**NORTHSTAR CARE FOR CHILDREN:**
**ENCOURAGING SAFE, PERMANENT HOMES FOR CHILDREN**

Beginning January 1, 2015 all child providers whether kin/relative or non-kin, will begin to be impacted by 2013 state legislation referred to as the Northstar Care for Children. Children in your care prior to January 1, 2015 will remain with the current system, until there is a change in placement. All new placements at your home will be funded and assessed through the Northstar system. We will be providing more information in the next few months related to this topic and probably even have a foster care information meeting so please read your newsletter and communication from Washington County Foster Care Program. Below is the Fact Sheet published on the Minnesota Department of Human Services website which provides an overview of the initiative:

Northstar Care for Children will help more children grow up in safe and permanent homes. It consolidates and simplifies administration of three programs: Family foster care, Kinship Assistance (which replaces Relative Custody Assistance), and Adoption Assistance. It realigns funds to provide a single program that focuses on the needs of children and supports permanency for children. It will take effect in January 2015.

Northstar Care for Children:

- Increases the monthly basic benefit for most children who enter the foster care system
- Reduces the number of children who leave foster care without a permanent family each year; currently, about 450 children age out of foster care each year, and more than one-third of them are likely to become homeless
- Provides permanent families to an estimated 100 or more vulnerable children each year who would otherwise age out of foster care
- Supports foster parents who adopt or accept permanent custody of children over the age of 5 in their care without loss of support, improving stability for the children and increasing the percentage of children who are adopted within two years
- Reduces the length of stay for children in out-of-home care

Unified benefits
The comprehensive, simplified program:

- Combines three separate programs into a single program with uniform processes and unified benefits
- Provides a monthly basic benefit based on children’s age
- Uses a uniform assessment for all children to determine any needs beyond the basic payment for one of 15 levels of monthly supplemental difficulty of care payments
- Maintains the highest range of the current foster care benefits for children with the highest need

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**WELCOME CAITLIN**
**NEW CHILD FOSTER CARE LICENSOR FOR MOST OF NORTHERN PART OF COUNTY**

Hello, my name is Caitlin McNamara. I attended Winona State University where I obtained a Bachelor’s Degree in Social Work. My previous work experience includes developmental disabilities case management and relative foster care licensing. I love spending time with my fiancé, Chris and daughter Lucy! We also have a dog named Tank and cat named Tobi!
FARMERS MARKET
Local Farmers Markets continue into the fall. They offer fresh, locally grown food at a good price. If you need help to find a farmer’s market go to mfma.org or check the local papers.

NEED INSURANCE?
Contact MNSure. The next open enrollment period will be November 15, 2014 through February 15, 2015, with coverage taking effect no earlier than January 1, 2015. There are enrollment events going on throughout the state. Go to MNSure.org or call 1-855-366-7873 (1-855-3MNSURE).

VOTING
Voting is an important activity for all members of society. Sometimes residents are not aware that they can vote or are hesitant because they are not registered. License holders are able to assist residents who are eligible to vote by going to the polling place with them and vouching that they are residents of the facility. Here is a link to the Secretary of State website on voting for individuals living in facilities www.sos.state.mn.us/index.aspx?page=1614.

FOSTER CARE PROVIDER TRAINING - BOTH ADULT & CHILD PROVIDERS WELCOME

2014 Anoka Fall Foster Provider Conference
The keynote speaker, Sal Di Leo, starts off the day with the topic of gratitude and hope. Participants can choose from a variety of workshops during the three break-out sessions. Some of the topics include Parenting Children with Attachment Problems, Understanding Personality Disorders, and Secondary Trauma. This all day conference is sponsored by Anoka County.

Date/Time: Tues., October 28 • 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
Cost: $40
Registration: Pre-registration is required. Call Teresa at (763) 422-7144.

ADULT TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

1st Annual MOFAS Statewide FASD Conference
Come get the latest information and useful tools, broaden your network, and be inspired in your work with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). Gain knowledge of best practices and the latest research in the field of FASD. Learn practical tools and tips to implement within your family, agency, or system.

Date/Time: November 1-2
Location: Doubletree by Hilton, Bloomington
Cost: $100 (Note: Annually $100 can be reimbursed per licensed family for training.)

ADULT FOSTER CARE PROVIDER TRAINING GROUP

Topic: To be determined
Date: Tues., November 25 • 6:00-8:30 p.m.
ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY IS EVEN MORE ACCESSIBLE!

The Minnesota STAR program representative spoke at our Adult Foster Care Training Group on July 22. The STAR program mission is to help “Minnesotans with disabilities find the assistive technology they need to succeed at home, school, work and in the community.” Jenni Delisi explained the program and brought items that are available for loan. You can ‘try before you buy’ with a variety of devices from those that enlarge type to those that shut off the oven. The STAR program staff will help you find the right technology to meet the needs of the person. They know resources and funding to help navigate the purchase of the device. Now they have gone one step farther!

