

# FOSTERING COMMUNICATIONS

Building a Network of People in the Foster Care System

May 2024

## Upcoming State Conferences

### North Dakota Indian Child Welfare & Wellness Conference

July 16-18, 2024

Bismarck Hotel & Conference Center

Bismarck, ND

Click

**HERE**

For Conference Registration Information

### Behavioral Health & Children and Family Services Conference

September 16-19, 2024

Bismarck Event Center  
Bismarck, ND

In-Person & Virtual  
More Details to Come...



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

## May is National Foster Care Month

This year's theme for 2024 National Foster Care Month has been designated "Engaging Youth, Building Supports, and Strengthening Opportunities." Specifically, this year's national theme encourages young people to be part of their case plan, while encouraging agencies to ensure supports and services are readily available to meet the needs of children. This theme continues to align with Children and Family Services Section's mission of "Safe Children-Strong Families."

This month we want to recognize the children who have endured resilience and perseverance while placed out of the home. This month also is intended to show appreciation for the dedication and hard work of those engaged in the child welfare system. This includes; relatives, foster care providers, custodial agencies, juvenile court, child welfare professionals, community service providers, and other partners. The collaboration and teamwork of all these entities is essential to ensure the safety, permanence, physical and mental well-being of children in care.

Cory Pedersen, Director of Children and Family Services stated, "**Foster care serves as a temporary safety service for children, while strengthening supports and opportunities for the families.**" Pedersen went on to note, "**National Foster Care Month is a time to recognize all of those involved in the child welfare system. This year's theme surrounding engaging young people, is both timely and important. Children have the right to be involved in their case plan and we believe strongly that this is necessary.**" Engaging young people, is both timely and important. Children have the right to be involved in their case plan and we believe strongly that this is necessary."

On any given day, North Dakota has 1,250 children in foster care, with nearly 850 licensed foster care providers and numerous relative caregivers opening their homes to provide a safety service to children in need of out of home placement. Relatives and licensed foster care providers are a support to maintain child safety, meet daily needs, and engage in family connections until reunification or other planned permanent options can occur.

Individuals interested in learning more about becoming a licensed foster care provider, are encouraged to contact 1-833-FST-HOME (1-833-378-4663). For information about how a licensed provider can offer respite care or emergency shelter care, contact the CFS Licensing Unit at 701-328-2322 or [cfslicensing@nd.gov](mailto:cfslicensing@nd.gov).

1250 Children in Foster Care	Public Agency Custodian
79%	Human Service Zone
19%	Tribal Nation (IV-E only)
2%	Division of Juvenile Services



# PRIDE Link



The theme of this year’s National Foster Care Month, “Engaging Youth, Building Supports, and Strengthening Opportunities” is the inspiration for May’s Pride Link. Really this particular theme/topic touches on a few if not all of the Pride competencies, but in this edition, we will be highlighting the Pride competency, “Meeting children’s developmental needs and addressing developmental delays”. Specifically, focusing on foster youth and young adults and how we can better engage them, provide supports and opportunities to meet their developmental needs from adolescents to transitioning to adulthood.

First, for us as foster care providers or child welfare professionals, it is always beneficial to continue to gain better empathy or understanding for the challenges that youth in foster care experience. The short video, “From Passenger to Pilot” from Spaulding For Children talks from the perspective of a youth in foster care and how they may feel as they are transitioning to adulthood and the need for youth and/or young adults to be in the driver’s (or pilot’s) seat when it comes to planning for their life. In addition, the video explores feelings of loss, trauma, and powerlessness that youth may experience as well as the need for authentic engagement from the adults and caregivers in their lives to help youth gain control of their own life and be back in that driver’s (or pilot’s) seat. Click on the link below to watch the short video.

### [Passenger to Pilot](#)

The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative through the Annie E. Casey Foundation provides a report, “The Road to Adulthood”, which covers the areas of the latest research on adolescent brain development; how ambiguous loss, which most youth in foster care experience, and bias may impact adolescent development; ways to promote healthy brain development for youth in foster care; as well as strategies that professionals as well as caregivers can utilize to engage and help a youth meet their developmental milestones while promoting overall wellbeing for that youth. To read the entire report, “The Road to Adulthood: Aligning Child Welfare Practice with Adolescent Brain Development” please click on the link below.

### [The Road to Adulthood](#)

The Child Welfare Information Gateway from the Children’s Bureau, has many great resources for youth and foster care providers. We will highlight two of those resources, the first is the “Helping Youth Transition to Adulthood: Guidance for Foster Parents” that provides information for foster care providers including, more information on adolescent development, federal laws and programs to support transitioning youth, and ways that foster care providers can help a youth transition to adulthood. You can click on the link below to download the complete guide.

### [Helping Youth Transition to Adulthood: Guidance for Foster Parents](#)

It is key for youth to be empowered, and to be at the table and active in their case planning, and with that focus, the second resource from The Child Welfare Information Gateway is a Factsheet for youth in foster care that you, the foster care provider or child welfare worker, could provide to a youth to assist them in understanding their role in their case plan. Specifically, “Using Your Voice: A Guide for Youth on Participating in Case Planning”, provides information for the youth in what case planning is, how to participate, what the rights of youth are in care, as well as additional information related to case planning. To access a link to download this Factsheet please click the link below.

