



**iCARE4 Adoptive
And Foster Families**

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IMPACT REPORT



**2024
-
2025**

When we CONNECT, Children THRIVE

We strive to serve as an expert, resiliency-oriented, hope-focused resource that strengthens connection among families, caregivers, educators, and support professionals navigating adoption, foster, and kinship care.

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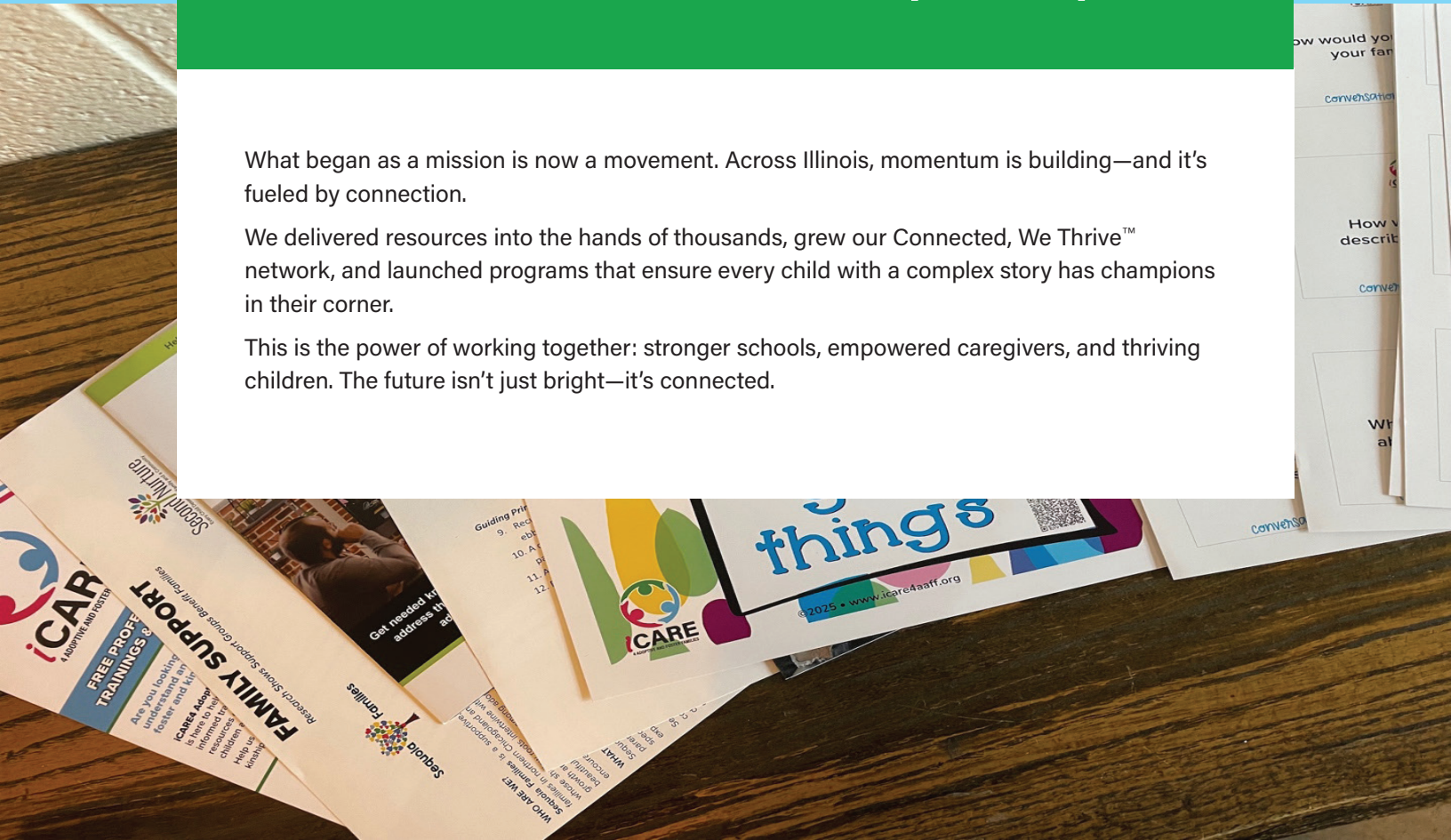
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Welcome to Our 2024-2025 Impact Report

What began as a mission is now a movement. Across Illinois, momentum is building—and it's fueled by connection.

We delivered resources into the hands of thousands, grew our Connected, We Thrive™ network, and launched programs that ensure every child with a complex story has champions in their corner.

This is the power of working together: stronger schools, empowered caregivers, and thriving children. The future isn't just bright—it's connected.



From the Founder



As I look back on this year, I'm filled with gratitude for every educator, caregiver, policymaker, and partner who chose to walk alongside us. Together, we've proven what we've always believed—connection is the most powerful tool we have to help children heal, learn, and thrive.

From launching Connected, We Thrive™ professional development in more districts, to distributing 1,000 iCARE4 Schools Connection Kits™ across Illinois, we've equipped thousands of school staff with practical, bilingual tools to support adoptive, foster, and kinship students. These kits are now making an impact far beyond classrooms—finding their way into therapy offices, university programs, and caregiver support groups, creating ripples of change in communities we hadn't yet reached.

We've also invested in the future of school-based mental health through the iCARE4 Adoption Competency Scholarship, helping prepare the next generation of school social workers to understand and respond to the needs of children with complex stories. This is more than a scholarship—it's a step toward a workforce that speaks the same language of hope and connection.

