



FOSTERING COMMUNICATIONS

Building a Network of People in the Foster Care System

December 2025

Upcoming State Conferences

North Dakota Family Based Services Association Conference

March 24-27, 2026

Fargo, ND

In Person

More Details to Come...

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



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

PRIDE Link

We are in the middle of the holiday season, a time when warm wishes of peace and joy are exchanged, yet it can also be a period that feels anything but peaceful or joyful. This time of year often brings extra challenges, and this edition of the PRIDE Link focuses on navigating those difficulties. Navigating these challenges addresses many of the PRIDE competencies, and in this edition the focus will be on “meeting children’s developmental needs” and “supporting relationships with birth families”.

Navigating the holiday season can bring BIG emotions, for both caregiver and child, which makes it essential for caregivers to meet children where they are (“meeting children’s developmental needs”). The Creating a Family podcast episode, “Navigating the Holidays With a Trauma-Sensitive Approach,” offers valuable insight into how caregivers can support children during a time filled with new experiences, feelings of loss, and potential sensory overload. With a trauma-sensitive lens, the episode explores why holidays can be difficult, the behaviors children and youth may show at different ages, practical strategies to support them, and much more. In this episode, Dr. David Adams, a Foster and Kinship Care Education Trainer, shares thoughtful guidance and real-world examples. To listen to Dr. Adams, please click the link below:

[Navigating the Holidays With a Trauma-Sensitive Approach](#)

The second resource, “Navigating the Holiday Season: A Guide for Caregivers” from the Attachment Trauma Network, provides strategies caregivers can use during the holiday season to support children and youth who may be impacted by trauma, attachment disorders, and neurodivergence. To read the article click on the link below:

[Navigating the Holiday Season: A Guide for Caregivers](#)

Creating a Family offers excellent resources that support the PRIDE competency, “supporting relationships with birth families” during the holidays season. The first resource is the article, “Working with Youth Child’s Birth Family During the Holiday Season”, is full of great practical tips on how providers can help maintain and strengthen connections with a child’s family. Click on the link below to read the entire article:

[Working with Your Child’s Birth Family During the Holiday Season](#)

The last resource explores the unique challenges that impact kinship providers. “Practical Help for Shared Parenting in Kinship Caregiving” offers seven tips for kinship caregivers that can provide guidance not just during the holiday season, but throughout the year. The tips include strategies for creating healthy boundaries, forming partnerships with parents, and much more. Please click the link below to access the article and the additional related resources.

[Help for Shared Parenting When You are a Kinship Caregiver](#)



The Digital Generation

Children and youth are gaining access to technology at younger ages, and as caregivers, it can be challenging to navigate the role technology plays in their lives while also keeping them safe. While there are no simple answers to the complexities that technology introduces, there are ways we can support our children in this digital age.

Parents Lead has launched a NEW podcast, *Parenting Unfiltered*, and in the premier episode, "Healthy Habits for Healthy Minds: Screens, Sleep, and Winter Routines" Dr. Shauna Eberhardt explores topics such as balancing screen time and sleep, setting screen-time guardrails, and other technology-related parenting strategies. She offers practical advice while also reminding caregivers to extend themselves grace as they navigate parenting in a digital world. To listen to this episode of *Parenting Unfiltered* as well as check out the other episodes click on the link below:

[Healthy Habits for Healthy Minds: Screens, Sleep, and Winter Routines](#)

Parents Lead has great resources regarding Media & Technology to include topics of Cyberbully, Media Use, and Tips to Prevent Sexting for Teens. Click the link below to access these resources from Parents Lead:

[Parents Lead: Media & Technology](#)

Dr. Crystal Collier is an expert in neurodevelopmental effects of risky behaviors to children, including how technology impacts overall brain development. Dr. Crystal Collier 's presentation, "Technology & The Developing Brain", provides valuable information how the brain develops, how technology use can influence that development in children and youth, as well as strategies you can implement into your home to support the children and youth in your home. To listen to Dr. Collier's presentation, click on the link below:

[Technology & The Developing Brain](#)

