

# FOSTERING COMMUNICATIONS

*Building a Network of People in the Foster Care System*

August 2025

## Upcoming State Conferences

### Behavioral Health & Children and Family Services Conference

October 20-23, 2025  
Bismarck Event Center  
Bismarck, ND

In-Person & Virtual  
To Register Click  
[HERE](#)

(Reminder, reimbursement options are available for attendance costs, so be sure to connect with your licensing worker for details)

### North Dakota Family Based Services Association Conference

March 24-27, 2026

Fargo, ND

In Person

More Details to Come...



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

## PRIDE Link

August signifies the start of a new school year and how we, as caregivers, can support youth during the transition of a new school year is the inspiration for August's PRIDE Link. Specifically, focusing on struggles youth may have with nervousness or anxiety about starting a new school year, to refusing to attend school. This PRIDE link theme focuses on the PRIDE competency "Meeting children's developmental needs and addressing developmental delays". We understand that due to past experiences, and or trauma, there may be specific reasoning why children have a negative response or connotation with transitioning to a new/different environment or school, and with guidance and support that you provide as the caregiver makes a difference for a youth in being successful in a school.

First, let us tackle back to school nerves and anxiety! Yes, the start of the school year can be so exciting, seeing old friends and getting new school supplies, but it naturally can be a time of some nervousness with thoughts of will I make new friends in my class, who I will sit with at lunch, etc. Creating a Family has a blog "Easing the Back-to-School Jitters" that helps caregivers tackle these anxieties. This includes information on how to identify signs that your child may be struggling with some back-to-school anxieties, how a caregiver can help navigate these anxieties, assessing where you (the caregiver) may have some anxieties, conversation starters, and more thoughtful practical advice. To read the entire Creating a Family Blog please click on the link below:

**[Easing the Back to School Jitters](#)**

Next Child Mind Institute's article "How Does Anxiety Affect Kids in School?" focuses on school anxiety and how school anxiety may present itself. To read the article about school anxiety click on the link below:

**[How Does Anxiety Affect Kids in School](#)**

Another resource about school anxiety is from Youngminds, covering topics from what makes young people anxious about school, how to support a child with anxiety, tips of ways to work with the school, strategies that can be tried at home, and so much more. Click on the link below to access the article and the linked resources from Young Mind:

**[School Anxiety and Refusal](#)**

The last resource is from Creating a Family on providing support when a child may refuse to attend school. The article, "Understanding and Overcoming School Refusal" covers what school refusal is, ways a caregiver can support a child who refuses to attend school, and hands on tools that a caregiver can use to help a child with anxieties. To read the article click on the link below.

**[Understanding and Overcoming School Refusal](#)**



# Suicide Prevention Month



September is Suicide Prevention Month. According to the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) about 1 person dies by suicide in the United States every 11 minutes in the United States. Suicide is also the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death among people ages 10-14 and among people ages 15-24; and is the 11<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death overall which indicates that Suicide Prevention is a crisis that we all should be invested in, especially for those of us who have a young person in our lives. The National Alliance on Mental Health's article "What You Need to

Know About Youth Suicide" provides some general information regarding suicide that include the impact of suicide on different identities and cultural groups, risk factors, and what to do if you are worried about someone. To read the article click on the link below:

## **[What You Need to Know About Youth Suicide](#)**

Child Mind Institute has great resources in regard to suicide prevention. There are two that stand out that we encourage you to explore further. The first is the article, "What to Do if You're Worried About Suicide", which is a parent's guide to helping a child in distress. This article covers topics that include what you should say to a child who is feeling suicidal as well as different actions steps you can take if you are worried about your child, such as providing empathy, talking openly, and selecting a clinician for your child. Click on the link below to access the Child Mind Institute's article:

## **[What to Do if You're Worried About Suicide](#)**

The second resource from Child Mind Institute talks about the use of safety plans as it relates to ensuring for a person's personal safety. The safety plan that is being referenced is a tool that a clinician, such as a therapist, will use when a youth has identified feelings of self-harm. This article covers basics about these safety plans such as, when it is an appropriate tool to use, the role of a parent/caregiver in the safety plan, and more. Click on the link below to check out this article:

## **[Reducing Suicide Risk with Safety Plans](#)**

Lastly, the link to the North Dakota Health and Human Services page of suicide prevention resources, is a great local option to access for other suicide prevention and 988 materials. To access this page with all of these resources please click on the link below:

## **[North Dakota Health and Human Services-Suicide Prevention](#)**

## Connecting with Youth

In the section above on Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, the resources highlight the importance of youth having a strong relationship with a caring adult. Creating and maintaining a connection can be extremely challenging especially when a youth is dealing with past traumas and the typical ups and downs of adolescence. The Creating a Family article, "Practical Ways to Connect with Your Tween or Teen", offers seven practical tips for caregivers to keep in mind when engaging with tweens and teens. Click on the link below to access this article as well as additional resources embedded in the article.

## **[Practical Ways to Connect with Your Tween or Teen](#)**



The second resource provided by Child Mind Institute is an article "Tips for Communicating With Your Teen". This article also highlights the importance of youth having a healthy trusting relationship with their parent/caregiver, while addressing the challenges that a parent/caregiver experiences with a adolescent. This article also provides nine tips from providing empathy and validation to giving praise. Click the link below to read this article and check out additional resources from Child Mind Institute.

## **[Tips for Communicating with Your Teen](#)**

The final resource is a podcast featuring Katie Bowler and guest Dr. Lisa Damour. As a clinical psychologist and author, Dr. Damour has expertise in child adolescent psychology. Within this podcast, Dr. Damour breaks down what may be going on with teens, when to worry, how to talk to youth, and much more. Click on the YouTube link to catch this podcast.

## **[What Do Teens Need?](#)**

# Recruitment & Retention

## Compassion & Self-Compassion: Both a Necessity

Compassion is a quality that sits at the core of fostering. Foster care providers commit themselves to opening their heart and home to care for children who are experiencing great loss, fear, and sadness. Providers strive to ease this hurt and pain by giving love, support, and guidance not only to children in their care, but to the child's family as well. This right here shows a true act of compassion. Taking on the role of caretaker does not always come easy. Putting energy into being self-compassionate on the tough days is equally as important as the compassion that is shared day in and day out. Nobody is perfect. As a foster care provider or even a parent yourself, mistakes will be made, you will question your decisions, and some days you may feel less than adequate. It is within these moments that self-compassion becomes a necessity. As a caretaker, it is important to treat yourself with the same kindness, warmth, and understanding that you show to others. Responding to yourself with kindness and care rather than criticism will reduce the risk of burnout. If you find yourself struggling with self-compassion, check out this video by Dr. Kristina Neff, a leading researcher in self-compassion. Dr. Neff's general self-compassion meditation break brings together mindfulness, common humanity, and self-kindness, which are three key components in supporting yourself during moments of struggle.

**Mindful Practice for Emotional Support**



## 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!

**The next panel is 9.04.25 7:00-8:00 p.m. CST**

Click [HERE](#) to register to attend!!



*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 care providers, kinship providers, adoptive parents, 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 care provider?

Please call the  
Toll Free Inquiry Line @

**1.833.FST.HOME**  
**(1.833.378.4663)**

to speak with  
Recruitment & Retention  
Specialist, Carissa Cox.



**UPCOMING  
Virtual Training:**

**"ND Post Adopt  
Network"**

**9.30.25  
7:00-8:00 p.m. CST**

*\*\*Registration email coming  
your way soon\*\**

NORTH  
**Dakota** Be Legendary.

Health & Human Services