First Steps Central MN

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FAMILY NEWSLETTER

Contact Us

763-276-0441

www.firststepscentralmn.org

Happy October!

As the leaves begin to change, October gives us a chance to slow down, savor small moments, and connect as a family. This month is full of opportunities for creativity, learning, and togetherness. Your home visitor will support you through it all.

THRIVING, NOT JUST SURVIVING

Main Street Family Services is one of several Family Resource Centers (FRCs) popping up across central MN. FRCs are a one-stop shop to access services available in the community, connect with peers, and receive education. Programming and supports available at FRC locations vary based on specific community needs.

Public Health and Health & Human Services (HHS) have been partnering with local FRCs to offer satellite WIC clinics, HHS financial resource access, outreach services, and/or onsite lactation support. In addition, First Steps home visiting staff have been planning regular "Fun with First Steps" events at select FRC locations. These events may include crafts and activities that foster parent/child connection and family's socialization.

"Fun with First Steps aligns with FHV goals–supporting parents despite life's challenges. We strive to create opportunities for joy, connection, and support. We are able to celebrate families in a setting outside their homes."–PHN Mallory

Main Street's FRC Coordinator (Shari), First Steps PHN (Mallory), and a local family (Mom Allison with daughters Natalie & Lydia) joined August's First Steps Joint Powers Board meeting to share about their valuable experiences bringing families together, helping meet family's needs, and what it is like to participate in the programming.

"Being connected to FHV and Mainstreet FRC has allowed me to not only survive, but THRIVE, as a parent."
–Mom Allison

Additional FRCs located in central MN, include the Southside Community Outpost, 10-10 Community Outpost, and Salem Community Outpost (learn more here), Wright County's Mobile FRC (learn more here), and ISD 742's Community Schools at Discovery & North Jr High.



(Pictured): Main Street's FRC Coordinator Shari, PHN Mallory & Local Family (Mom Allison, daughters Natalie & Lydia)

Drop-In Feeding Support

Tuesdays
- 9:30a-11:30a, Monticello Community Center
- 9:30a-11:30a, St. Cloud YMCA 👣

Wednesdays
- 9:30a-11:30a, Wright County Historical Society, Buffalo 👣
- 1:30p-3p, North Memorial-Maple Grove Hospital

Thursdays
- 11a-12:30p, Cambridge-Isanti Adult Enrichment Center

Fridays
- 10a-12p, Options for Women -Cornerstone, St. Michael

👣 **=First Steps staff present**

Mindfulness Moment

Focusing on good events increases happiness and helps to re-train our brains to remember the good things in life. It can also:
- improve your sleep quality
- create more positive relationships
- reduce levels of burnout and depression

How 'Three Good Things' works:
Every night for 2 weeks, set aside 3-5 minutes right before you go to sleep. Write down on paper three things that went well that day, or something positive you noticed. Commit to doing 'Three Good Things' for the full 14 days. The positive effects of using this tool for the 14 days can last for about six months!

Learn more at Bounce Back Project



Here's a fun way to get your family involved: Start a Family Gratitude Jar—add one note a day about something your child enjoyed or is proud of.



Our First Steps collaborative is guided by a Joint Powers Board (JPB), made up of one County Commissioner from each of our First Steps counties. The JPB meets quarterly to review family home visiting updates, data, and budget information. We truly value having families and home visitors join these meetings to share their experiences. Their perspectives enrich the conversation, and the JPB is always deeply appreciative. Let your home visitor know if you would be interested in sharing your story.

Activities of the Month

Here are a few simple, low-stress family activities to enjoy this month:

• Nature walks with leaf collecting: Turn a walk into a discovery adventure. Kids love finding different colors and shapes, and you can use them later for crafts.





• Pumpkin or apple activities: Decorate pumpkins, make applesauce together, or visit a local orchard. Even toddlers can help wash apples or scoop pumpkin seeds.





• Fall-themed sensory play: Fill a bin with leaves, pinecones, or small pumpkins for hands-on play.

HOW HOME VISITING BUILDS PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Adverse childhood and community experiences (ACEs) are events that can occur in a household, within the community, and the environment.
Types of ACEs may include:

- Abuse
- Neglect
- Divorce
- Mental Illness
- Incarceration
- Substance misuse
- Bullying
- Community violence
- Experiencing or witnessing terrorism, war, or natural disasters

ACEs are common--nearly nearly two-thirds (64%) of adults from the study had at least one ACE.

ACEs don't occur alone. if you have one ACE, there's an 87% chance that you have two or more

When these tough experiences aren't addressed, the stress from ACEs can affect children, parents, and even the community. This kind of stress can make it harder for families to handle challenges and can influence health and well-being throughout life.

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT WITH SUPPORT, CONNECTION, AND CARE, FAMILIES CAN BUILD STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE!

