

FOSTERING COMMUNICATIONS

Building a Network of People in the Foster Care System

August 2023

Upcoming State Conferences

ND Behavioral Health and Children & Family Services Conference

October 24-26, 2023

*Pre-Conference on ethics starting October 23

Bismarck Event Center

Bismarck, ND

Virtual & In-Person

Click [HERE](#) to Register

North Dakota Family Based Services Conference

April 9-12, 2024

Holiday Inn

Fargo, ND

In-Person

More Details to Come...



Children and Family
Services Training Center
Department of Social Work
University of North Dakota

PRIDE Link

It is the time of the year where we start to put away the sunscreen, flip flops, and beach bags and pull out the school supplies, tennis shoes, and backpacks to start a new school year. The start of a new school year can be exciting and a chance for continued growth, but it also presents different challenges for both children and parents and caregivers. Because of this transition we will take a closer look at the importance of meeting educational needs for children in foster care as it relates to the PRIDE competency, "Meeting children's developmental needs and addressing developmental delays".

Some children who are in foster care will need additional support from the education system for a variety of reasons to meet their fullest potential. And navigating through this can be challenging with different acronyms, testing, and qualifications for services just to name a few. *Creating a Family* focused a podcast on how to navigate the process of the special education system to include the discussion on diving deeper into laws that govern special education, acronyms, how trauma impacts a child's ability to learn, educational assessment, differences between an IEP and 504 plan, and how a foster or kinship provider can be the most help when working with a child with learning disabilities or other disabilities. To listen to the entire podcast as well as check out a variety of different back to school resources from *Creating a Family* please click on the link below.

[Navigating Special Education and the IEP/504 Process](#)

We encourage you to learn more about North Dakota Special Education programs. The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction offers oversight to the special education programs in North Dakota. The following link provides a variety of North Dakota Special Education resources including state guidelines, policies, the North Dakota Special Education Directory.

[North Dakota Department of Public Instruction-Special Education](#)

Lastly, the start of a new school year often times means meeting new education providers and familiarizing and advocating with these providers regarding how best to meet the education needs of your child. At times to do this may require you to share your child's history, but may leave you questioning how much you should be sharing? *Creating a Family* provides guidance to handle these conversations as well as additional resources that may be useful for educators. Please click on the link below to view the article and resources. In addition, we would encourage those in a foster care provider role to reach out to the child's case manager to have a conversation about what can or should be shared with the school and other education providers.

[What Do You Share At School About Your Child's Story?](#)



School Anxiety

The start of the school year can lead to an increase of generalized anxiety for both child and caregivers. And a type of anxiety known as school anxiety may result in an excessive fear of school to include a child refusing to attend school. School anxiety doesn't always manifest as a child refusing to attend school, but could also look like disruptive behavior, clingy behavior, physical ailments, avoidance, etc. The *Child Mind Institute* provides information describing what anxiety may look like in school in the link below

[How Does Anxiety Affect Kids In School?](#)

When your child is experiencing some anxiety regarding school it is helpful to have ways you, as a caregiver, can be supportive. The *Child Mind Institute* provides ways that as a caregiver you can provide additional support for a child that is experiencing some anxiety with starting school. This includes being mindful of how you, as a parent/caregiver, may be experiencing anxiety with the start of the school year and how you communicate that with your child; how to respond to worries your child may be sharing, how to handle transitions, and more. To read the complete article that includes additional ways you can support your child click on the below link.

[Back to School Anxiety](#)

Additionally, *PBS Kids* article, "*4 Things to Do When Your Child is Worried*", provides additional ways you can help a young child, preschool/school age, handle feelings of anxiety about school. This includes naming the feeling, explaining and exploring the feeling, finding the source, and managing the worry. To read and learn more about the four things to do when your child is worried, please click on the link below to access the full article.

[4 Things to Do When Your Child is Worried](#)

Caregiver Grief

Being a caregiver to children healing from their own trauma and loss can be a challenging, yet rewarding experience. With the challenges it is appropriate to acknowledge that caregivers may experience feelings of grief and loss. It is not only important to acknowledge these feelings of grief and loss, but it is important for a caregiver to process their feelings of grief and loss. In The *Honestly Adoption Company* Podcast Kristen Berry talks with Jessica Sinarski, LPCMH about caregiver grief, how it may show up in a caregiver's life, and how to process these feelings so you can be the best caregiver you can be. To listen to this entire podcast, "*How to Navigate Grief On The Caregiver Journey*", please click on the link below.



