Fostering Communications

Building a Network of People in the Foster Care System

May 2019

Foster Care….
because a child can never have too many people to love them!!!

Appreciation Central

Each May we are given the opportunity to recognize all of the children in foster care across our nation as well as show appreciation for all of the individuals who contribute to the care and safety of our children. Governor Burgum has once again declared May as "Children's Foster Care Month". See his proclamation on the following page.

This year's Foster Care Month theme highlights offering temporary care to best support families. This theme really echoes the direction of the federal government and the Family First Prevention Services Act efforts to maintain families and support parents caring for their children in their homes. The Children's Bureau, Jerry Milner stated "families are to be given what they need to thrive, not just survive." Milner suggested that what families need to prevent maltreatment and potential placement of children includes "parenting education and support, community-based substance abuse prevention and treatment services, ready access to needed medical and mental health services and trauma-informed services to help parents heal from their adverse experiences. ND Department of Human Services Children and Family Services Division continues to work hard to finalize the implementation phases of Family First regulations.

As the ND Foster Care Administrator, Dean Sturn shared the following message "I want to thank all of you for your efforts in serving children and families. ND has over 1600 children in foster care at this time. This number has remained constant in the last seven months, some areas of the state have seen a large increase in foster care numbers and others have decreased foster care numbers. ND has seen an increase in entries of children 0-5 years old, a decrease of out of state placements and a decrease in facility/ congregate care placements both in and out of state. Children and Family Services also recognizes the number of relative caregivers who care for their kin. At the same time, it is understood that not all family members are able to care for their relatives reinforcing the need for well-trained foster families willing to open their hearts and homes to temporarily care for foster children. ND currently has over 1000 licensed foster homes".

Pictured left to right:
Dean Sturn, Foster Care Administrator (ND Department of Human Services), Kirsten Hansen, Regional Representative (ND Department of Human Services), Carrie Kovash, LSW, Foster Care Lead Worker (Stark County Social Services), Diane Mortenson, Director (Stark County Social Services) Governor Doug Burgum, & Deb and Todd Schweitzer, Stark County foster parents along with their grandson, Kelsey Bless, Permanency Administrator (ND Department of Human Services).

C • F • S • T • C
Children and Family Services Training Center
Department of Social Work
University of North Dakota

Fostering Communications

Building a Network of People in the Foster Care System

May 2019

Children's Foster Care Month 2019

Governor Doug Burgum Foster Care Month Proclamation

State of
North Dakota
Office of the Governor

Doug Burgum
Governor

PROCLAMATION
CHILDREN'S FOSTER CARE MONTH
MAY 2019

WHEREAS, strengthening families and focusing on their well-being is key to building strong communities; and keeping families together is the primary goal of the child welfare system; and

WHEREAS, North Dakotans have a long-standing tradition of opening their hearts and homes to children in need of stability and caring surroundings; and

WHEREAS, compassionate foster families play an important role in making sure children and adolescents are able to grow and develop in a safe, stable and nurturing environment until they can be reunited with their families or achieve permanency; and

WHEREAS, Children's Foster Care Month is an opportunity to recognize the nearly 1,000 licensed foster families who provide quality foster care in North Dakota; and

WHEREAS, relative caregivers, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles and other close family members, also play an important role in providing normalcy, stability and family connections to their kin who are not able to remain with their biological parents; and

WHEREAS, dedicated foster families often engage to finalize permanency through adoption when foster children cannot return to their birth families, resulting in a greater need for more foster families; and

WHEREAS, foster families, county social services, child welfare providers and professionals and others involved in foster care deserve recognition for their continued teamwork and steadfast devotion to the safety, permanency and well-being of children and adolescents; and

WHEREAS, this annual observance calls attention to the value of foster care as a temporary service that provides help, healing and hope to children and adolescents in our state.

NOW THEREFORE, as Governor of the State of North Dakota, I do hereby proclaim May 2019, as **CHILDREN'S FOSTER CARE MONTH** in the State of North Dakota.

Doug Burgum
Governor

ATTEST:

Alvin A. Jaeger
Secretary of State

600 E Boulevard Ave. • Bismarck, ND 58505-0001 • Phone: 701.328.2200 • www.governor.nd.gov

President Donald Trump Proclamation on National Foster Care Month, 2019

C • F • S • T • C
Children and Family Services Training Center
Department of Social Work
University of North Dakota

Fostering Communications

Building a Network of People in the Foster Care System

May 2019

Upcoming State Conferences…

North Dakota Children & Family Services Conference, Bismarck, ND
July 23-27, 2018

Registration available by clicking HERE

ND Conference of Social Welfare
Baymont Inn, Mandan, ND
September 25-27, 2019
www.ndcsw.org

ND Family Based Services Conference, Holiday Inn, Fargo, ND
April 1-3,2020
www.ndfbsa.org

PRIDE Link

The PRIDE Model we follow highlights the competency of "**Supporting children's relationships between children and their birth families.**" We support these relationships in many ways, including visitation. "As a foster parent, you have the opportunity to help children and families develop stronger connections, whether or not children return to their birth family. Family visits can be one of the most valuable opportunities for children to heal and cope with the trauma of being separated from their family. Research shows that when children have regular, frequent contact with their family while living in foster care, they experience shorter foster care placements, less re-entry into foster care, more successful reunification, and overall improved emotional well-being". The following link connects us to a portion of Wendy Negaard's guide to "*Putting the pieces of family visits together*". Negaard shares how caregivers can make the transition to and from visitations a little less painful.

