

# FOSTERING COMMUNICATIONS

March 2026

## Upcoming State Conferences

### ND Indian Child Welfare & Wellness Conference

April 21-23, 2026

4 Bears Casino, New Town, ND

Click [HERE](#) for more information

### Behavioral Health & Children and Family Services Conference

September 14-17, 2026

Bismarck Event Center

Bismarck, ND

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

This edition of PRIDE link focus is on how you, as foster care provider, navigates working with a parent who is struggling with substance used disorder (SUD). While this topic connects to all five PRIDE competencies, the primary emphasis is on "Supporting Relationships with Birth Families". This means focusing on how, as a provider, you can sustain and nurture a child's relationship with a parent or caregiver who is experiencing SUD.

It is important to have a understanding of what it means when a individual is struggling with a Substance Used Disorder (SUD). A SUD does not indicate a moral failing or lack of motivation; rather, it is a disease that impacts an individual's brain and behavior, often leading to an inability to control the use of legal or illegal drugs or medications. To best support the child and their family, we need to better understand the disease that is impacting the entire family. The National Council for Adoption (NCFCA) article, "How Substance Use Disorders Affect Family Systems in Foster Care and Adoption" provides a helpful overview of SUD and its impact on families. To view this resource and learn more about SUD please click on the link below:

### [How Substance Use Disorder Affect Family Systems in Foster Care & Adoption](#)

Caring for a child whose parent is struggling with a Substance Use Disorder (SUD) may bring unique challenges for you as a provider. This may include how to talk with a child about their parent's SUD, what boundaries may need to be set, and how to work alongside or co-parent with a caregiver impacted by SUD. Creating a Family has several awesome resources to help you navigate these situations and more! One helpful option is the *Creating a Family podcast* episode, "When Birth Parents Struggle with Addiction, Mental Health, or Intellectual Disabilities," which explores these topics in depth with psychotherapist Teresa Bradley. Click the link below to listen:

### [When Birth Parents Struggle with Addiction, Mental Health, ...](#)

The second resource from Creating a Family is the article "Co-parenting with parents who Struggle with Addiction, Mental Health, or Intellectual Disabilities". This article highlights six key areas of guidance to support you in navigating these relationships. To read the article and access additional linked resources, please click the link below:

### [Co-parenting with Parents Who Struggle With Addiction, Mental Health ...](#)

Lastly, the links below provide support in having a conversation with a child about SUDs. The first, *Sesame Workshop's "Explaining Addiction,"* provides support for having these conversations with younger children. The second is from the *Alcohol and Drug Foundation*, which offers guidance for talking with older children.

[Sesame Workshop: Explaining Addiction](#)  
[Alcohol and Drug Foundation: Explaining Addiction](#)



# Healthy Dating Relationships



February was National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month, a time to highlight unhealthy dating relationships. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly one in three teens experience some form of dating violence. Teen dating violence can be physical, such as hitting or shoving; emotional, including insults or controlling behavior; sexual, such as coercion or sharing intimate images without consent; and digital, using technology to harass or bully. To learn more teen dating violence, please click

the link below to the CDC's resource on Intimate Partner Violence Prevention-Teen Dating Violence:

**[Teen Dating Violence](#)**

Caregivers may wonder "How do I know my teenager is involved in a dangerous or unhealthy dating relationship?" According to Teen Dating Violence, there may not be one specific behavior that clearly indicates a teen is in a harmful relationship. George Mason University's College of Public Health created a helpful resource, the "Tip Sheet: Teen Dating Violence Warning Signs and What Teens Need to Know", which outlines possible warning signs of teen dating violence, including online forms of abuse. To learn more about Teen Dating Violence, what warning signs to look for, as well as ways to help support teens to foster healthy relationships, please click on the link below:

**[Tip Sheet: Teen Dating Violence Warning Signs and What Teens Need to Know](#)**

Next, Dr. Lisa Damour, a clinical psychologist specializing in adolescent development, addresses Teen Dating Violence in an episode of *Ask Lisa Podcast*. In the episode, "Can I Talk My Teen Out of a Toxic Romance", Dr. Damour responds to a mother seeking advice on how to protect her daughter from a controlling relationship. This episode covers how dating violence can happen to anyone, what teen dating violence may look like, and how parents/caregivers can support their child. To listen to this 30-minute podcast, click on the link below:

