



## Innovative Search Strategies

**The Why: Finding family for children in foster care may take going a step further than just discussions with family. It may take thinking creatively to find loved ones. Below are some strategies you can use when locating important people in the lives of children.**

- Start with broad search terms and narrow terms down when needed.
- Not everyone spells their name the same. Try different spellings and nicknames. Ask about maiden names and married names of relatives.
- Use quotation marks to qualify searches which pulls up items in that exact order.
- Utilize email addresses, usernames and handles when searching.
- Compare and contrast information found electronically, in files, from family, and friends.
- Using search logs can be helpful when keeping track of information found during your searches. A separate document with maternal, paternal, and kinship logs can be a great reference tool.
- Remember state databases, child support cases, and public assistance can be a great way to find additional family information.
- Clicking on the "About" section on Facebook has great information - names, DOBs, and family relationships to allow further search opportunities. Don't forget to use the search function on someone's page as well!
- Zoom within pictures to locate key details to find a loved one such as house numbers or school names to cross reference on other search findings.
- Letter writing is not the best engagement tool but requesting an "address correction service" at the post office will provide a forwarding address if a forward address is listed.
- If a family member is not home when completing an investigative visit, speak to the neighbors. They may have a lot of information to provide and can relay messages of you stopping by.
- Don't be afraid to try something "outside of the box" . You never know what you might find!



## General People Searches:

- Truepeoplesearch.com
- Search.connectourkids.org
- Fastpeoplesearch.com
- Peoplefinders.com
- Familytreenow.com
- Findagrave.com
- Familysearch.com

## Law Enforcement:

- Online court records
- Vinelink.com
- Local Municipalities
- Dept. of Corrections
- Bop.gov
- Mugshots.com
- Arrests.org

## Rural Areas:

- Connect with local libraries
- Utilize Facebook check-ins
- Don't forget local grocery marts or gas stations in the area who may have information about family members.
- Local law enforcement and post offices

## Publicly Available Searches:

- Real Estate
- Tax Information
- Personal Property
- Business Registries
- Professional Registries
- VoterRecords.com (includes AK, AR, CO, CT, DE, D.C., FL, LA, MI, NV, NC, OH, OK, RI, UT, WA)

## Social Media:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Instagram
- Pinterest
- Snapchat
- YouTube
- MySpace

## Searching for families out of the country:

- National Genealogy Society (<https://www.ngsgenealogy.org/>)
- Embassy for a particular country
- International Social Service (<https://iss-usa.org/>)
- United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (<https://uscis.gov>)