



12th Annual
Foster-Adoptive Parent
and Community Support
Regional Conference

What is going on in their heads?

Tuesday, June 2, 2026

[REGISTER HERE](#)



“I don’t know how to stop anxiety. Maybe we can’t. Maybe this is what happens when you grow up. You feel less joy.”

— Inside Out 2

About the Conference

During our time together, we will explore what foster youth are dealing with mentally as they navigate care. We know that children want and need love, attention, stability, and guidance. We also know that all our caregivers whether they are kinship, licensed, adoptive or people helping also need guidance, grace and support. Our focus during this conference will allow for you to ask questions.



Today’s foster parents live a very rewarding but demanding life. The sacrifices you make to give hope to a child or family in crisis come at a cost. Whether it is the time you spend up late at night with a child, driving them to and from visits, dealing with challenging behaviors, or giving up what little time you may have had to yourself, the commitment required of foster parents is immense.

Research shows that foster parent training, camaraderie, and community supports are three of the necessary elements to build resiliency in foster homes and provide for better outcomes for the children who come into your care. As such, it is our goal to provide you with a comprehensive training that will include each of these elements in a way that is enjoyable, fun and engaging. This joint training of foster parents and community support systems will serve to give you the latest in relevant topics that will support you as you determine "what is going on in their heads?"

Bringing foster parents and community agencies/organizations together will provide you with opportunities to develop strong support systems and make new connections. Our goal is that you leave here inspired, reinvigorated and equipped with new information and valuable insights. During the conference, we will also look at the assistance children need in their teen and young adult years. We will be focusing on the areas of trauma, sexualized behaviors, the technology areas, subsidy assistance and information provided by our keynote who is a foster/adoptive parent along with our plenary who specializes in trauma.

Our Goal

Being a foster parent, relative or adoptive caretaker can be a lonely responsibility at times. Our intention is to provide training and information, as well as encourage connections and support within our communities. We would like everyone to leave feeling more supported, engaged and connected. This joint conference of foster-adoptive parents and community support systems will provide information on key topics that will help you build a solid foundation.

Today, you will have the opportunity to:

- Hear from a variety of relevant speakers.
- Learn about supportive services available in your community.
- Meet other foster-adoptive parents.
- Join in interactive training sessions.

Conference Schedule

7:45 – 8:30 a.m.	Registration
8:30 – 8:45 a.m.	Welcome: Danielle Martin, Mecosta/Osceola DHHS Director
8:45 – 10:00 a.m.	Keynote: Jen Wrayno, Former Regional Director, Business Service Center 5
10:00 – 10:20 a.m.	Break: Enjoy the vendors.
10:20 – 11:20 a.m.	Workshop #1
11:20 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Lunch: Basket give aways (must be present to win).
12:30 – 1:30 p.m.	Workshop #2
1:30 – 1:45 p.m.	Break: Enjoy the vendors.
1:45 – 2:00 p.m.	Afternoon Welcome & Introduction: Lindsey Lassanske, Lake/Oceana/Newaygo DHHS Director
2:00 – 3:30 p.m.	Plenary: Dr. Stephanie Grant
3:30 – 4:00 p.m.	Closing/Wrap-Ups/Drawings-basket handouts (must be present to win): Carey Adrianse, Wexford/Missaukee DHHS Director

Conference Location & Hotel Information

**The David L. Eisler Center
University Center**
805 Campus Drive,
Big Rapids, MI 49307

Hotels:

[Holiday Inn Express](#)
[Country Inn & Suites](#)
[Hampton Inn](#)

Morning Speakers

Welcome

Danielle Martin

Danielle has more than 25 years of experience working with children and families within child welfare, early childhood development, national child welfare consultation programs and domestic violence settings. Her work with children and families at risk has involved direct service provision, management and administration. She began her career with MDHHS in 1997 in a prevention position and has served as children's protective services investigator, CPS ongoing worker, foster care worker, lead worker, manager, program manager and county director.

She served as acting director of the Division of Continuous Quality Improvement and as regional director for BSC3 prior to serving in national child welfare transformation roles. She also served on the Governor's Task Force in Michigan for the prevention of child sexual abuse as a departmental representative, and she has trained child welfare staff in many counties in the Safe and Together Model. She has a master's degree in social work with an emphasis in child welfare.



Keynote Speaker

Jennifer Wrayno, MSW

Former Regional Director, Business Service Center 5 (BSC5)

Jennifer Wrayno has served as the BSC5 Regional Director since September 2013. As it relates to all child welfare programs, BSC5 provides direction and supervision to four of the urban counties in Southeast Michigan: Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, and Genesee.

