

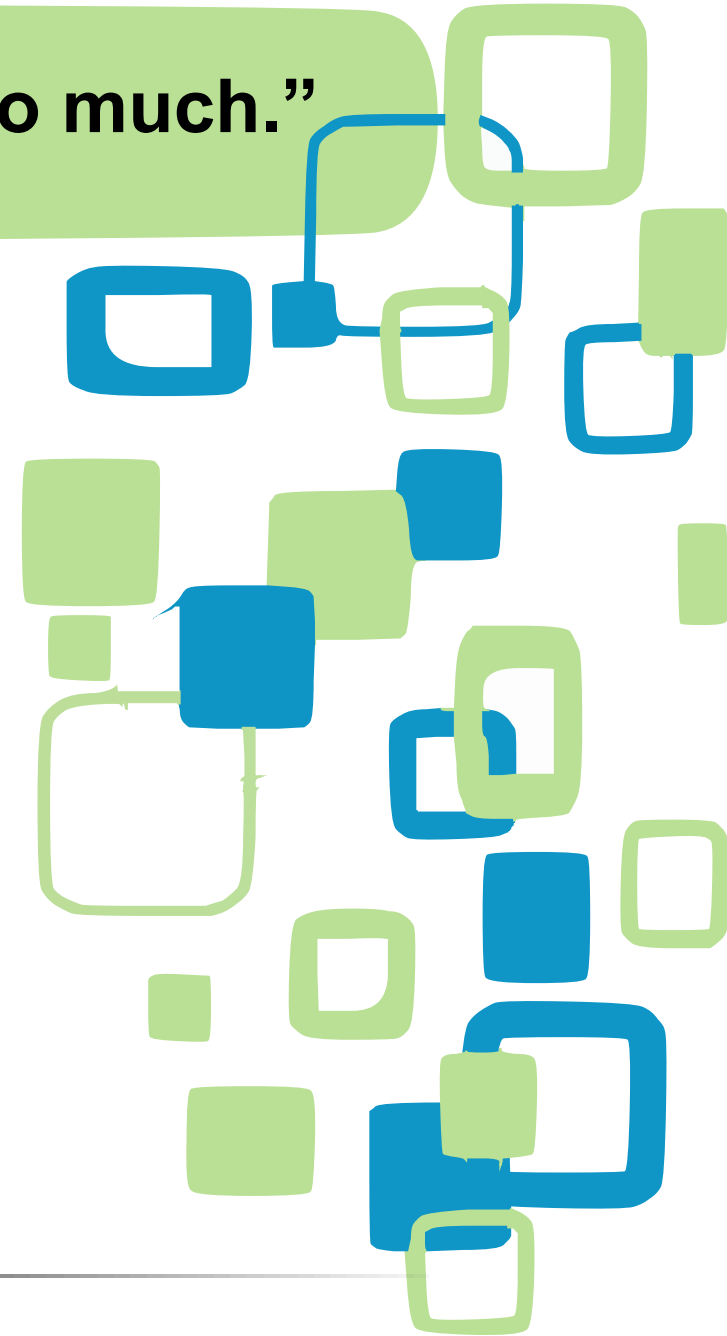
# Family Resource Centers Working with Families in Rural Communities



**“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”**

Helen Keller, author, educator, and disability rights advocate.

This quote highlights the need for collaboration, building relationships, teamwork and maintaining trust. These are some of the values shared by community partners as we implement Family Resource Centers in Polk County.



# Polk County Family Resource Centers

The Polk County Family Resource Centers are proudly co-managed by Polk County Social Services and our community action partner, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council.