Through every training, partnership, and conversation, one truth has remained clear: healing happens in everyday moments, in the presence of adults who see, hear, and believe in every child. As we close out this year, I'm inspired by how far we've come—and energized by the work still ahead.

Thank you for standing with us. Thank you for believing that because when we connect, children thrive.

A handwritten signature of Laura L Adams in blue ink.

Laura L Adams

Founder and President of iCARE

**"At the end of the day, it's not about what you have or even what you've accomplished... It's about who you've lifted up, who you've made better. It's about what you've given back."
— Denzel Washington**



Vision and Mission

iCARE4 Adoptive And Foster Families empowers schools, families, and policymakers with education and resources to help them recognize that children from adoptive, foster, and kinship families have unique needs and require a different kind of support—one that’s holistic, collaborative, and grounded in a family-systems approach.

Our Vision

Our vision is for thriving children living in strong and loving families, supported by compassionate, knowledgeable schools, professionals and policymakers.

Our Mission

iCARE4 Adoptive And Foster Families equips schools and families to support adoptive, foster, and kinship children through professional development and bilingual tools grounded in evidence-based frameworks.

Our Impact

IMPACT RESULTS

This year, connection turned into measurable change. Together, we reached thousands of educators, caregivers, and professionals with tools and training designed to meet the needs of adoptive, foster, and kinship children. From distributing 1,000 iCARE4 Schools Connection Kits™ across Illinois to expanding Connected, We Thrive™ professional development and launching the iCARE4 Adoption Competency Scholarship, our work created ripples of belonging, safety, and hope in schools, families, and communities. These numbers aren't just statistics—they represent children who feel seen, families who feel supported, and systems moving toward compassion. Because when we connect, children thrive.

EXPANDED

Expanded **strategic partnerships** to strengthen school-based mental health supports.

PRESENTED

Presented at **regional and national conferences** to share best practices in healing-centered education.

LAUNCHED

Launched **large-scale distribution** of bilingual Connection Kits™ with tiered tools and developed a professional educator professional development series appropriate for all school educators for maximum impact.



iCARE is not only shining a light on the needs of a deeply underserved population of students in our schools - children who are adopted, in foster care or in kinship living situations - but they have also created an essential tool belt for supporting them. The iCARE4 Connection Kit™ is a powerful, comprehensive, and easy-to-use resource for schools, filled with tools that teachers and clinicians can use to help students feel seen and heard. These tools will not only help students cope with the most challenges aspects of school, educators will feel more effective and empowered in supporting them. These kits should be within arms reach of every educator.

Doug Bolton, PhD

Key Accomplishments



In 2024–2025, iCARE4 Adoptive And Foster Families made significant strides through a focus on professional development, resource distribution, and policy collaboration. The organization delivered 25 trainings at conferences and school workshops to over 400 educators and social workers, focusing on healing-centered practices and earning high praise for both the expertise and the practical value to participants' work with students. iCARE also distributed 1,200 bilingual Connection Kits™ to more than 1,000 schools, embedding regulation tools and inclusive language to help create emotionally safe spaces for students. Through legislative roundtables and workgroups, iCARE partnered with key organizations like West40 and C.A.S.E. to advance trauma-responsive mental health training for schools. These collaborations in training, resource distribution, and advocacy ultimately impacted over 600,000 students across the state.

01

Connected We Thrive™ Professional Development Series

- Delivered 25 in-person and conference trainings to over 400 educators, social workers, and administrators, focusing on healing-centered practices for students with complex family stories.
- Participant feedback showed an average rating of 3.9 out of 4 for presenter skill, knowledge, and usefulness.
- Sessions increased understanding, strengthened professional practice, and gave attendees practical strategies they could use immediately.

02

Connected We Thrive™ Professional Development Series

- Distributed 1,200 free bilingual Connection Kits™ to over 1,000 schools across multiple Illinois districts.
- Kits embedded regulation tools and inclusive language into classrooms, accompanied by interactive walk-throughs aligned with MTSS and SEL frameworks.
- Helped educators create regulation-ready, emotionally safe spaces that support student engagement and learning.

03

Systems and Policy Collaboration

- Hosted legislative roundtables and workgroups with leaders in education, mental health, and child welfare.
- Partnered with West40, C.A.S.E., DCFS, and other key organizations to advance adoption-competent, trauma-responsive mental health training for schools.
- Combined reach of training, resource distribution, and advocacy impacted over 600,000 students statewide.

Looking Ahead

In 2025–2026, iCARE will take bold steps to ensure every child impacted by adoption, foster care, or kinship care has the understanding and support they deserve.

We will expand Connected, We Thrive™ professional development to more schools, strengthen partnerships that open doors for children to flourish, and champion policies that put emotional safety and connection at the center of learning.

Together, we will turn possibility into lasting change.



SCALE

Scale Connected We Thrive™ professional development to reach more schools across Illinois.



DEEPEN

Deepen partnerships to ensure every child impacted by adoption, foster care, or kinship care receives the understanding and support they need to thrive.



CONTINUE

Continue advancing policy and practice that place student emotional safety and connection at the center of school culture.





**iCARE4 Adoptive
And Foster Families**

Thank You

We extend our sincere gratitude to our partners, funders, and volunteers for championing healing-centered schools.

Your investment in prevention and resilience is transforming classrooms and changing lives.

Together, we are demonstrating that when we connect, children thrive—fostering brighter futures for adoptive, foster, and kinship children.



LET'S STAY CONNECTED

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Get Connected

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