

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | July 17, 2019

Speakers share information on building strong families, supporting families impacted by substance abuse and other child welfare topics at conference July 23-25 in Bismarck

BISMARCK, N.D. – Building safe environments for children, encouraging family engagement in the child welfare system and supporting families impacted by substance abuse are some of the topics that will be discussed at the North Dakota Children and Family Services Conference, July 23-25, at the Ramkota Inn in Bismarck. The conference provides training, information and skill development in the areas of child safety, permanency and well-being for child welfare professionals and others who work directly with children and families.

The three-day event will feature two keynote presentations. On July 23 at 10 a.m., Jade Woodard, executive director of Illuminate Colorado, will share information on supporting families impacted by caregiver substance use. Dr. Andrew McLean, chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences, will give a presentation on the complex science of addiction on July 24 at 1:30 p.m.

Nearly 20 educational sessions are planned during the conference. Some topics include infant safe sleep practices, overview of the different classes of psychotropic medications, the importance of kinship care as an out-of-home placement, and cultural competency and building an understanding of the current state of Native American communities. Other topics include expressive writing to overcome trauma, the Bismarck Public School's Students in Transition Program and the Dual Status Youth Initiative.

Several other sessions focus on addiction and recovery including the impacts and implications of prenatal substance exposure, safety for children when parents use substances and the work being done by Face It TOGETHER in North Dakota.

At 6:30 p.m. on July 23, there will be discussion on the social work code of ethics and the role of social work in the federal Family First Prevention Services Act legislation.

On July 25 at 8:30 a.m., the North Dakota Department of Human Services' Executive Director Chris Jones will give an overview of Senate Bill 2124, the social services redesign legislation recently passed by state lawmakers. At 9 a.m., there will be a panel discussion on several pilot projects underway to redesign child welfare services to be more efficient and responsive to families. At 10:15 a.m., Kristen Cox, a key consultant in the state's child welfare redesign effort, will discuss the Theory of Constraints and its impact on social services.

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A conference schedule including online registration and other details can be found at www1.und.edu/centers/children-and-family-services-training-center/cfs-conference/.

Individuals interested in the child welfare system are invited to attend the conference. Registrants include social workers, counselors, foster and adoptive parents, therapists, law enforcement professionals, tribal social services staff, juvenile court directors, students, and other professionals who work with children and families and the child welfare system.

Continuing education credits are available for social workers, counselors and licensed addiction counselors. Continuing legal education credits are available for attorneys.

Preregistration is required. The registration fee is \$150 for the three-day conference, \$100 for a two-day registration and \$50 for a single-day registration.

Individuals who need accommodations to participate in the training conference should contact Peter Tunseth in advance of the conference at 701-777-3258, 711 (TTY) or peter.tunseth@und.edu.

The Children and Family Services Conference is co-sponsored by the University of North Dakota Children and Family Services Training Center and the North Dakota Department of Human Services' Children and Family Services Division.

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