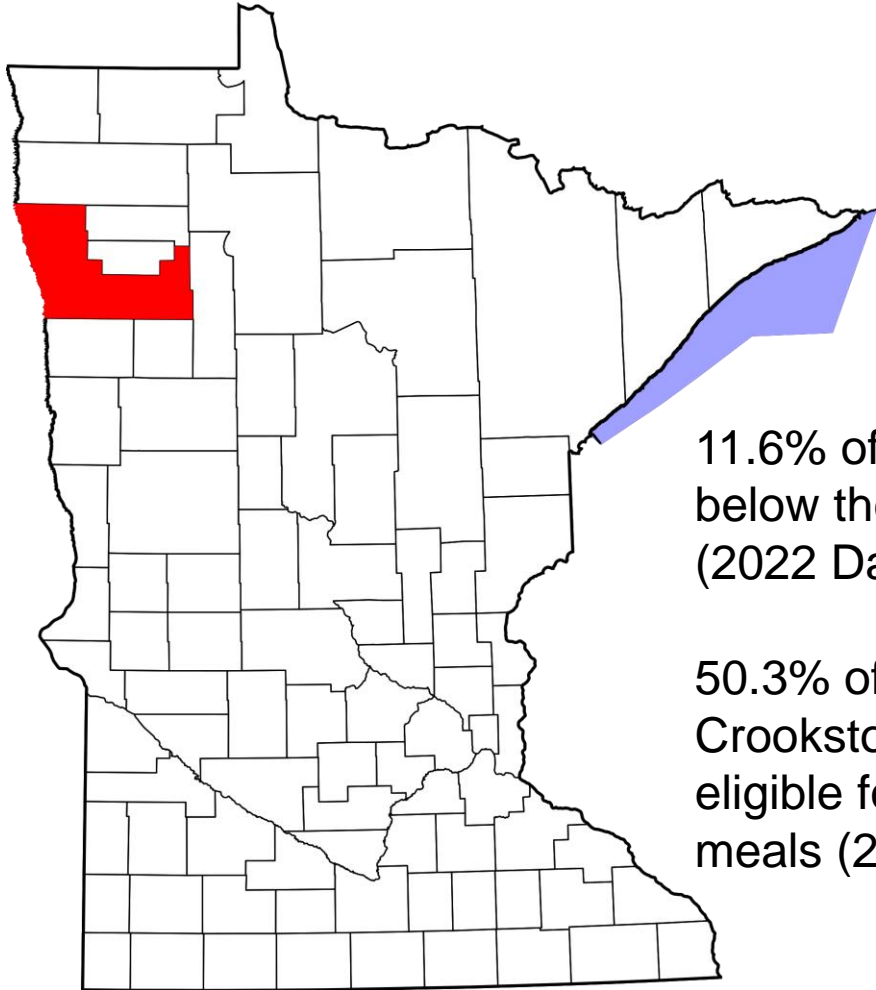
Mission Statement: “The Polk County Family Resource Center is a safe and welcoming space for all, providing access to community resources that support family strengths and is parent and caregiver driven.”



A family participates in a Play & Learn activity at our FRC.



# Polk County, MN



11.6% of the population are below the poverty line (2022 Data USA)

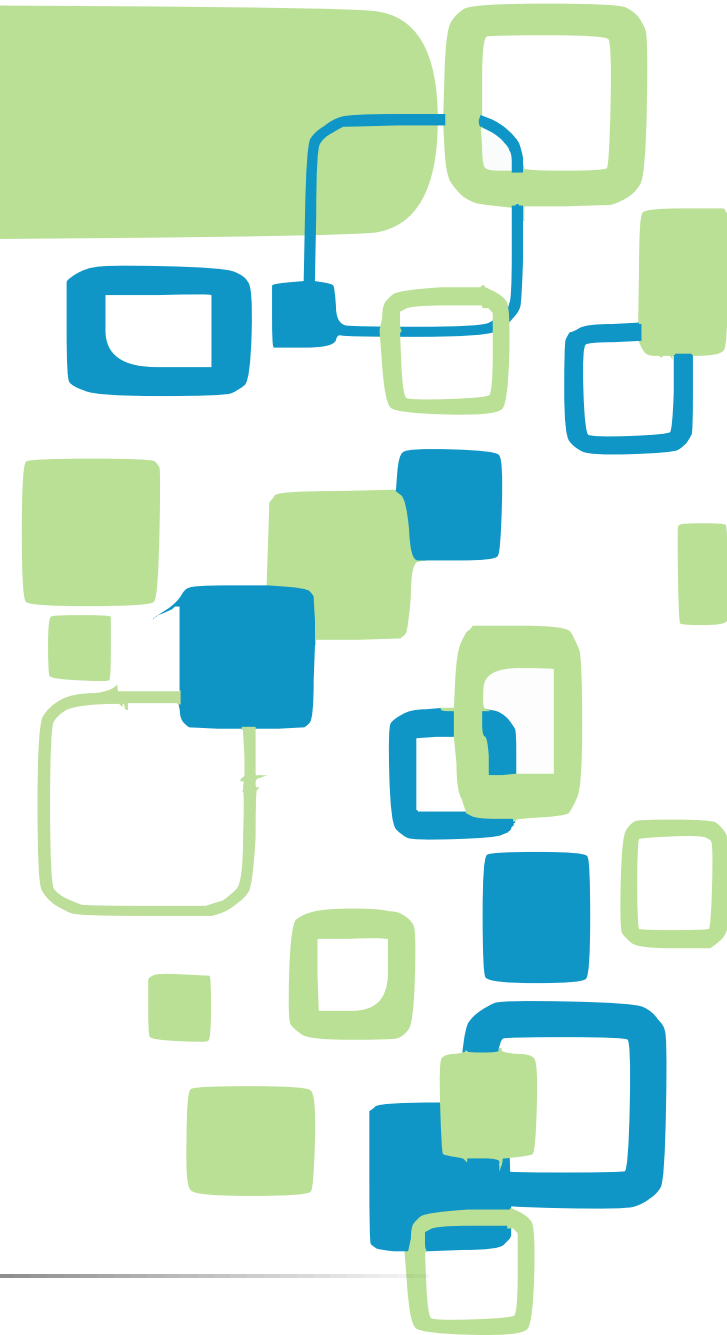
50.3% of students in the Crookston School District are eligible for free and reduced meals (2021 US News)