The STAR program’s new website has information about assistive technology such as:

- What is assistive technology?
- How is assistive technology used in employment settings?
- How is assistive technology used in post-secondary settings?
- How do I know which types of assistive technology may help me?
- What is the process for getting assistive technology to be used at work or in college?
- And more!

Check out the new website for yourself! http://mn.gov/admin-stat/tools-for-your-future/

CHILD FOSTER PROVIDERS BECOMING MORE FAMILIAR WITH IMPACT OF TRAUMA ON CHILDREN

Research is learning more and more about the impact trauma has on our lives young and old. Information on trauma is particularly applicable to our children – infant and up entering foster care or participating in respite care. This past spring/early summer, Washington County, in conjunction with Minnesota Department of Human Services, offered “Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma” training series. We are thrilled to say we had 27 individual providers attend at least 1 session. Twelve foster providers including 9 families attended at least 3 out of the 4 trainings in the series. Six providers attended all 4 trainings! So the hope is their knowledge, understanding, awareness, and skills related to the impact trauma has on a child has increased. We would welcome your feedback in how to make our placement process more trauma sensitive. We plan to provide more trauma-focused training in the future and stress the importance of learning more about the latest research and offer hands-on ideas for foster providers.

FIVE TIPS TO MAKE HALLOWEEN SAFE

Just because Halloween celebrates scary things doesn’t mean you want any safety scares of your own. With a little bit of planning and these five tips from Kids.gov, you can ensure your ghouls and goblins have a frightfully fun time this year.

1. Look up your local trick-or-treating time and rules. Then plot out a map of safe neighborhoods for trick-or-treating. Let older children take the map with them if they’re trick-or-treating on their own.
2. Stick reflective tape on dark costumes—it will help drivers see you. And make sure your kids can see clearly. Face paint may work better than a mask when it comes to visibility.
3. Pick a perfect pumpkin for carving. It should be sturdy, not soft, with a flat bottom so it doesn’t topple over. You can also encourage your kids to paint creative faces on their pumpkins instead of carving.
4. Consider using a glow stick or battery-powered lights instead of candles to light the way for trick-or-treating or in jack-o-lanterns, especially around little kids who could get burned or drapery that could catch fire.
5. Screen candy before your kids eat it. Toss out anything with opened or damaged wrappers and homemade treats, unless you know the giver personally.

Don’t forget basic safety precautions that will make your children’s Halloween a safer night of fun. For more tips on having a healthy and fun Halloween, visit Kids.gov’s Halloween page.

Adult Foster Care Providers Needed!

When life gets difficult... can you help? As a Washington County Adult Foster Care provider, you can make a difference in the lives of adults with a mental health diagnosis who are unable to live independently. Many choose to live in a family setting and simply need the support and stability of foster care to manage the demands of everyday life.

Who needs care?
- Over 18 years old
- Individuals with a mental health diagnosis
- Need a safe, caring environment
- May be involved in programs during the day such as school, work, or organized day program
- May stay with you for a long time, but most are short-term

What is adult foster care?
Licensed individuals or families provide adult foster care in their own home. The adults in care need a safe and supportive environment in which to thrive and learn independent living skills.

Our next Adult Foster Care Informational Meeting:
Mon., October 6
6:00-8:00 p.m.
Government Center
14949 62nd St. N.
Stillwater

For more information call (651) 430-6455.
Welcome New Child Providers:

May 2014
• Karen & Larry Stang, Lake Elmo (Kin)

August 2014
• Janice Ellis, Bayport (Kin)
• Melissa Kordosky, Hugo (Kin)
• Terry Summers & Shirly Moore, Woodbury (Kin)

FREE CELEBRATION!
The 17th Annual Circus of the Heart Celebration helps kick-off Minnesota Adoption Month. All adoptive, foster, and kinship families are welcome! They’ll be games and prizes, pony rides, petting zoo, family photo corner, etc.
Sun., November 2
1:00-4:00 p.m.
Prom Center Event Facility, Oakdale
For more information, contact MN ADOPT at (612) 861-7115 or info@mnadopt.org.

DID YOU KNOW?
READING TO CHILDREN
If a young person is read to at least three times a week, that person is twice as likely to score in the top 25% of reading!

FIRE HAZARD
When was the last time you cleaned out your dryer vent? Check to be sure it is not full of lint—it could be a fire hazard.

USE METAL TAPE
Gas dryer vents must be sealed with metal tape (not duct tape).

ARE YOU GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP?
Sleep is important for people of all ages to stay in good health. Read more to learn how much sleep your body needs.

