

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services**  
**600 East Boulevard Avenue – Department 325, Bismarck ND 58505-0250**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*April is Child Abuse Prevention Month in North Dakota*

**Child Abuse Prevention Education Strengthens Parenting Skills and Families**

BISMARCK, N.D. – Gov. John Hoeven has proclaimed April *Child Abuse Prevention Month* in North Dakota. To assist parents in gaining confidence and skills necessary to nurture their children at all stages of development, the North Dakota Department of Human Services funds a variety of child abuse prevention education programs with both public and private partners.

“The department’s budget includes \$2.1 million this biennium to make information and expertise available for parents,” said Tara Muhlhauser, Children and Family Services Division director. “We contract with organizations to provide prevention programs. It’s a win-win for everyone. We really appreciate the work our partners provide in local communities to offer resources to parents.”

The **North Dakota Parent Education Network** is one joint venture between the Department of Human Services and the NDSU Extension Service. This network is made up of eight Parent Resource Centers located throughout the state that provide educational classes, support groups, a newsletter, and a lending library equipped with books, videos and other educational materials for parents and other family members. These services are available for families at no cost.

The Department of Human Services also funds three child abuse prevention programs offered by Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota (PCAND). The newest program, **Happiest Baby on the Block**, teaches new parents positive strategies to soothe crying or sensitive newborns. This program began in the Bismarck/Mandan area in January 2010.

The **Wakanheza Project** is another joint effort between the department and PCAND which teaches community volunteers simple, useful tools and strategies to offer support to a parent when their child displays an inappropriate behavior like a temper tantrum in a public place. This program is available in the Grand Forks region.

The annual **Pinwheels for Prevention** campaign, which is now underway, involves over 25,000 blue and silver pinwheels on display in North Dakota communities to create awareness about child abuse prevention. Participating communities also coordinate special events during the month including parenting classes, conferences, walks, in-school activities, and other fun family activities.

The department also financially supports the **Healthy Families** program through a partnership with Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota. Healthy Families is a free, family support service that offers new parents information on wellness, breastfeeding, and parenting skills along with well-baby visits, immunizations and developmental screenings. Healthy Families is available for parents living in Burleigh, Grand Forks, Morton and Nelson counties.

There are also **Nurturing Parenting Programs** held in various communities in the state that teach families effective discipline and parenting skills. Participants in the program meet for a 15-week period and select between two types of curriculum including *Nurturing for Parents of Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers* and

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*Nurturing for Parents and Children Ages 5-12.* Programs are held twice a year in January and September in Belcourt, Bismarck, Fargo, Jamestown, Mandan, Minot, and once a year in Harvey and Valley City in September.

The Department of Human Services also partners with the Department of Health on the **Parenting the First Year** newsletter. The publication is presented to parents of new babies in the hospital and is filled with resources on infant development and growth, crib and car seat safety, feeding, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, and child care. A free monthly newsletter is also available on-line at [www.ndhealth.gov/familyhealth](http://www.ndhealth.gov/familyhealth)

“The health and well-being of children is important to everyone. These prevention programs are designed to provide parents with informational support if they need it,” said Carol K. Olson, executive director of the Department of Human Services.

Funding to support these prevention and awareness campaigns comes from the North Dakota Children’s Trust Fund that was established by legislative action in 1985, annual federal community-based child abuse prevention grants, and the state general fund.

If individuals suspect a child is being abused or neglected, they should call a county social services office in North Dakota listed in the phone book. The 53 county social services offices serve as the department’s designee’s for child protection services.

The proclamation Gov. Hoeven issued to recognize Child Abuse Prevention Month is on-line at <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/docs/cfs/child-abuse-prevention-proclamation.pdf>.

Individuals who want information about child abuse and neglect prevention programs should contact the following organizations.

- **Child Protection Program of the N.D. Department of Human Services’ Children and Family Services Division:** [www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily/cps/](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily/cps/), 701-328-2316
- **NDSU North Dakota Parent Education Network:** [www.ag.ndsu.edu/ext-emp/prc/prc/maps/ndpenetworkmap.pdf](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/ext-emp/prc/prc/maps/ndpenetworkmap.pdf) or call one of these offices in North Dakota: Region I Williston Vacant; Region II Minot 701-857-6450; Region III Devils Lake 701-665-4452; Region IV Grand Forks 701-787-4216; Region V Fargo 701-241-5700; Region VI Valley City 701-845-6652; Region VII Mandan 701-667-3342; Region VIII Dickinson 701-456-0007
- **Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota:** [www.pcand.org](http://www.pcand.org) or 701-223-9052
- **Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota:** [www.lssnd.org](http://www.lssnd.org) or at these offices in North Dakota: Bismarck 701-223-1510; Fargo 701-235-7341; Grand Forks 701-772-7577; Minot 701-838-7800; or Williston 701-774-0749
- **Nurturing Parenting Programs:** Amy Tichy, Parenting Resource Coordinator, 701-845-6652 or [amy.j.tichy@ndsu.edu](mailto:amy.j.tichy@ndsu.edu)
- **Parenting the First Year:** [www.ndhealth.gov/familyhealth](http://www.ndhealth.gov/familyhealth)

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