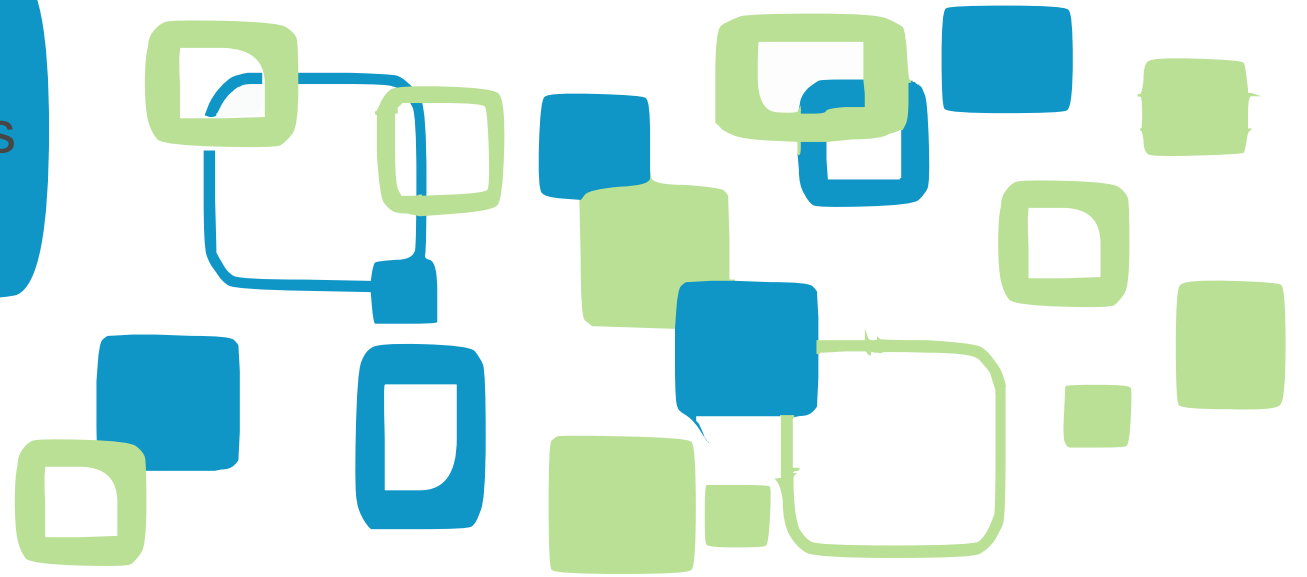
# Polk County, MN

Facts: Its population was 31,192 at the 2020 census.<sup>[1]</sup>

Race	Number	Percent
<a href="#">White</a> (NH)	26,538	85.1%
<a href="#">Black or African American</a> (NH)	958	3.1%
<a href="#">Native American</a> (NH)	376	1.21%
<a href="#">Asian</a> (NH)	156	0.5%
<a href="#">Pacific Islander</a> (NH)	4	0.01%
<a href="#">Other/mixed</a> (NH)	1,161	3.72%
<a href="#">Hispanic</a> or <a href="#">Latino</a>	1,999	6.41%



Polk County Resource Centers programming, resources and supports are based on the Five Protective Factors that are the foundation of the Strengthening Families Approach:



Parental  
resilience

Social  
connections

Concrete  
supports in  
times of need

Knowledge  
of parenting  
and child  
development

Social and  
emotional  
competence  
of children

# What Services Are Available Through the Center?

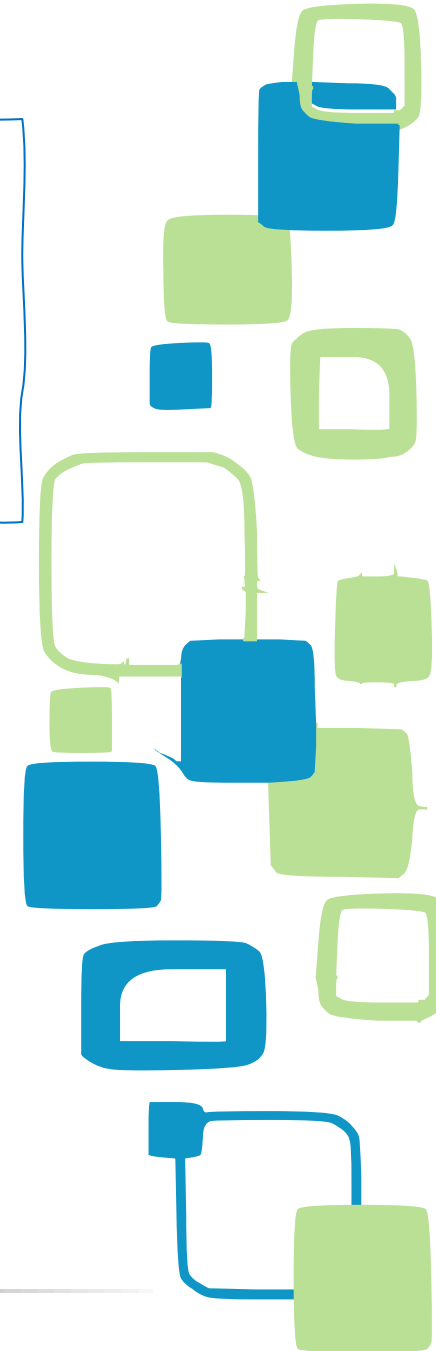
## **Family Well-being:**

Focused on addressing the social and mental well-being of students and families. FRCs offer a variety of services to address the mental health needs of students and families such as case management, and early intervention programs.

## **Family Support:**

Family Resource Centers offer a variety of opportunities that support both students and their families. FRCs serve as an essential partner with the school and family to support consistent school attendance. FRCs provide many services to address or eliminate barriers to consistent attendance including provision of basic needs, referral coordination for social services, mental health, and/or health care, employment assistance, and case management.

FRC are responsive to the specific needs of each community and can include concrete supports. In East Grand Forks, the school has requested we have available student hygiene kits on site.





# Cultural Navigation Services – Summer 2024

Groups are provided at the FRC to help prepare children and adolescents for the upcoming school year.

## **YOUTH EDUCATION GROUP:**

This group is designed for youth in Middle School and High School. Approximately 20-25 youth attend each week over the summer. The group has provided a safe place for youth to have conversation and learn. Benefits seen have been - youth feel like they have a sense of belonging, gain confidence and leadership skills.

## **READ WITH ME PROGRAM:**

This group is designed for elementary age children. Approximately 20-25 youth attend weekly over the summer. The children take turns reading books and listening to each other. Benefits seen have been - increased social skills, vocabulary and reading skills.

## **ADULT EDUCATION (EL) ENGLISH LEARN:**

Approximately 20 women attend weekly for parenting and/or emotional support and to help improve their English communication skills.

## **CASE MANAGEMENT:**

Ongoing support is provided to help families. Assistance is provided to find housing, register the children in school, explain attendance requirements, assist with applications for social services or housing assistance, etc. In one week, 10 new families were provided case management.





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## Monthly youth groups held in Crookston facilitated by our local mental health center.