How you feel and perform during the day is related to how much sleep you get the night before. If sleepiness interferes with your daily activities, more sleep each night will improve the quality of your waking hours. Yet many adults report experiencing a sleeping problem one or more nights a week.

Insufficient sleep is associated with a number of chronic diseases and conditions—such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, obesity, and depression—which threaten our nation’s health. Not getting enough sleep is associated with the onset of these diseases and also may complicate their management and outcome.

Sufficient sleep is increasingly being recognized as an essential aspect of chronic disease prevention and health promotion. How much sleep is enough? Sleep needs vary from person to person and change as people age.

Consider these sleep guidelines for different age groups. How much sleep do you need?
• Newborns: 16-18 hours
• Preschool-aged Children: 11-12 hours
• School-aged Children: at least 10 hours
• Teens: 9-10 hours
• Adults (including older adults): 7-8 hours

...Sufficient sleep is not a luxury—it is a necessity—and should be thought of as a vital sign of good health.” Wayne H. Giles, MD, MS, Director, Division of Population Health, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.

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SLEEP DISORDERS
Sleep-related difficulties – typically called sleep disorders – affect many people. Major sleep disorders include:
• Insomnia: an inability to fall or stay asleep that can result in functional impairment throughout the day.
• Narcolepsy: excessive daytime sleepiness combined with sudden muscle weakness; episodes of narcolepsy are sometimes called “sleep attacks” and may occur in unusual circumstances.
• Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS): an unpleasant “creeping” sensation associated with aches and pains throughout the legs that can make it difficult to fall asleep.
• Sleep Apnea: interrupted sleep caused by periodic gasping or “snorting” noises or momentarily suspension of breathing.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a sleep disorder, it may be important to receive an evaluation by a healthcare provider.

From: www.cdc.gov/features/sleep/index.html

SLEEP HYGIENE
The promotion of regular sleep is known as sleep hygiene. Here are some simple sleep hygiene tips:
• Go to bed at the same time each night, and rise at the same time each morning.
• Sleep in a quiet, dark, and relaxing environment, which is neither too hot nor too cold.
• Make your bed comfortable and use it only for sleeping and not for other activities, such as reading, watching TV, or listening to music.
• Remove all TVs, computers, and other “gadgets” from the bedroom.
• Avoid large meals before bedtime.
WASHINGTON COUNTY
All trainings will be held at the Washington County Government Center in Stillwater unless otherwise noted. To register for trainings contact Ann Maudal at (651) 430-6485. All trainings are free to Washington County Foster Care Providers unless otherwise noted. *Reminder: Foster parents can seek up to $100 training reimbursement per calendar year per household.

*Resource Family Trainings: Highly recommended for new providers seeking to have respite/placements in their homes.

SUID (Sudden Unexpected Infant Death) / AHT (Abusive Head Trauma) Training

This training is required when caring for kids 5 and younger.

Date/Time: Thurs., October 9 • 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Trainer: Pam Bohm, Certified MNCPD SUID & AHT Trainer
Date/Time: Wed., December 3 • 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Trainer: Washington Co. Community Services Staff

CARS (Children and Restraint Systems) Training

This training is required when caring for kids 8 and younger. Limited participants! No walk-ins.

Date/Time: Mon., November 17 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.
Trainer: Washington Co. Public Health Staff

Foundational Resource Family Training

*New Daytime Classes
An experienced foster, adoptive, or kinship parent and an agency professional will guide participants through an interactive and informative training series filled with activities and learning opportunities. Sign up for all 3!

Trainers: *New trainers this year:
Cecelia Gran & Laurie Sjodin-Ernste,
Dept. of Human Services Trainers

Family Systems and Abuse and Neglect
Participants will begin to identify the characteristics of families where maltreatment occurs and the role of parents in preventing abuse and neglect. They will explore the contributing factors to maltreatment and learn how abused and neglected children continue to be at increased risk for abuse and neglect even after being placed in foster, adoptive, or kinship care.

Date/Time: Tues., October 21 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Impact of Abuse and Neglect on Child Development
This training provides an overview of normal childhood development and the impact of abuse and neglect. It also explains how to recognize developmental delays or challenges.

Date/Time: Sat., November 22 • 9:00 a.m.-Noon

Attachment, Separation, & Placement
This training outlines normal, healthy attachment and the impact on attachment of separation from primary families. Participants will explore how children’s developmental levels affect their understanding of and reactions to out-of-home placement.

Date/Time: Sat., November 22 • 1:00-4:00 p.m.

M E T R O T R A I N I N G O P P O R T U N I T I E S

CPR - Infant & Child
This 4 hour workshop meets DHS/licensing requirements for CPR training. Participants will be able to use their own mannequin. Certification cards will be given out in class.