Jennifer has more than 25 years experience in public child welfare programs, including 22 years with the State of Michigan. She has been employed in numerous child welfare programs, including foster care, Children's Protective Services (CPS), adoptions, and licensing. She has worked in various management capacities in Wayne County as well as Central Office (Lansing). Prior to becoming the BSC5 Director, Jen served as Acting Director of Adoption Subsidy & Field Programs for Child Welfare Field Operations; Field Coordinator, for Wayne County Children's Services Administration; and she has held management and front-line positions in foster care, CPS, and licensing.

In addition to child welfare oversight for four urban counties in the state of Michigan, BSC5 is also responsible for the Regional Placement & Support Unit (RPS) which handles foster care placements; a Purchase of Service (POS) Regional Team which monitors BSC 5 PAFC cases; Permanency Facilitators, who handle team decision making meetings statewide; and the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) PAFC units throughout the state. In 2024, Jen was a recipient of the 2024 Adoption Excellence Award from the US Department of Health & Human Services, for her innovative work that has positively impacted permanency outcomes for children and youth. An adoptive and foster parent herself, Ms. Wrayno is a graduate of Eastern Michigan University and holds bachelor's and master's degrees in social work.



Workshops

Same for the morning and afternoon.

Workshop 1: How Trauma Impacts the Development of Children

Trauma impacts everyone – especially developing children. This impact hits hardest in three primary areas: how they relate to others, how their brain's develop and what they believe about themselves. This brief training will help develop a better understanding of this impact and actions the parent/caregiver can take to help it get better.

Chad Campbell

Chad is a 30 plus year veteran in the field of mental health. He has worked with families and children in many different capacities and roles. He is a licensed MSW in the State of Michigan and currently works as a Clinical Manager for Eagle Village, Inc. Chad has focused much of his work in helping to bring trauma informed care to Northern Michigan and has provided several trainings for foster families and the community at large in the trauma informed model. Chad lives in Cadillac, Michigan with his wife, family, dog's and chickens.

Workshop 2: Medical, Guardianship & Adoption Subsidy

Join the analysts from the Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Office to learn more about medical subsidy and adoption assistance. This is a great opportunity to learn more and ask all your subsidy related questions regarding medical subsidy, adoption assistance, eligibility, pre-approval, extensions and how to apply for services.

Julie Wineland

Julie is an ongoing analyst for the Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Office (AGAO). She has been with AGAO for over 12 years. She has a bachelor's degree in both criminal justice and psychology from Northwestern State University in Louisiana and a Master of Education/school counseling from the same university. She previously worked for over five years with the Louisiana office of community services first as a foster care worker and then as a CPS investigator.

Workshop 3: Identification & Intervention of Problematic Sexual Behaviors

To help caregivers and professionals understand problematic sexual behaviors in children, distinguish them from developmentally appropriate behaviors, recognize contributing factors, and respond in a trauma-informed, effective way that promotes safety, healing, and healthy development.

Ashlynn Peterman & Kadie Smith

Ashlynn is a MSW student at MSU who will graduate in 2027 and currently lives in Tawas, MI. Kadie Smith is also a MSW student at Spring Arbor who will graduate in June of 2026.

Rebecca Yunker

Rebecca graduated from Central Michigan University with her undergraduate degree in child development and psychology and earned her master's degree in counseling. After receiving her master's degree, she moved to Grand Rapids and worked at the Kent County Children's Assessment Center for 15 years. Having recently moved to the area, Rebecca began the NMCAC with the help and support of community members in 2014. What was once a single woman operation providing forensic interviews and advocacy, has grown steadily since its' humble beginning and now offers counseling, advocacy, forensic interviewing, medical services for children and adults, and prevention services.

Workshop 4: Computers, Internet & National Center for Missing & Exploited Children-Technology Education

This workshop will give a brief overview of the types of investigations the Computer Crimes Unit (CCU), the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC) & the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC). It will focus on the child sexually abusive material, AI, online enticement, sexting/sextortion & human trafficking. It will show you the suspicious activities to be aware of, how to utilize platforms that victims/suspects use online and the parental controls to assist, as well as assistance for victims.

Robert English

Robert grew up in the Upper Peninsula before attending and graduating from Grand Valley State University with a bachelor's in criminal justice and a minor in juvenile justice. He was then hired by the Michigan State Police in 2015 and graduated from the 128th Recruit School. Robert has since worked across the lower peninsula to include the Marshall Post, Lakeview Post, the Marijuana and Tobacco Investigation West Section, and the Grand Rapids Post. Currently, Robert is assigned to the Grand Rapids Computer Crimes Unit and is a member of the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force. He is responsible for investigating crimes against children to include the production and sharing of child sexually abusive material.

