

FOSTERING COMMUNICATIONS

Building a Network of People in the Foster Care System

October 2026

Upcoming State Conferences

North Dakota Family Based Services Association Conference

March 30-April 2, 2027

Holiday Inn

Fargo, ND

Details to come...

Reminder!

Reimbursement options are available for costs related to continuing education trainings for licensed foster care providers.

Be sure to connect with your licensing worker to learn more!



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

PRIDE Link

Fall is in the air, bringing with it a season of change. In honor of change, this edition of the PRIDE Link focuses on helping adolescents navigate the many changes they experience as they grow into young adults, with a specific focus on supporting their mental health. This reflects the PRIDE competency, "Meeting Children's Developmental Needs." We have all experienced the changes that come with growing into adolescence and young adulthood. During this developmental phase, it is appropriate for adolescents to begin pushing away from parents and caregivers as they explore their independence and define who they are. However, this does not mean that youth need less from their parents and caregivers. In fact, they may need a parent or caregiver's guidance and support more than ever, particularly when it comes to supporting their mental health. As caregivers, we also have to be flexible in how we provide that guidance and support to meet each individual youth's needs.

To start, let's talk about early puberty. Studies have indicated that children who have been exposed to trauma may experience puberty earlier than expected. The Child Mind Institute article, "How Early Puberty Affects Children's Mental Health," addresses the increasing prevalence of early puberty in the United States. The article explores why early puberty can be more difficult for a child, how it can impact mental health, and ways caregivers can help children navigate these changes. To read the article, click on the link below:

[How Early Puberty Affects Children's Mental Health](#)

During puberty, the adolescent brain also experiences significant growth and change. The changes brought on by puberty, combined with the potential impacts of trauma, can add an additional layer of challenges for youth, as well as for their parents and caregivers. The article "The Teen Years: Brain Development and Trauma Recovery," from Families Rising, explores adolescent brain development and the impact of trauma. The article focuses on three ways caregivers can respond: only intervene when necessary, prioritize connections, and work as a team. Click on the link below to read the entire article and learn more:

[Adolescence, Trauma, and the Brain](#)

Finally, Dr. Lisa Damour, a national expert on adolescent development, parenting, and child mental health, is featured in an episode of Creating a Family's podcast, "The Emotional Lives of Teenagers." This episode covers a variety of topics related to adolescence, including myths about the teenage years, having constructive conflict, managing technology, and much more. To listen to the podcast, click on the link below:

[The Emotional Lives of Teenagers](#)

Interested in learning more about Dr. Damour's podcasts, books, and other resources? Visit her website in the following link:

[Dr. Lisa Damour](#)



When Bedtime Feels Hard

The start of the school year is often a time to re-establish new routines and one routine that can be stressful for all in the home, children and caregivers alike, is bedtime. For children who have experienced trauma, the transition to bedtime can be particularly challenging. Bedtime may bring up feelings of anxiety or loss, as well as reminders or triggers related to past abuse, neglect, or other difficult experiences. To learn more about how trauma can impact bedtime as well as ways to support bedtime we are sharing a few resources.

First, the article “Trauma-Informed Sleep Supports: How to Help Your Child When Traditional Sleep Supports Are Not Enough” includes information on how trauma and loss impact sleep, steps to help support a child, and other resources and tips. To read the article, please click on the link below:

[Trauma-Informed Sleep Supports: How to Help Your Child When Traditional Sleep Supports Are Not Enough](#)

Another great resource comes from our friend, Laura Foster Parent Partner. In this short video, Laura shares how trauma may impact a child’s ability to go to bed. She shares how understanding where the trauma comes from helps in understanding how to best support the child. As a foster care provider, she shares tips and demonstrates different ways to support a child who may be struggling with bedtime. To watch Laura’s video, click the link below:

[What Nobody Tells You About Foster Kids and Sleep](#)

The last resource is from Creating a Family’s Weekend Podcast, “5 Ways to Handle Bedtime Battles Without Dividing Your Parenting Team.” In this short video, a Creating a Family host addresses a viewer’s question about how to work as a team with a partner when there is a trauma response to bedtime. To watch this short video, click the link below:

[5 Ways to Handle Bedtime Battles Without Dividing Your Parenting Team](#)

Neurodiversity

You may have heard the term neurodiversity and wondered what that means. Neurodiversity generally refers to the ways our brains work and recognizes that our brains may work differently. These differences can bring unique strengths and ways of experiencing the world. Some forms of neurodiversity include ADHD, learning disorders, and autism.