### Topics include:

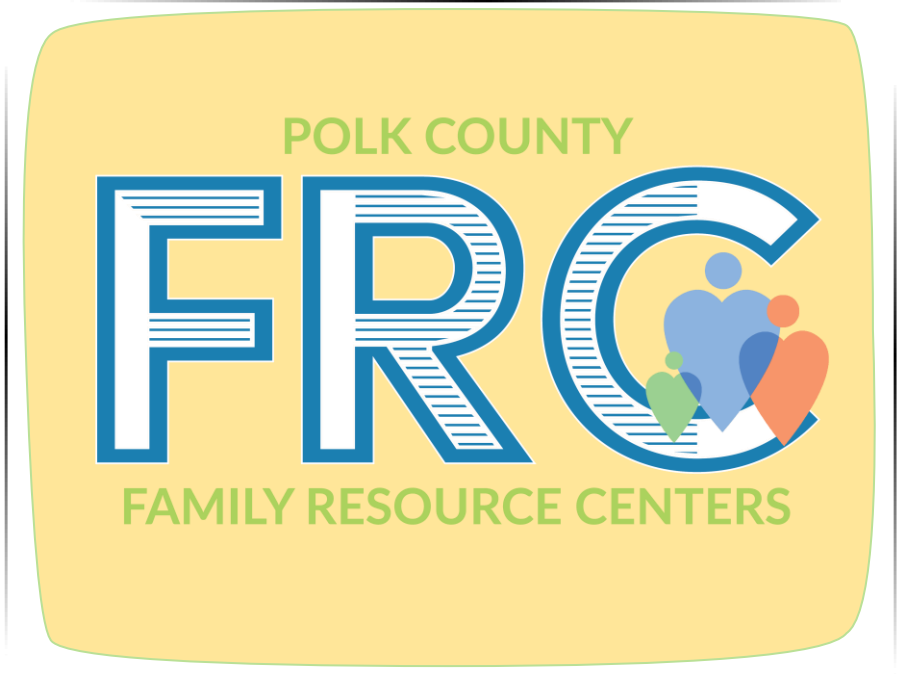
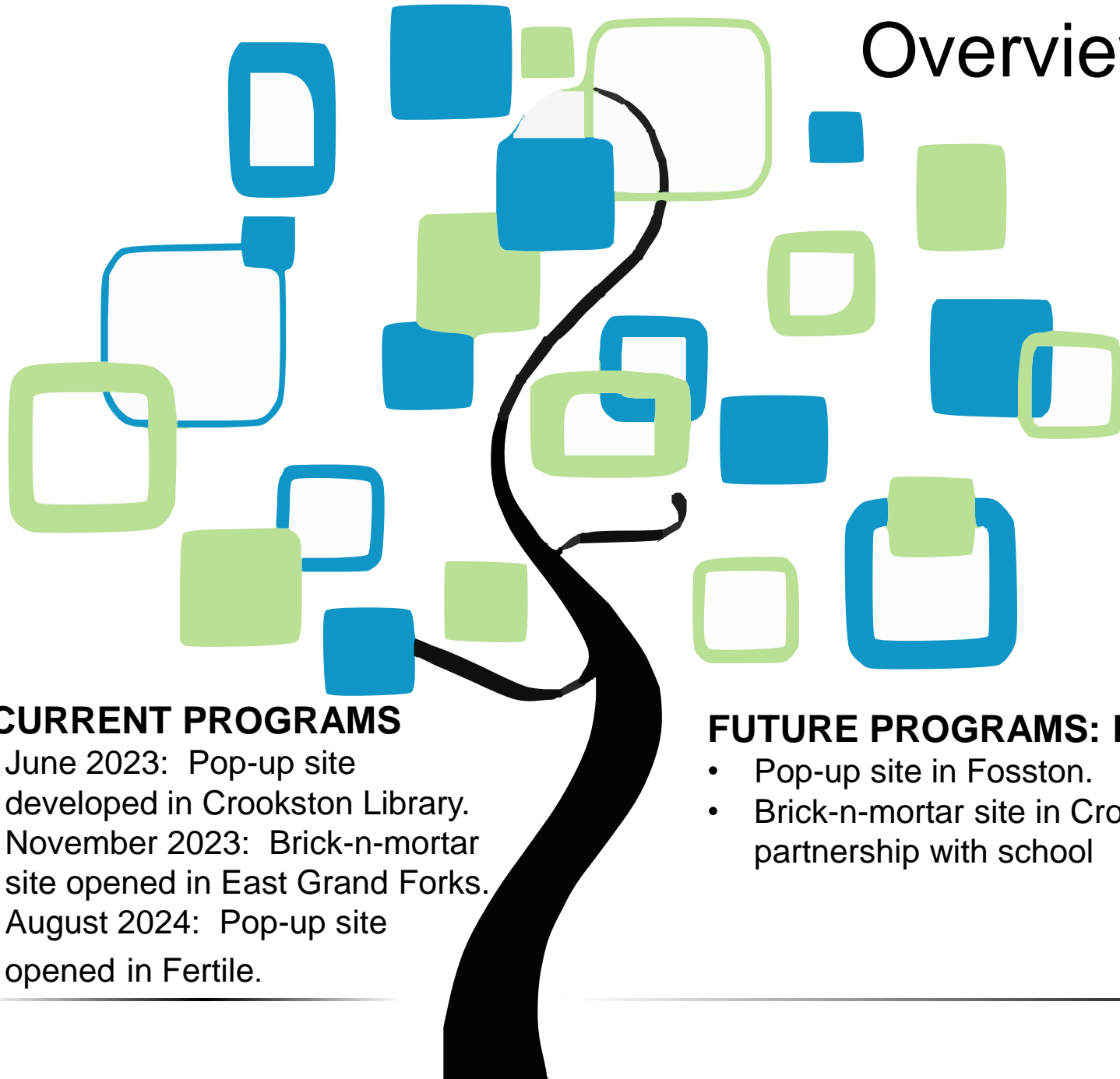
- Encouragement Postcards – each person will get 3 postcards to write and give them to others. Skills practiced: positive affirmation, listening, task completion.
- Worry Stones, Friendship Bracelets – Skills practiced: thought stopping, self acceptance, stress management.
- Positive Affirmation Fortune Teller – Skills practiced: self awareness, positive affirmation, stress management.
- Zentangle Drawings – Skills practiced: self calming, coping skills, turn taking, concentration.
- Sand Art Feeling Jars – Skills practiced: feelings identification, emotional regulation, coping skills.
- My Emotions Wheel, My Safe Place Activity – Skills practiced: feelings identification, coping skills, communication.

