

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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Nurturing Parenting Program gears up for fall sessions in 10 North Dakota communities

BISMARCK, N.D. – Child abuse and neglect is preventable. The Nurturing Parenting Program is proven to help families replace negative parenting practices, establish a nurturing way of life and develop healthier, stronger relationships.

Parents with children birth to age 12 can now enroll in the program that will be offered in Belcourt, Bismarck, Devils Lake, Dickinson, Fargo, Harvey, Jamestown, Minot, Valley City and Williston. Program session dates vary by location, and some start as early as next week.

“According to parent assessments on their attitudes and beliefs before and after the program, evaluation data shows a 40 to 80 percent reduction in the risk of child maltreatment,” said Marlys Baker, child protection services administrator with the North Dakota Department of Human Services. “Parents who complete the program are taking positive steps to strengthen their families. The best part is parents and children attend and learn together.”

The department-sponsored training is a community-based partnership led by trained facilitators who guide families through group learning and discussion that addresses different parenting topics. The classes are conducted in a group setting, with separate parent and child sessions and a family-time activity. Participants complete a pre- and post-session inventory that helps measure their family’s progress and success with the program.

Amy Tichy, statewide Nurturing Parenting Program coordinator, said data compiled from these evidence-based inventories indicate the program had a significant impact on participants’ beliefs and attitudes. Upon completion of the program, participants were less likely to abuse or neglect their children.

“The greatest change parents reported was an increase in nurturing attitudes and empathy towards their child’s needs,” she said. “Parents also gained an increased awareness and understanding of alternatives to punishment and child development. These are all positive changes that can strengthen families and safeguard children.”

There is no cost to participate in the Nurturing Parenting Program. Preregistration is required. For more information, visit www.ndnurturing.org or call toll-free 855-NURTND (855-687-8163).

Baker said 252 families participated in the program statewide last year. Participants were either self-referred to the program or referred by local agencies.

The Nurturing Parenting Program is sponsored by the North Dakota Department of Human Services’ Children and Family Services Division and administered by the North Dakota State University Extension Service in partnership with the Parent Education Network and other local agencies.

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