Putting the Pieces of Family Visits Together: Transitions

As noted above, as licensed foster parents, we follow five competencies to include:

- Protecting and nurturing children
- Meeting children's developmental needs and addressing their delays
- Supporting relationships with birth families
- Connecting children to safe, nurturing relationships intended to last a lifetime
- Working as a member of a professional team.

While doing all of these as foster parents, you make the time for the children in your care to feel loved, have a sense of belonging, and in turn, hope that you have made a difference in that youth's life. In honor of May being Children's Foster Care month, it seemed appropriate to share a powerful message from former foster youth, Josh Shipp. His message is a reminder that what you do can make more of a difference than you ever imagined!!! Every Kid is ONE Caring Adult Away from Being a Success Story

Simple Reminder

With May being National Foster Care Month; in honor of the children in foster care, it seemed fitting to include an article that reminds us of the trauma that these youth experience before being placed into foster care. It can be easy to forget that the behaviors a child may display mean far more due to the trauma they have experienced earlier in life. It's Not "Just a Kid Thing": Behaviors in Adopted and Foster Children

LIKE US ON facebook

C • F • S • T • C
Children and Family Services Training Center
Department of Social Work
University of North Dakota

Fostering Communications is published by the UND Children and Family Services Training Center under the sponsorship of the Division of Children and Family Services, North Dakota Department of Human Services. It is intended for all foster parents, foster care providers, and child welfare agencies. Comments should be directed to the Training Center.

Fostering Communications

Building a Network of People in the Foster Care System

May 2019

ONE….

One tree can start a forest;
One smile can begin a friendship;
One hand can lift a soul;
One word can frame a goal;
One candle can wipe out darkness;
One laugh can conquer gloom;
One hope can raise your spirits;
One touch can show you care;
One life can make the difference;
Be that ONE today!!

~Author unknown

Empathy

Children who are placed into foster care experience trauma and from this, emotions can be hard for them to manage, often being displayed in hard to handle behaviors. The children in our care have experienced events that we will never know about. Events that have left their mark far greater than we would often like to believe. This makes it hard for caregivers to see life from the child's perspective. "Empathy is often defined as seeing things from the other person's point of view. But empathy is actually a physical event, controlled by the insula in our right brain. The structure of the right brain is formed during the first two years of life, before your baby becomes verbal. Scientists suspect that the right brain is the orchestrator of intimacy. The insula connects the brain with the heart, digestive organs, and skin. So when our heart leaps, or our stomach turns, or our skin crawls, the insula is sending us a message. And when we feel deep empathy, we feel it in our bodies. That means a more accurate definition of empathy is "feeling" from the other person's point of view. Empathy strengthens the relationship bond. Empathy helps the child to feel understood, less alone with her pain and suffering. Empathy heals"(Dr. Laura Markam, Aha!Parenting). The following article from *Aha! Parenting* shares what empathy is and isn't along with a follow-up article that shares what to do when empathy does work.

Empathy: Foundation for Emotional Health

The Necessity of Self-Care

It is easy to say that foster parents often have a desire to give more than they receive, and that individuals who foster hope to make a difference in the world. It is also easy to say that most foster parents don't put themselves on the top of the list, which means self-care often gets pushed to the bottom of the list, if it even makes it onto the list at all. Parenting is far from easy these days, and parenting a child who has experienced trauma can be nearly impossible some days. With this being National Foster Care Month, it seems appropriate to remind all caregivers that you honestly can't give your best to the children in your care unless you take care of yourself first. We encourage you to take the time to implement pieces of the self-care from the following two links as shared from *Fostering Perspectives.*

A Trauma-Informed Approach to Self-Care
Self-Care: Do it for Yourself, Your Family, and Your Kids

Cost of Vicarious Trauma

In honor of Foster Care Month, we wanted to re-share the message from Amy Cunningham on the impact of vicarious trauma in hopes of reminding caregivers once again to take the time for self-care. "Vicarious Trauma" is a significant change in oneself within trauma situations as a result of being involved with another individual's trauma story. To best care for others, you must also take the time to care for yourself.

Drowning in Empathy: The Cost of Vicarious Trauma

LIKE US ON facebook

C • F • S • T • C
Children and Family Services Training Center
Department of Social Work
University of North Dakota