local human service systems become more knowledgeable and better equipped to serve K&A families and OhioKAN assesses and monitors the extent to which the available services and supports meet K&A families' needs, **then** OhioKAN will build community level awareness and develop connections with places families already are.

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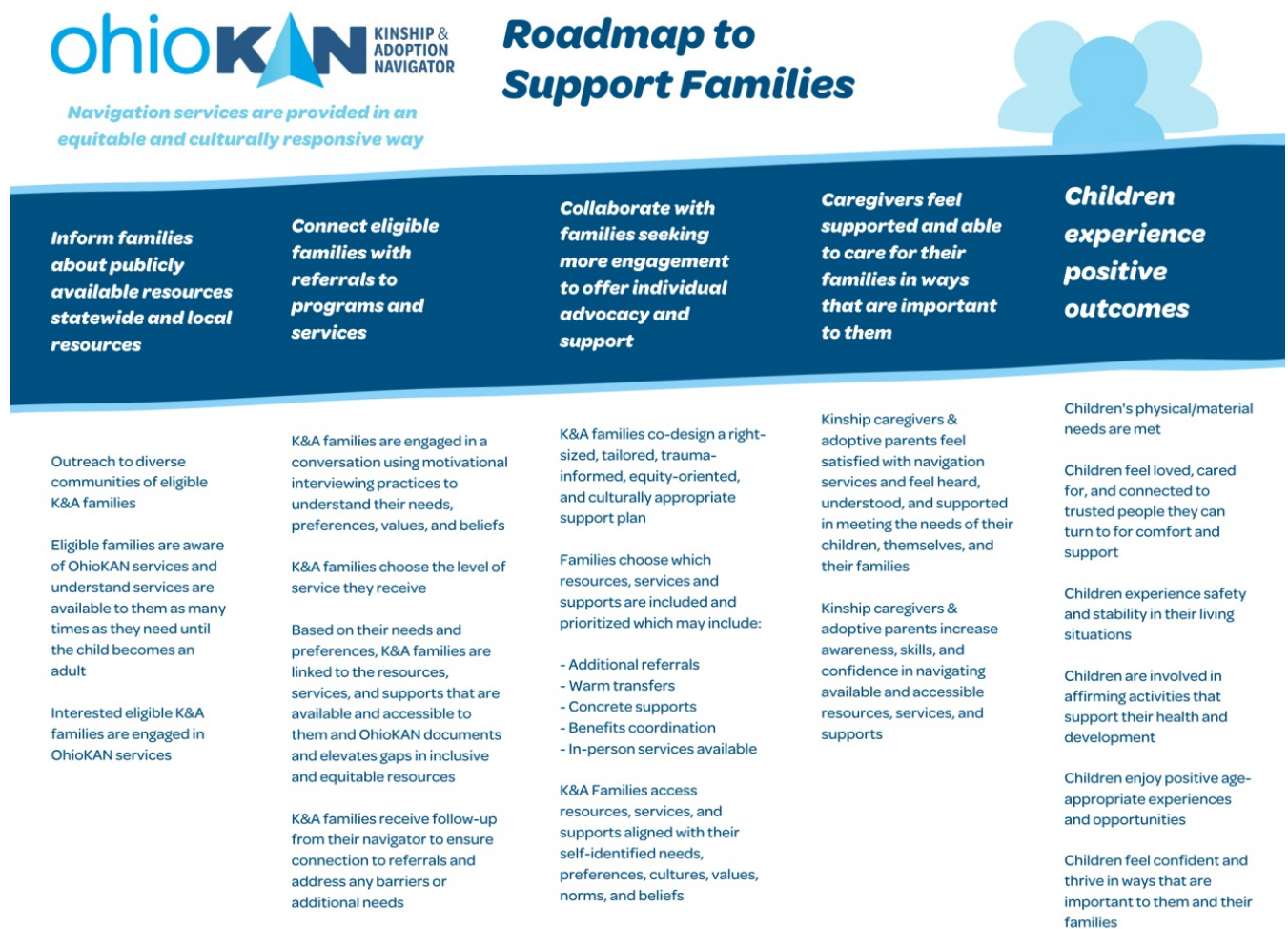


Figure 2. The roadmap to support families demonstrates the activities and desired outcomes of OhioKAN service delivery in support of families.

Families Build Confidence and Connections

OhioKAN's target population includes both formal and informal kinship caregivers and adoptive parents, public and private, domestic and international adoptions. Service provision includes information and referrals to meet kinship and adoptive (K&A) family's individual needs, trauma-informed navigation services, and access to material resource to care for the child. The activities related to directly serving families are located on the dark blue roadmap, visualized in Figure 2.

- Gain knowledge and access to the human services and resources they need to achieve positive health and wellbeing outcomes
- Understand all their options and are confident, capable, and committed to providing a stable permanent home
- Connect and build community with other K&A families, and they have the continuous support they need

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Roadmap to Support Communities



Figure 3. The roadmap to support communities demonstrates the activities and desired outcomes of OhioKAN service delivery in support of communities.

Communities and Systems Build Capacity

In addition to directly serving families, OhioKAN partners with systems like education, health, mental health, housing, legal, and judicial to identify and develop collaborative strategies to address knowledge and capacity gaps. The activities related to building system and community capacity are located on the sky blue roadmap for communities, visualized in Figure 3.

- Develop awareness of K&A families' experiences and build strategies and capacity to better support them
- Become interconnected networks with the knowledge and material resources to serve K&A families
- Increase their service array and develop sustainable solution to support K&A families