Participating in family home visiting helps families grow stronger by building protective factors—things that support your child's healthy development and help your family feel confident and connected. Home visiting helps by:

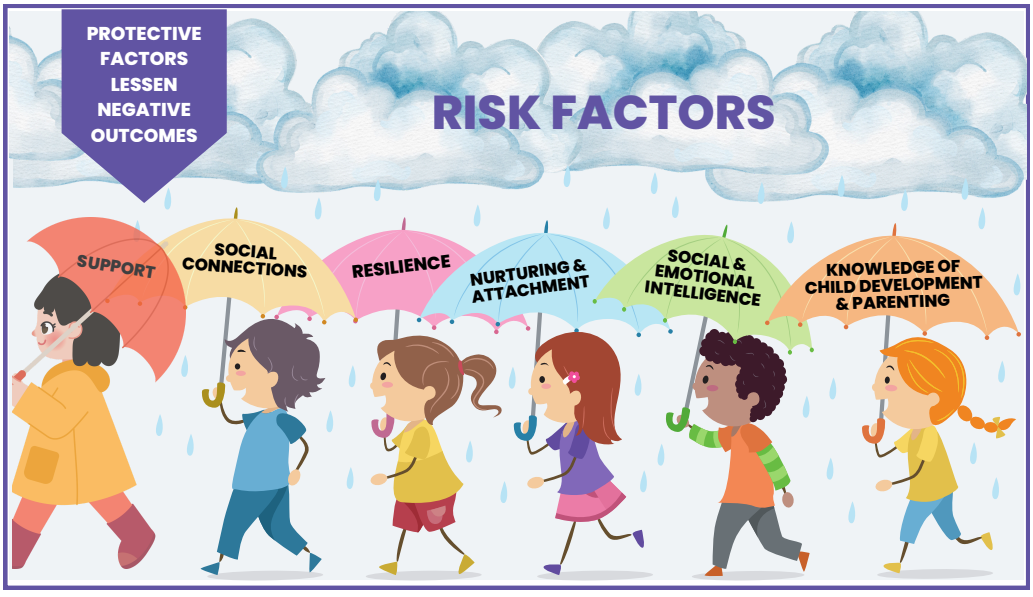
• **Strengthening parent–child relationships**: Home visitors share ideas and activities that help you bond with your child and understand their needs.

• **Building parenting skills**: Families get tips, tools, and encouragement for handling everyday challenges, from creating routines to supporting behavior and learning.

• **Connecting families to support**: Home visitors help you find local resources like childcare, health care, community programs, and more—whatever fits your family's goals.

• **Boosting confidence**: With ongoing support and someone to talk things through with, many parents feel more empowered and prepared to tackle new stages of their child's growth.

• **Supporting family well-being:** Home visitors can help families manage stress, celebrate successes, and plan for the future.



FHV HELPS CHILDREN THRIVE AND GIVE PARENTS THE SUPPORT THEY NEED TO FEEL STEADY, CAPABLE, AND CONNECTED. THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

NURTURING FATHERS FAMILY HOME VISITING PROGRAM

The Nurturing Father's Program is a comprehensive, evidence-based initiative designed to support and empower fathers in their parenting journey.

The program aims to:

1. **Strengthen Father-Child Bonds**
2. **Improve Communication Skills**
3. **Promote Positive Discipline**
4. **Enhance Co-Parenting Relationships**
5. **Build Self-Awareness and Emotional Intelligence**

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW WOULD BE INTERESTED, APPLY AT

https://firststepscentralmn.org/make-a-referral

OR CONTACT CAIDAN –

320.968.5331 EXT: 5343



Help the fathers in our community **grow and thrive!**

BENTON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

First Steps Central MN

Fun WITH First Steps Central MN

CRAFTS | ACTIVITIES | CONNECTIONS

Caregivers and little ones are invited to join First Steps for a fun morning of crafts designed to build connection, creativity, and community!

WEDNESDAY,
October 7th
1:00PM-3:00PM

MAIN STREET FAMIY SERVICES
400 JACKSON AVE NW,
SUITE 101
ELK RIVER, MN 55330



FRIDAY,
October 16th
10:00AM-12:00PM

1010 COMMUNITY OUTPOST
1114 - 9TH AVE SE
ST. CLOUD, MN 56304



FRIDAY
October 9th
9:30AM-11:30AM

WRIGHT COUNTY HERITAGE CENTER
2001 MN-25
BUFFALO MN 55313



THESE EVENTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO ALL!

FAMILY FUN FEST!

2026

COSTUMES ENCOURAGED

FACE PAINTING

FRIDAY OCT. 2ND
5:00 TO 7:00 PM

LIBERTY ELEMENTARY GYM
FREE RESOURCE FAIR!