### [Using Your Voice: A Guide for Youth on Participating in Case Planning](#)

## Taking care of YOU!

During the month of May as we honor foster care it is important to acknowledge **YOU**, the foster care provider, adoptive parent, and child welfare worker (to name a few), seemed to be a great time to highlight the importance of taking care of yourself. In our work within foster care, we value taking care of others, but often we neglect the need to take care of ourselves. Creating a Family’s article, “Self-Care Isn’t Selfish”, highlights because of our work we need to make space for self-care. The article addresses the small things we can do to take care of ourselves and how we can plan for self-care. Click on the link below to read the entire article.



### [Self-Care Isn’t Selfish](#)

Lastly, our friend, Jessica Sinarski in her latest blog post, “Climbing out of Chronic Stress” addresses self-care by focusing on Stressor vs Stress and the caregiver’s need to complete the Stress Cycle. To learn more about self-care and gain additional self-care tools from Jessica click on the link below.

### [Climbing Out of Chronic Stress](#)

# Foster Care Month Proclamations

## STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

PROCLAMATION

CHILDREN'S FOSTER CARE MONTH  
MAY 2024

WHEREAS, keeping children safe and families strong is the key to healthy communities, while providing services and support to families so they can stay together or be reunited as soon as possible is the primary goal of the North Dakota child welfare system; and

WHEREAS, North Dakotans have a long-standing tradition of helping the community, while opening their hearts and homes to children in need of stability and support; and

WHEREAS, North Dakota foster care providers are role models and provide important mentoring to parents, helping them enhance relationships with their children and maintain family connections until reunification can occur; and

WHEREAS, Children's Foster Care Month is an opportunity to recognize nearly 900 licensed foster families and numerous relative kinship caregivers who provide quality care to 1,200 children and adolescents placed in foster care; and

WHEREAS, there is an ongoing need to engage family and kinship caregivers immediately, while working to recruit additional foster care providers and retain current foster care providers; and


WHEREAS, grandparents, aunts, uncles and other close family members and relative caregivers have an important role in providing normalcy, stability and family connections to children and adolescents who are not able to remain with their biological parents; and

WHEREAS, relative caregivers, foster care providers, human service zones, child welfare professionals and other partnering agencies involved in foster care deserve recognition this month and all year long for their continued teamwork and steadfast devotion to the safety, permanency and well-being of children and adolescents; and

WHEREAS, this annual observance calls attention to the value of foster care as a temporary service that provides safety and supports for the engagement of children and adolescents, while strengthening opportunities for their families in our North Dakota communities.

NOW, THEREFORE, as Governor of the State of North Dakota, I do hereby proclaim  
May 2024, CHILDREN'S FOSTER CARE MONTH in the State of North Dakota.



  
Doug Burgum  
GOVERNOR

ATTEST:   
Michael Howe  
SECRETARY OF STATE





# Recruitment & Retention

May 2024

## National Foster Care Month: Engaging Youth. Building Supports. Strengthening Opportunities

May is a beautiful month offering longer days and more sunshine to enjoy, the flowers start to bloom, and it is a sign that summer is right around the corner. May is also a special time to spread awareness about foster care! This year's National Foster Care month theme is "Engaging Youth. Building Supports. Strengthening Opportunities." This theme emphasizes the importance of authentic youth engagement, encouraging healthy relationships that will last a lifetime, and helping youth gain opportunities as they prepare for adulthood. According to the Child Welfare Information Gateway, each year roughly 20,000 young adults transition out of foster care without a permanent family. This transition does not come easy, especially if support, connections, and opportunities are missing. Oftentimes, this leads to higher risk for adverse outcomes for youth aging out of foster care. Preparing youth in foster care for their move into adulthood is crucial, and this needs to start long before their 18th birthday. During National Foster Care month and beyond, consider how you can ENGAGE youth in preparing for adulthood, help them BUILD strong connections, and gain access to OPPORTUNITIES that will lead to a successful transition.

The Child Welfare Information Gateway has captured stories of foster care from individuals and families who have been impacted by the child welfare system. Tanja's story is just one of the many that is being highlighted in May. Tanja is a current provider in Oklahoma who has full-circle experience with the child welfare system. Learn more about her story and the advice she gives to other providers for supporting youth in foster care:

**National Foster Care Month: Tanja's Story**

## 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!



It is that time when we want YOUR feedback for planning for future Foster Care Provider Trainings. To provide that feedback please complete a survey before 7.1.24 by clicking the Survey Link below.

**Foster Provider Needs 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 UND CFSTC Facebook page for upcoming dates, and consider sharing with friends, family, and through social media!

**The next panel will be scheduled for Fall 2024.**

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)**

And speak with Recruitment & Retention Specialist, Carissa Cox.



**UPCOMING**  
**Virtual Training:**  
**June Training**  
**"Summer Safety Tips"**

**6.5.24**  
**8:00-9:00 p.m. CST**

Click **HERE** to Register

**\*\*Watch your emails for further details\*\***

NORTH  
**Dakota** Be Legendary.

Health & Human Services