Date/Time: Sat., October 18 • 8:00 a.m.-Noon
Location: Guardian Angels, Oakdale
Cost: $44
Registration: Call (651) 641-3549 or go to www.mnstreams.org
Please contact Think Small for registration and training policies.
*No walk-ins allowed. Participants who miss 15 minutes or more of training will NOT receive a certificate of completion.

First Aid
This workshop is geared to your needs as the first one on the scene when someone has a medical emergency. It covers basic first aid principles and practices, injury prevention, and safety information. This 4 hour workshop meets DHS/licensing requirements for First Aid training. Certification cards will be given out in class.

Date/Time: Sat., Oct. 18 • 12:30–4:30 p.m.
Location: Guardian Angels, Oakdale
Fee/Credit: $44.00
Registration: Call (651) 641-3549 or go to www.mnstreams.org
Please contact Think Small for registration and training policies.
*No walk-ins allowed. Participants who miss 15 minutes or more of training will NOT receive a certificate of completion.

Autism: Children with Social, Communication, & Behavioral Needs
This workshop will explore the key characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder and give early childhood practitioners tools to more effectively include a child with Autism in their child care setting. Included in this interactive workshop are myths and facts about Autism as well as practical strategies and tips for inclusion.

Date/Time: Tues., November 25 • 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Location: Oakdale Discovery Center, Oakdale
Cost: $22
Registration: Call (651) 641-3549 or go to www.mnstreams.org
Kathryn has provided respite care for both boys and girls in Washington County for the past 5½ years. She lives in Woodbury and the children in her home have the added benefit of her dogs and cats. Kathryn enjoys being active with the foster children and spending time outdoors in nature. We appreciate her service to the children she has fostered and their families!

What prompted you to become licensed?
I always enjoyed kids and helping them be successful in life. Being I did not have any, I looked into fostering and ran across respite care. I have a full-time job, so fostering kids was not possible. Respite care allowed me to work with kids and also work full-time.

What advice would you give to someone that is newly licensed?
Respite care is very rewarding, but at the same time can be challenging. I would recommend to have a clear set of house expectations and then make sure that you reinforce them both to redirect when they don’t follow them and to praise them when they do. Also, I keep electronics to a minimum. Sometimes you have to negotiate the allowed time. I want them to try different activities vs. just play video games, watch TV, or text on their phones. Seems today that the only way kids know how to entertain themselves is with something electronic. Another thing is make sure you have a poker face that you can draw upon. Sometimes these kids say the darndest things and you have to make sure you do not react or over react.

What is something you have learned that would be helpful to other providers?
Patience is always important and making sure that expectations are clear. I am big on saying please and thank you, and I find that these kids typically are not accustomed to saying these things. I also look for behaviors that are positive and I reinforce them with positive comments. If I see something I like, I say it. I try to focus on the positive. The good thing with doing respite care is I have these kids for the weekend and we get to play. The same as if I had my nephews or niece over. When there are problems, which on occasion there are - especially when I have more than one respite at a time - I help them problem-solve and come to the solution. I try not to solve it for them, but rather help them learn how to solve it for themselves. Sometimes you have to negotiate with them.

What is your best memory of providing foster care?
There are many. I had a girl that I did respite care for almost 5 years. She is no longer in respite care, but she still comes over. After about a year of respite care, we were driving to my dad’s for dinner and she asked if she could tell me something, I said of course. Then she said that she loves me. I told her thanks for telling me and that I loved her too. Another time we were driving to my dad’s for dinner and she asked if she could tell me something, I said of course. Then she said that she loves me. She asked her if she had fun and she said yes. I then asked her what she liked the most and she said that it was eating dinner at the table with everyone. Really makes one think about the background some of these kids come from and how the simplest things can be big events for these guys. Also what stands out is I have been able to give these kids their first experience in many different activities, like catching their first fish, boating, etc. Pretty neat.

CHILDFOSTER CARE SUPPORT GROUP

We listened when providers said they wanted support groups! We’re bringing back Child Foster Care Support Group. We will be offering two support groups; one for Relative/Kin providers and one for Non-Relative/Non-Kin providers. Please contact your licensor for additional information. See dates and times below:

Relative/Kin Support Group
(Monthly)
Relatives Raising Children—Supporting One Another—Challenges & Special Joys
Date/Time:  Mon., Oct. 20 • 6:30-8:00 p.m.
Location:  Woodbury City Hall, Poplar Rm.
Questions:  Ann Maudal at (651) 430-6485 or ann.maudal@co.washington.mn.us

Child Support Group (Non-Relative/Non-Kin)
(Bi-monthly)
Support for veteran and newer child foster care providers. An opportunity to consult, connect, and create community.
Date/Time:  Mon., Nov. 10 • 6:00-7:30 p.m.
Location:  Oakdale Library, Public Mtg. Rm.
Questions:  Kim Pfuehler at (651) 430-6598 or kim.pfuehler@co.washington.mn.us