

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | Aug. 25, 2020

Behavioral Health Division's Parents Lead program creates new resource to help parents during the pandemic

BISMARCK, N.D. – The start of school and fall activities can be stressful under normal circumstances, let alone during a pandemic. To help engage parents and children in open communication and support them through this transition, the North Dakota Department of Human Services' Behavioral Health Division has created a new toolkit for parents called *Parenting During a Pandemic*.

The new Parents Lead resource touches on a variety of topics, including how to support children going back to school, whether they are going in-person a few days a week or participating in full-time distance learning, balancing teleworking with children at home, supporting a child when they are grieving the loss of activities, knowing when a child is ready to stay home alone, age-specific ideas on supporting children impacted by COVID-19 and more. The new resource can be found online at www.parentslead.org/COVID-19.

"Parents are making difficult decisions relating to child care, education and managing careers," said Behavioral Health Division Director Pamela Sagness. "Caring for young children while assisting with distance learning for older children and working full time, often from home is difficult. Any support or resources we can offer to North Dakota families is important."

The Behavioral Health Division continues to develop new resources not only for parents, but also for community members and professionals. Individuals are encouraged to check the Parents Lead website regularly for new resources, links to helpful information and for updates on supporting families during these times.

The primary goal of Parents Lead is to provide parents and caregivers with tools and resources to support them in promoting the behavioral health and well-being of their children. Interested individuals can also follow Parents Lead on Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest.

The department's Behavioral Health Division is responsible for reviewing and identifying service needs and activities in the state's behavioral health system to ensure health and safety, access to services and quality services. It also establishes quality assurance standards for the licensure of substance use disorder program services and facilities and provides policy leadership in partnership with public and private entities. Learn more about the work of the Behavioral Health Division at behavioralhealth.nd.gov.

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