Healing Through Play

What each of us considers "fun" is subjective, but one thing we know to be true is that being intentional about making time for family fun can help children and youth build connection and support healing from trauma. To learn more about the importance of play and how it contributes to trauma recovery, check out Psychology Today's article "The Importance of Play and Fun in Relational Trauma Recovery." The article explores how trauma can affect a child's ability to engage in play, defines what "fun" and "play" can look like, and offers ways to help children and youth rediscover activities that feel enjoyable and meaningful. To read the article, please click the link below:

[The Importance of Play and Fun in Relational Trauma Recovery](#)



Expanding on the idea of fun building connection and bringing healing is Foster Friendly Podcast "Fostering Resilience: Humor and Play as Tools for Felt Safety". In this episode, Podcast hosts, Brian, Travis, and Courtney share how humor and play can build a foundation of connection and regulation for children and youth who have experienced trauma. To listen to insights on humor and play with practical applications click on the link below:

[Fostering Resilience: Humor and Play as Tools for Felt Safety](#)

Another resource focused on having fun is from Laura-Foster Parent Partner's video "Some of my FAVORITE things as a Foster Parent (Tools, Games, Ideas!)" where she shares from her 10 years of experience of being a foster care provider of different tools that can be used for a child to have fun. She also highlights several helpful items she recommends for foster care providers themselves. To view this 6-minute video, click on the link below:

[Some of My Favorite Things as a Foster Parent \(Tools, Games, Ideas!\)](#)



Happy Holidays

your friends
at CFSTC



Recruitment & Retention

Celebrating National Adoption Month in North Dakota

"Honoring Youth: Strengthening Pathways for Lasting Bonds". This was the theme for 2025's National Adoption Month that the country celebrates each November. During National Adoption Month, extra attention is given to increasing awareness about adoption from foster care, recruiting adoptive families, highlighting the adoption process, and supporting and celebrating the children and families impacted by adoption. Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK) went above and beyond doing just that right here in North Dakota! A few highlights include the first annual Virtual Adoptive Parent Panel. This panel showcased adoptive parents who had the opportunity to share their adoption stories, answer questions, and provide advice and encouragement to those considering adoption from foster care. This panel gave close to 80 attendees a wonderful opportunity to learn and their presence made it a truly special evening! Beautiful moments were also captured on camera through mini family photo sessions that AASK coordinated across the state. Each photo session was free of charge and available to families who have adopted. A third highlight was celebrating three families in the Southeast part of the state who had the opportunity to finalize their adoptions on November 22nd - National Adoption Day! In addition to these larger events, AASK worked diligently on spreading awareness by teaming up with local businesses to share recruitment items, creating signature drinks at local coffee shops, tying red ribbons around trees at the State Capital, and participating in media interviews! All children deserve a forever family. The goal of AASK is to get the number of waiting children in North Dakota to zero, and their efforts to do so are ongoing! Visit the AASK website to learn more:

Adults Adopting Special Kids - Fargo, ND

Statistics show that teenagers are at higher risk of leaving foster care without permanent connections. Watch Jayden and Zander's heartwarming adoption story that is also a touching reminder that it's never too late to find the place you're meant to call home.

Jayden & Zander's Forever Family — The Reel Hope Project

Native American Heritage Month

November was a special time to honor the rich histories, cultures, and traditions of Native communities across the country. One way to celebrate Native American Heritage Month is by listening, learning, and uplifting Native voices, as well as advocating for systems that keep Native children connected to their culture, roots, and communities. North Dakota has a strong need for more Native American foster care providers. When Native children enter foster care, they often face the risk of being separated not only from their families, but also from their culture and tribal community, connections that are essential to identity, belonging, and healing. By increasing the number of Native American foster care providers, Native children in foster care can feel a better sense of connection to stories, traditions, and community ties that shape who they are. If you would like to learn more about foster care licensing, call 833.378.4663.



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 CFSTC Facebook page for upcoming dates,
and consider sharing with friends, family, and through social media!

The next panel is 2.12.25 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 Children and Family Services Section, North Dakota Department of Health and 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:

"Navigating the Holidays
as a Provider"

12.9.25

7:00-8:00 pm CST

Click [HERE](#) to register

CFSTC will email upcoming
2026 training details

NORTH
Dakota Be Legendary.

Health & Human Services