

FOSTERING COMMUNICATIONS

Building a Network of People in the Foster Care System

May 2026

Upcoming State Conferences

Summit on Behavioral Health in Energy Country

June 17-18, 2026

Astoria Hotel & Event Center
Dickinson, ND

Click [HERE](#) to Register

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

May is Foster Care Month!

May is foster care month, and we are Children and Family Services May 2026 press release honoring all children and families impacted by foster care.

North Dakota Health and Human Services (HHS) is recognizing May as Foster Care Month, a time to highlight the resilience of children involved in the state's foster care system and the dedication of those who support them. We encourage you to read the Foster Care Month proclamation.

On any given day, about 1,050 children are in foster care in North Dakota. More than 700 licensed foster care providers and nearly 200 relative caregivers open their homes to provide stability and support for children until reunification or another permanent plan can be achieved.

This year's theme, "It Takes All of Us: Caring for Children, Supporting Families and Strengthening Futures," emphasizes the importance of strong, collaborative communities in ensuring the safety, well-being and long-term success of children. The theme highlights the role of partnerships across organizations, with families at the center of the work.

Everyone involved in the child welfare system plays a critical role in supporting the safety, permanency and well-being of children in care. This includes relatives, foster care providers, public agencies, juvenile court, child welfare professionals, schools, community service providers, and other partners working together to support families and promote reunification whenever possible. "Foster care is a temporary service designed to ensure child safety while supporting families," said Chelsea Flory, HHS Children and Family Services Director. "May is a time to recognize everyone involved in the child welfare system. This year's theme highlights the importance of all who play a role in engaging with and supporting families. Together, we strengthen connections and help create brighter, more stable futures."

Click the links below to view the North Dakota and the National 2026 Foster Care Months Proclamations.

[North Dakota Proclamation-Children's Foster Care Awareness Month](#)
[National Foster Care Month Proclamations](#)





PRIDE LINK

North Dakota 2026 Foster Care month theme is “It Takes All of Us: Caring for Children, Supporting Families and Strengthening Futures”. And with this theme in mind May’s edition of the PRIDE link focuses on self-care for you as the one who is supporting children and families. This reflects the PRIDE competency, “Working as a Member of a Professional Team”. The concept of taking care of yourself first, especially when providing support to other brings to mind the quote, “Just remember that you can’t help others before helping yourself first.

Like an oxygen mask on the plane, you won’t be good for much if you’re running out of air as you prioritize everyone’s needs over your own.” Our friends at Creating a Family recognize the importance of self-care and provide great resources that focus on the topic of self-care for Foster Care Providers, Kinship Providers, Adoptive Parents and more. We are sharing two of these resources. The first is, the podcast, “Building Rhythms of Self-Care Into our Parenting with Nicole Barlow”. Nicole Barlow holds many titles including wellness coach, parent trainer for foster and adoptive parents, as well as a foster/adoptive parent, and in this podcast she shares information of the importance of self-care for those caring for children who have experienced trauma, indicators that we may need to focus more on our well-being, as well as practical advice on how to implement self-care into your daily routine. To listen to the podcast from Creating the Family please click on the link below:

[Building Rhythms of Self-Care Into Our Parenting with Nicole Barlow](#)

The second podcast from Creating a Family is, “Take Care of Yourself When Parenting Harder to Parent Kids”. In this podcast the conversation focuses on the importance of self-care for caregivers, the barriers that foster care providers may experience with self-care, and small ways that providers can implement self care daily and weekly. Click the link below to listen to the podcast episode:

[Taking Care of Yourself When Parenting Harder to Parent Kids](#)

Better Living’s article “Self-Care Tips for Foster Parents” provides 10 self-care tips. The 10 tips include practical ways to implement self-care including tips that were noted in the above-mentioned podcasts as well as other additional tips to include meditative breathing. Click on the link below to see the complete list of self-care tips.

[Self-Care Tips for Foster Parents](#)

Mental Health Awareness Month

May’s mental health awareness month 2026 theme is “More Good Days, Together”. According to Mental Health America this theme reflects on how “good” days looks different to each individual and how we can connect individuals to the right support at the right time. To learn more about 2026 Mental Health Awareness Month please click on the link below:

[Mental Health America-Mental Health Month 2026](#)



Taking care of mental health is a part of taking care of your overall health. Life can get overwhelming for each of us, adults and children alike, and when we find ourselves becoming, anxious we may feel disconnected/detached to our world around us we may find ways to ground ourselves. Child Mind Institute has a short YouTube video that walks us through grounding exercises to help in these moments. Click on the link below to watch the short video:

[2 Easy Ways to Ground Yourself and Find Calm](#)

In addition, PostivePsychology.com has 23 Mindfulness Activities for Kids and Teens. This article includes mindfulness activities, tips for practicing mindfulness, as well as other resources. To view this entire article, click on the link below:

[25 Fun Mindfulness Activities for Kids & Teens \(+Tips!\)](#)

Lastly, North Dakota has Mental Health services that are available to anyone in need of help and support. To learn about North Dakota Mental Health Resources, including 988 and 2-1-1Helpline click the link below:

[North Dakota Health and Human Services-Mental Health](#)



We, at Children & Family Services Training Center, honor children and families that are impacted by foster care as well as those that support the children and families impacted by foster care. A special acknowledgement to foster care providers, kinship providers, adoptive parents, child welfare workforce, and community partners who work with children and families impacted by foster care. **You make a difference!**



Recruitment & Retention

It Takes All of Us

North Dakota's theme for this year's National Foster Care Month is "It Takes all of Us: Caring for Children, Supporting Families, and Strengthening Futures". The month of May invites us to recognize the resilience of children and families involved in foster care, the selflessness of foster care providers, and the dedication of workers who go above and beyond to support them. It is also a time to reflect on the importance of community. Caring for children, especially those navigating trauma, loss, and uncertainty, has never been the responsibility of just one person. It takes all of us! A child's "village" is made up of several people, all who play an important role in the healing process. This could be a teacher or para who nurtures a child's strengths, a worker who advocates for their needs, or the bus driver who offers daily kindness through a welcoming smile or high five. These everyday actions strengthen a child's sense of safety and self-worth. For older youth in foster care, they often face hurdles during their transition to adulthood. Supports like mentorship, educational guidance and job coaching can make the difference between struggle and success. Long term outcomes for all kids in foster care are built through a collective effort. When we all come together to care for children and support families, we are building stronger futures and healthier communities!

A Moment to Reflect: Teens in Foster Care

During National Foster Care Month, it is important to reflect on the needs of children and families involved in foster care. One of the greatest needs here in North Dakota is to increase the number of homes for teens. Teenagers in foster care deserve caring families who can guide, encourage, and support them as they make their transition to adulthood. Oftentimes, the myths around caring for teenagers hold families back from providing a meaningful service. Take a moment to view this foster care provider testimonial to discover how caring for teens not only positively impacts the youth in foster care, but the foster family as well!

[ND Health & Human Services-Teens in Foster Care](#)

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!

Foster Care Provider Training Needs Survey

We, at the CFSTC, need YOUR feedback as planning is underway for the 2026-27 foster care provider trainings. To provide feedback click [HERE](#) to complete a survey!

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 will be held on 9/3/26 7-8 p.m. CT

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 at **833-378-4663** to speak with Recruitment & Retention Specialist, Carissa Cox.



UPCOMING Virtual Training:

"Child Passenger Safety"

6/3/26
6-7 p.m. CT
Click [HERE](#) to register

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

NORTH Dakota Be Legendary.

Health & Human Services