## Youth Group

### **Youth Group Impact Story:**

The Family Resource Center in the town of Crookston is a very good thing for us because it helps families get what they need and feel connected. The workshops that have been done are really amazing. I struggled a lot in school. I got bullied. The impact that it's done for me is it has really helped me. ~ From a youth participant.

# Overview of Polk County FRCs



## 3 CURRENT PROGRAMS

- June 2023: Pop-up site developed in Crookston Library.
- November 2023: Brick-n-mortar site opened in East Grand Forks.
- August 2024: Pop-up site opened in Fertile.

## FUTURE PROGRAMS: Fall 2024

- Pop-up site in Fosston.
- Brick-n-mortar site in Crookston - partnership with school

## STAFFING:

- .5 FTE Manager
- .5 FTE Director
- 1.5 FTE FRC coordinator
- .5 FTE Cultural Navigator
- Hiring 1-2 FTE coordinators

## Crookston, MN (pop-up site)



Chris Boike, Crookston Public Library director, and Victoria Ramirez, Family Resource Manager, hold a banner with the Polk County Family Resource Center logo on it in front of the Crookston Public.



FRC Core Stakeholders at Grand Opening event on June 1, 2023

# East Grand Forks

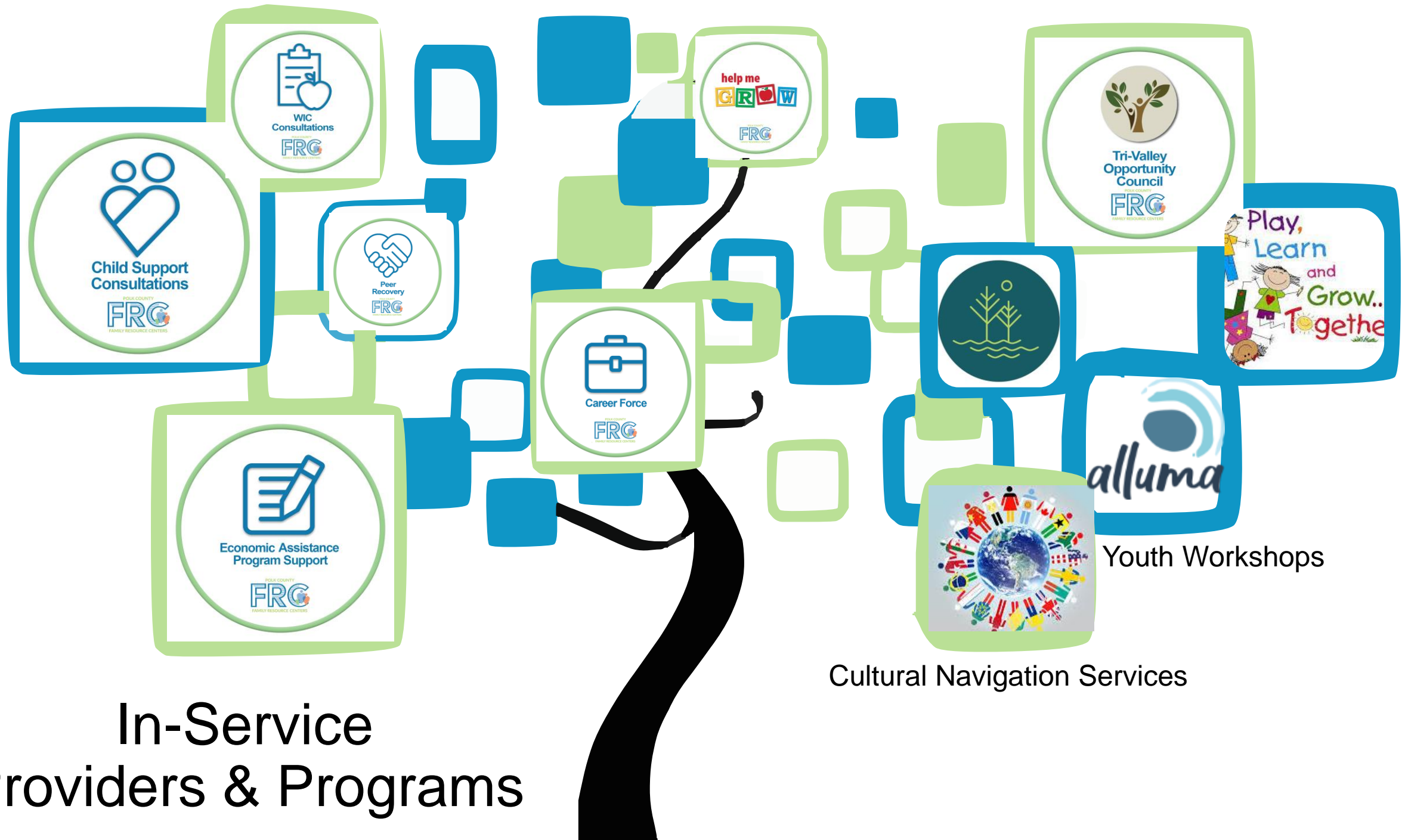


Community partners at our Grand Opening event on Nov 14, 2023.