PRIZES
GAMES

COME JOIN US





Big Lake EARLY CHILDHOOD



COMMUNITY CONNECT

FREE EVENT

THURSDAY, OCT. 15, 2026
1pm - 5pm
BIG LAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL
601 Minnesota Ave, Big Lake, MN 55309

A Place to Find Strength in Community

FREE WINTER COATS
Shoes, Hats, Socks and other necessary clothing

FREE ESSENTIAL ITEMS
From dozens of local vendors

Free Food & Haircuts Available

Interpreters Available in Russian & Spanish

Resources for both Sherburne and Wright County residents

Free transportation will be available:
Tri-Cap Transportation – Call for more info 888-765-5597 or 320-251-1612
For residents of Wright County, contact Trailblazer Transit at 1-888-743-3828

FREE ACCESS TO COMMUNITY RESOURCES
Housing assisstance, food support, mental health needs and more

Event by:
Big Lake Schools
United Way
Sherburne County Area United Way

FOR MORE INFO CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE OR EMAIL
www.SherburneUnitedWay.org
info@SherburneUnitedWay.org

@sherburneunitedway

Project Connect

Join us!

Project Connect is a free event that offers people within our community the opportunity to access services offered by governmental, non-profit, and other agencies

Services Offered

- Legal Resolution
- Disability Services
- Clothing/Coats/Shoes
- County Social Services
- Legal Services
- Veteran's Services
- County Financial
- Public Health
- Family Support
- Mental Health
- Youth Agencies
- Housing
- Haircuts
- Medical Care:
  - Blood Pressure
  - Vaccinations
  - Doctor Visits
  - Chemical/Diagnostic assessments

Somali, Spanish interpreters will be available

Like us on Facebook for updates!

SCAN ME!

Free Lunch
Door Prizes
Giveaways

October 27th, 2026
10 AM - 3 PM

River's Edge Convention Center
10 - 4th Ave S, St Cloud, MN 56301





COMMUNITY BABY SHOWER

Thursday, Oct. 29

4:30 - 6:30 p.m.

CentraCare South Point | Todd Steinke Auditorium
3001 Clearwater Road, St. Cloud

Join us for a Community Baby Shower, a free resource fair designed for expecting parents, new parents and the people who support them.

The event will feature:

- Community resources and vendors
- Helpful information for parents and families
- Raffle prizes and giveaways
- A Q&A panel with healthcare professionals focused on maternal mental health, with an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about emotional wellbeing during pregnancy and postpartum.

This event is free. No RSVP needed.

everyday miracles

CentraCare®

Questions? Contact equityandbelonging@centracare.com.



St. Cloud Area School District 742

BABY TALK

FREE for Parents, Caregivers & Babies Ages 0-12 Months

FREE GIFT AT FIRST VISIT!

CONNECT
WITH OTHER PARENTS

GAIN
SUPPORT & INSIGHTS FROM PARENT & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

- Baby Care & Routines
- Sleep & Self-Care
- Postpartum Wellness
- Play & Early Learning
- Family Changes & Transitions
- Language, Motor & Social-Emotional Development

FREE! REGISTRATION AVAILABLE BUT NOT REQUIRED. THIS IS A DROP–IN CLASS.

MONDAYS	TUESDAYS (1st & 3rd)	THURSDAYS
11:30a.m.–1:00 p.m.	5:30–7:00 p.m.	9:30–11:00 a.m.
No class 9/21, 12/21, 12/28, 2/15, 3/8, 5/17	No class 1/19	No class 10/15, 11/26, 12/24, 12/31, 3/11

Quarryview Education Center
800 7th St S, Waite Park, MN

320-370-8250

Scan the code to check out more parent child classes!

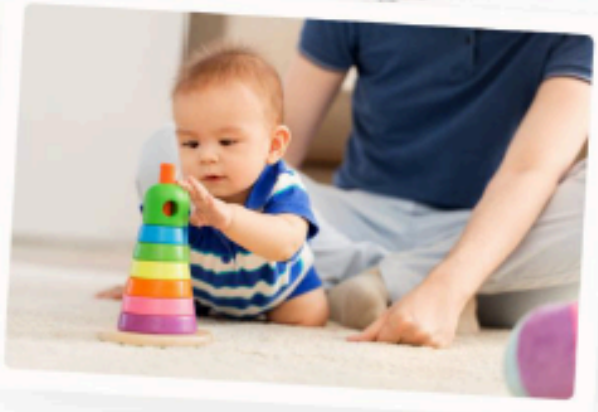
Drop In & Play

St. Cloud Area School District 742

Stop by our Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) classroom to play with your child, birth to age 5.







Free! No Registration

Ages 0–5

Mondays
Sept. 14-Oct. 26
12-1:30 pm

Mondays
Sept. 14-Jan. 11
9-10:30 am

Wednesdays
Sept. 23-Nov. 11
12-1:30 pm

Quarryview Education Center
Door 1, 800 7th St S., Waite Park

Questions? 320-370-8250

No Morning sessions on late-start days. Go to isd742.org for holidays, closures and schedule changes.