To help explain neurodiversity, the neurodiversity movement, and types of neurodiversity Child Mind Institute author Caroline Miller published an article, “What is Neurodiversity? And how can parents support kids who are neurodivergent?”. This article dives into this topic and provides links to additional resources. To read the entire article, click on the link below:



[What is Neurodiversity?](#)

An additional resource in the link below is “Through My Eyes” from Understood. The “Through My Eyes” site incorporates numerous resources and links related to topics around neurodiversity. The resources on the site are geared toward parents, educators, and kids and include links to videos, podcasts, toolkits, information about types of neurodivergent diagnoses (ADHD, dyslexia, etc.), information on navigating IEPs and 504 Plans, managing daily big feelings and challenges, and so much more. To check out “Through My Eyes” and the numerous resources, click the link below:

[Understood-Through My Eyes](#)

Lastly, the Creating a Family podcast episode, “Parenting Neurodiverse Teens: Practical Help for Hard Days,” features Carl Young and Joel Sheagren, co-authors of Embracing Hope: Innovative Strategies to Empower Parents Raising Neurodiverse Teens. They share their expertise on parenting teenagers with neurodiversity. The specific topics covered include why the teen years are especially hard for neurodiverse kids and caregivers; an explanation of executive functioning that helps caregivers understand what their child may be struggling with; co-regulation and how that can help; and so much more. Click the link below to listen to this episode from Creating a Family.

[Parenting Neurodiverse Teens: Practical Help for Hard Days](#)

Recruitment & Retention

You Cannot Pour From an Empty Cup: Preventing Caretaker Burnout

Caring for children who have experienced trauma can be both deeply rewarding and emotionally demanding. Because of the latter, burnout is real among foster care providers and those who have adopted from foster care. Caretaker burnout is a combination of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion that develops over time when self-care is not prioritized. Signs of burnout include a decreased tolerance, increased stress, feeling overwhelmed with normal day-to-day responsibilities, and chronic fatigue. If you are experiencing these symptoms, it is important to make yourself a priority. Or even better, be proactive! Regular exercise, balanced nutrition, adequate sleep, and making time for your hobbies help restore emotional and physical energy. Seeking continuing education in areas of need can also play an important role. Ongoing learning not only enhances skills, it can also increase confidence and help minimize stress levels when responding to challenging situations. Another consideration is scheduling respite or substitute care. This allows built-in breaks for you and the child without compromising their safety or well-being. Taking steps to prevent burnout is not only beneficial to those in the caretaking role, it is also an essential part of providing the consistent and nurturing care a child needs. Remember, you cannot pour from an empty cup!

In this short reel, Laura with The Foster Parent Partner, role-plays a variety of scenarios that highlight the realities of caregiver burnout. If you find yourself experiencing any of these signs, it may be time to pause and prioritize your own needs.

Laura Foster Care Partner-Signs of Blocked Care for Foster Parents

Here you can find some additional suggestions for preventing caretaker burnout.

Tips to Avoiding Foster Parent Burnout - TFI

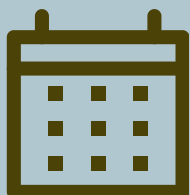
Virtual Training Opportunities!

CFSTC offers monthly virtual training as part of the Recruitment & Retention contract with North Dakota Health & Human Services. One hour of education credit is available 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!

CFSTC Archived Foster Care Provider Trainings

If you missed a recent CFSTC foster care provider training, would like to rewatch a training you attended in the past, or want to explore our archived foster care provider training library, you can access the recordings on the CFSTC website by clicking the link below.

CFSTC Archived Foster Care Provider Training



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 11/19/26 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:**
"Safety Planning with
Youth At Risk of Suicide"

10/7/26
6:30-7:30 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