**[Can I Talk My Teen Out Of A Toxic Romance](#)**

Lastly, in the *Ask Lisa Podcast*, the non-profit One Love, was highlighted as a great resource for caregivers. One Love has the strong mission to end relationship abuse, and they provide awesome tips and tools for parents and caregivers on how to have conversations with all teens and young adults about healthy and unhealthy relationships. To access One Love's resources to help you have conversations about healthy relationships, please click on the link below:

**[One Love](#)**

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## Little Kids and BIG Emotions

No matter our age, we all experience big emotions. So when young children are having BIG emotions, it is normal. However, what may be normal for a child, can be challenging for parents and caregivers, especially when we know that children's brains are developing and how we respond can help build positive connections. To help answer questions about how caregivers can support a child experiencing big emotions, Child Mind Institute offers the article, "How Can We Help Kids With Self-Regulation?". This article explores self-regulation and strategies for teaching children how to manage their, sometimes, big emotions. To read the article please click on the link below.

**[How Can We Help Kids with Self Regulation](#)**



The *Parents Lead's* Podcast, *Parenting Unfiltered*, tackles the topic of managing big emotions in children from toddler through elementary ages. In the podcast episode, "Big Feelings, Little Kids" licensed social worker, Nikki Mundahl, provides strategies caregivers can use to help young children manage their emotions and build resiliency. To listen to this 30 minute episode of *Parenting Unfiltered*, click the link below:

**[Big Feelings, Little Kids](#)**



## March is Social Work Month!!

Happy Social Work month to all social workers that touch the lives of children and families. A special recognition to all child welfare social workers including Intake Workers, Child Protection Workers, Case Workers, Supervisors, Adoption Specialists, Therapists, Probation Officers, School Social Workers, Chafee Transition Coordinators, ICWA Family Preservationists, and Guardian ad Litem. Please know that:

**Even on the Toughest Days, You Make a Difference!**



# Recruitment & Retention

## Caring Connections for Providers

Having someone in your life to bounce ideas off of, seek guidance from, and turn to during challenging moments can be incredibly impactful. Sometimes that person is a mentor; a special person who is willing to build a relationship, be a listening ear, and share their knowledge and experiences to help another individual grow. Mentors can be especially important to foster care providers. Because of the complexity of foster care and the many unknowns, entering the role of foster care provider can be challenging. Nationally, 30-50% of providers choose to close their license within their first year. It is important for new providers to feel supported, connected, and heard. Here in North Dakota, the foster care provider mentor program (a support through the Recruitment & Retention contract) was recently enhanced to do just that! As of November 1, 2025, providers now have access to the *Caring Connections for Providers Program*. Upon licensure, all fully licensed and certified providers will automatically be assigned a Caring Connections mentor. This gives new providers the opportunity to form an immediate connection with a seasoned provider who they can reach out to as they continue to learn, gain comfort, and navigate challenges in their fostering role. There is no limit on how long a mentee will be matched with a mentor and it is entirely up to the mentee to continue or discontinue this support. Keep in mind, Caring Connections is not limited to new providers. It is also available to providers licensed or certified before November 1, 2025, by referral from their licensing specialist with the Children and Family Services (CFS) Licensing Unit! Retention is a priority, and the goal of Caring Connections is to help maintain licensed providers who are committed to supporting children and families across North Dakota.

## Foster Care Provider Training: Foster Care Provider Introduction to Case Management Redesign

If you missed any (or all) of the three sessions of the *Foster Care Provider Introduction to Case Management Redesign*, recordings of the live sessions held on February 25 is now available and sessions held on March 4, and March 11 will be available. To access the recordings go to the Children & Family Services Training Center website under Foster Care Provider Education & Resources in Archived Webinars, or by clicking the link below to view the recordings and related resources:

[Foster Care Provider Introduction to Case management Redesign](#)

## Virtual Training Opportunities!

CFSTC offers monthly virtual training as part of the Recruitment & Retention contract with ND's Health & Human Services. One hour of education credit is offered to licensed foster care providers who attend. Kinship homes are also welcome and encouraged to participate! Watch for monthly flyers sent by email, which include details about upcoming training opportunities. If you have questions or need access to the flyer, please reach out to your Licensing Specialist, Case Worker, 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 CFSTC Facebook page for upcoming dates, and consider sharing with friends, family, and through social media!

**The next panel is 5.14.26 7:00-8:00 p.m. CST**

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



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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:

"Digital Guardianship"

4.02.26

7:00-8:00 pm CST

Click [HERE](#) to register

Watch your emails for more information about this training and future virtual trainings

NORTH  
**Dakota** Be Legendary.

Health & Human Services