[How to Navigate Grief On The Caregiver Journey](#)



Foster Care Provider Needs Survey

We want your feedback regarding what you want for future continuing education trainings in the upcoming year. To provide your thoughts please complete a Foster Care Provider needs survey by clicking on the link below or scanning the below QR code. The survey will be open through 9.15.23.



[Foster Parent Needs Survey](#)



Recruitment & Retention

Expanding Comfort Zones"

"The comfort zone is a beautiful place, but nothing ever grows there."
-Unknown

In North Dakota, 25% of children in foster care are teenagers who also experience the longest wait times for homes. For some providers, it may be the fear of expanding their comfort zone that is holding them back from opening their home to an older child. Now keep in mind, for the majority of providers, taking the initial leap to become licensed was also very likely outside of a comfort zone. Then, getting that first call and accepting placement of a child was unfamiliar territory, nudging a bit farther out. The reality is, new foster care providers continue to step out of their comfort zone the moment they open their home to a child in foster care, even when that child fits all of their preferences. However, with support, training, and time, providers do begin to feel comfortable again. If you are a current provider who has found that comfort in caring for younger children, start to envision what opening your home to a teen could look like. By continuing to expand that comfort zone, not only will you be meeting an urgent need in North Dakota, but you will be providing yourself with a great opportunity for personal growth. Even more importantly, you will be giving youth in your care a sense of belonging, an opportunity to thrive, and a trusting relationship that can follow them into adulthood!

In this past article from *Psychology Today*, Abigail Brenner, M.D. wrote, "Very simply, what we fear most about challenging ourselves is that we may fail and/or get hurt. But most of us have the ability to rise to the occasion, overcome hurdles and obstacles, and actually succeed in accomplishing something new and challenging." To get further insight into benefits of stepping outside the comfort zone, read the full article here:

[5 Benefits of Stepping Outside Your Comfort Zone](#)

Former North Dakota Youth Testimonial

Looking back on her experience as a teen in foster care, feeling comfortable in the home and also being respected by her foster care providers was important to Arraya. To hear more from Arraya, check out the video below!

[North Dakota Former Foster Youth Testimonial- Arraya Wiesshoff](#)

Virtual Training Opportunities!

CFSTC offers monthly virtual training as part of the Recruitment & Retention contract with the North Dakota Department of Health & Human Services. One hour of education credit is offered to licensed foster care providers who attend. Kinship homes are also welcome to participate! Watch for monthly fliers sent through email that will include details on upcoming training opportunities! If you have questions, or need access to the monthly flyer, please reach out to your Licensing Specialist, Case Manager, or CFSTC!

Virtual Foster Care Panels

Do you know somebody who is interested in fostering?

Attending a Virtual Foster Care Panel is a great place to start!

Keep an eye on the UND CFSTC Facebook page for upcoming dates, and consider sharing with friends, family, and through social media!

**Upcoming Panel scheduled for Thursday, September 14, 2023
from 7:00-8:00 pm CST**

Anyone interested can simply register through the Zoom link [HERE](#) and join on the scheduled date!



Fostering Communications is published by the UND Children and Family Services Training Center under the sponsorship of the Division of Children and Family Services, North Dakota Department of Human Services. It is intended for all foster parents, foster care providers, and child welfare agencies. Any comments or questions should be directed to the CFS Training Center.

NORTH DAKOTA

FOSTER OR ADOPT



Are you interested or know someone who may be interested in becoming a foster parent?

Please call the Toll Free Inquiry Line @
1.833.FST.HOME
(1.833.378.4663)

And speak with Recruitment & Retention Specialist, Carissa Cox.



**UPCOMING
Virtual Training:**

**September Training
TBD**

****Information will be emailed out****



**UPCOMING
Virtual Open Chat
Sessions:**

09.11.23

11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. CST

09.27.23

7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. CST

Session details come by email from CFSTC. Please reach out if you would like to attend and have not received an email invite.

**NORTH
Dakota** Be Legendary.

Health & Human Services