

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Registration now open for parenting program

Program helps strengthen family relationships and improve child well-being

BISMARCK, N.D. – Parenting is rewarding and challenging. The North Dakota Department of Human Services and North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension invite parents to register now for the Nurturing Parenting Program fall session being offered in nine North Dakota communities. The program helps parents develop positive, empathic and nurturing attitudes and behaviors that develop healthier, stronger family relationships.

The Nurturing Parenting Program is being offered to parents with children birth to age 12 in Belcourt, Bismarck, Devils Lake, Dickinson, Fargo, Jamestown, Minot, Valley City and Williston. Program session dates vary by location with most starting next week.

“The program brings parents and children together for a fun and meaningful learning experience,” said Marlys Baker, child protection services administrator with the North Dakota Department of Human Services. “It strengthens families by teaching parents and children skills to interact with each other in respectful ways, provides tools for parents to deal constructively with challenging behaviors and helps parents increase parenting patterns central for a healthy family.”

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 assessment that helps measure their family’s progress and success with the program.

Whether it is the establishment of effective routines and family rules, better communication or increased empathy among family members, participants regularly report positive changes within their families.

“The program helped me to not feel so helpless and made me use different tools other than raising my voice all the time,” one program participant said.

Amy Tichy, statewide Nurturing Parenting Program coordinator with NDSU Extension said the curriculum is evidence-based and the greatest change parents report is an increase in nurturing attitudes and empathy towards their child’s needs, which are positive changes that 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 1-855-NURT1ND (855-687-8163). Sessions will also be offered in Belcourt, Bismarck, Fargo, Harvey and Minot starting in early January.

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Tichy said 286 families participated in the program statewide last year, an increase of 34 families from the previous year. Participants are either self-referred or referred by local agencies to the program.

The Nurturing Parenting Program is sponsored by the Department of Human Services' Children and Family Services Division and administered by NDSU Extension in partnership with the Parent Education Network and other local agencies.

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