Balloon twisting activity

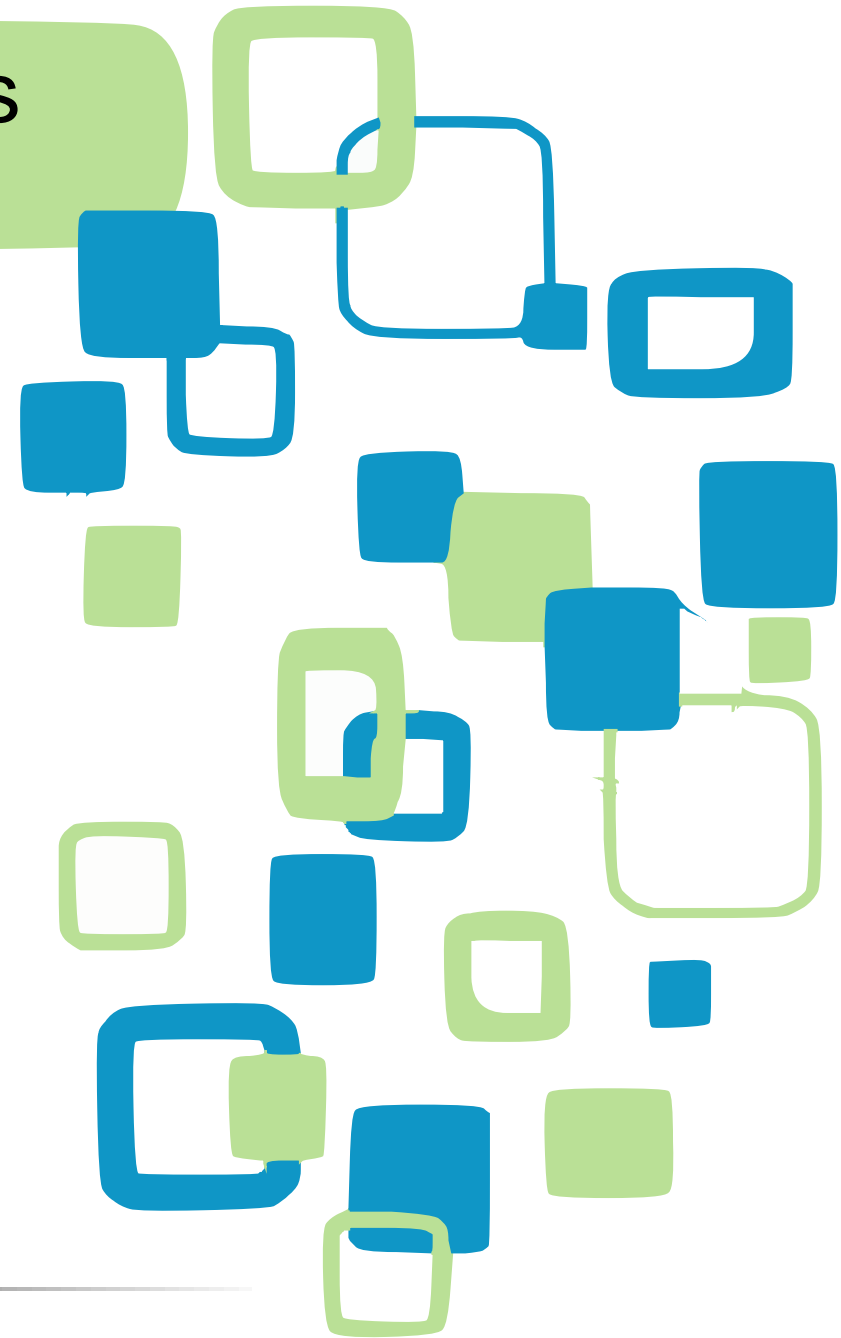
# In-Service Providers & Programs



# When families, school and communities work together children succeed.

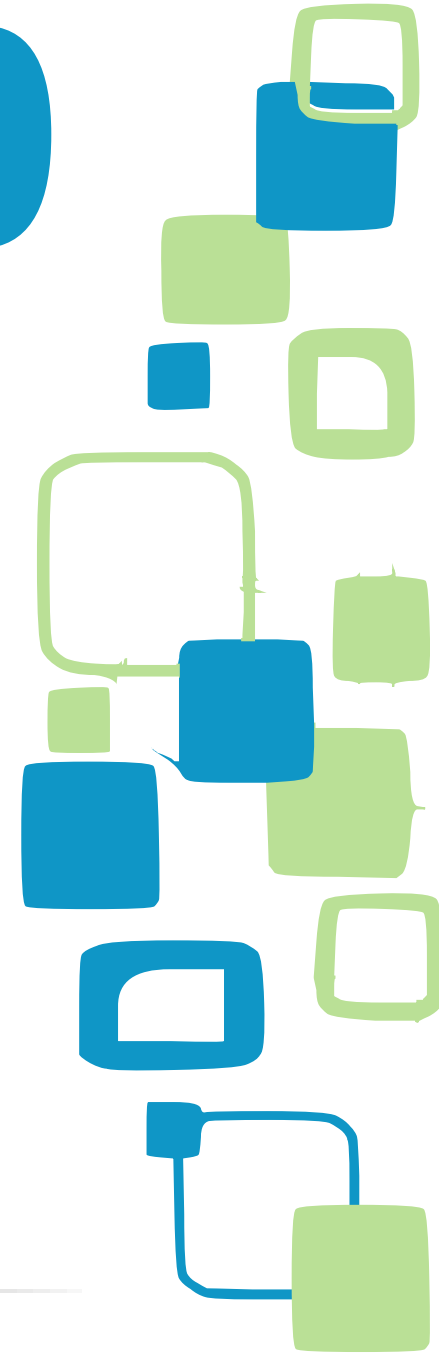
Schools' perspective from Dr. Randal Bergquist, Superintendent Crookston School District:

- Family Resource Centers help support families to provide a place where we can all work together to raise and support OUR students.
- Some parents/families do not trust schools, and having Family Resource Centers support could help bridge that trust and lessen the "gap" of school "insecurity."
- Family Resource Centers working with families, helping support them, communicating with parents, and just all around being available shows parents and students that FRC cares about them and wants them to succeed.



# School Homeless Liaison Collaboration

The school homeless liaison connects directly with the FRC around families and youth experiencing homelessness to assist the families and youth to get direct connection to housing assistance and connected to other needed services. The FRC staff work with the Schools to arrange transportation to and from their current location. This prevents students from being