Jerry Tacey

Jerry graduated from Ferris State University with a bachelor of science degree in criminal justice. He was hired by Ann Arbor Police Department and began his career as a road patrol officer. He is experienced in community orient policing, bicycle patrol and impaired driver enforcement. After eight years he was promoted to detective. He specialized in crime scene processing, fraud and electronic evidence recovery. He retired after 25 years of service. Upon retirement, Jerry moved to Portland, Oregon to explore the pacific northwest. He continued his public service career as a civilian public safety support specialist for the Portland Police Bureau. Currently, Jerry is serving as the computer crimes unit detective for the Big Rapids Department of Public Safety. He is assigned as the Mecosta county representative to the Michigan State Police-Cyber Section and is a member of the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force. He is responsible for child safety investigations and digital evidence forensics.

Workshop 5: Inside Out Tools for Caregivers: Connecting Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviors

This workshop introduces caregivers to the brain-based foundations of children's behaviors, helping them understand how stress, emotion and developmental needs shape what they see on the outside. Participants learn how the nervous system influences regulation, connection and problem-solving, and how to respond in ways that support—not escalate—children's internal experiences. The session also equips caregivers with practical, play-based strategies that strengthen attachment, build confidence and promote emotional safety. Through simple, relationship-centered techniques, caregivers gain tools to nurture resilience, deepen connection and guide children toward healthier patterns of behavior.

Sarah Meeuwes, LLMSW

Sarah is a Limited License Master Social Worker whose career spans more than two decades of child welfare case management, leadership, quality assurance, and statewide systems improvement. She holds a Master of Social Work from Spring Arbor University. Sarah currently serves as therapist at Pawsitive Counseling Center, where she specializes in individual play therapy, sand tray therapy, and animal assisted play therapy for children and adolescents. Sarah's professional history reflects deep expertise in child welfare systems, trauma-informed care, and culturally responsive practice. She has served as a statewide trainer, conference presenter, and community educator on topics including youth engagement, resilience, trauma, and the MiTEAM Case Practice Model. A committed advocate for children, families, and youth, Sarah blends clinical insight and relational warmth to support healing, resilience, and meaningful change for the individuals and communities she serves.

Afternoon Speakers

Afternoon Welcome & Introduction

Lindsey Lassanske, MSW

Director, Lake/Oceana/Newaygo DHHS

Lindsey Lassanske serves as the Director of Lake and Newaygo DHHS, bringing over 20 years of experience in child welfare. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Urban Studies and a master of social work from Grand Valley State University. Lindsey, her husband David, and daughters Lennon and Stella have been a foster family for the past two years, reflecting their deep commitment to supporting children and families in their community.



Plenary Speaker

Stephanie Grant, MA, MA, PhD

Stephanie is trained as a Developmental Psychologist and is licensed as a Professional Counselor. She has separate master's degrees in Marriage and Family Therapy and Psychology and a PhD in Lifespan Developmental Psychology. She is also endorsed as an Infant Mental Health Specialist. Her clinical and research interests focus on working with infants and children with attachment concerns and trauma histories, specifically those who have adoption or foster care backgrounds. She has worked as a clinician, professor, and researcher and has provided professional development and support services for community organizations and schools around the world.

Stephanie brings an extensive and varied background with her. Not only has the topic of trauma and neurodevelopment been a significant part of her career, as a foster and adoptive parent, she also understands how the research translates into day to day experiences for the adults that work with children with these histories.

Stephanie has a passion for her work. It's not just what she does, it's a part of who she is. Whether it's working with kids and their families, teaching college students, providing trainings to adults, or advocating for changes to systems, she looks forward to the task and has no intention of stopping.



Closing

Carey Adrianse

Director, Wexford and Missaukee County DHHS

Carey Adrianse has over 17 years with the State of Michigan and has served in roles of Child Protective Services, investigations and ongoing, Children's Services Supervisor, Children's Services Program Manager and has been a Director for six years. Prior to working for the State of Michigan, Carey worked in a residential treatment facility for almost 10 years, first as a direct-care staff and then moved into the role of Family Counselor. Carey has a deep passion for trauma-informed child welfare and understands the complexity of caring for children who have been deeply hurt.



Registration deadline is May 5, 2026

Attendees must register individually. Please register by clicking the link below or scanning the QR code.

Questions? Contact Jennifer Oehrli at 231-492-3223 or email oehrlij@michigan.gov.

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HERE**



The LMNOW Coalition

Since 2009, child placing agencies in Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Missaukee, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola and Wexford counties have collaborated to provide trainings, recruitment and retention activities.

Since 2012, LMNOW has presented this conference at no cost to registered participants.





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If you are unable to register using the link above, please complete the registration form below and email it to oehrlij@michigan.gov.

Name

Agency or Affiliation

Address

City, State

Phone

Email