absent from school due to experiencing homelessness. Parents get the support they need and are encouraged to continue sending children to school. The continuity is good for the children and allows the parent to take care of other needs while children are in school.



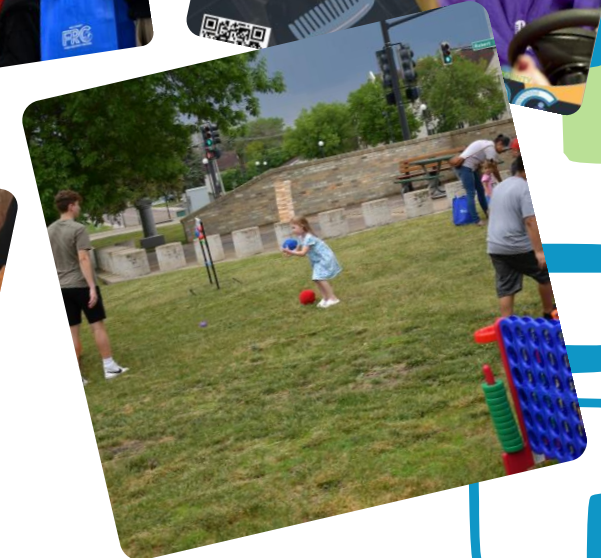


# Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

- The Parents Advisory (PAC) is a group of parents and caregivers from the community. Its purpose is to provide input to the Family Resource Center on designing programs and services that meets the needs of families. Our FRC staff have attended training to learn more about implementation of the advisory committee. We are in the process of recruiting parents right now.
- As parents access the center we learn about the programs and events that are needed in the community. For example, in one community the media reported a suspicious person in a car was following children when they left a park. Parents expressed safety concerns. The FRC put together a presentation where local Law Enforcement could come talk to children and parents about safety and ask questions.



# Family Programs and Events



# One-Year Anniversary

Annual snap-shot: 06/01/23 - 05/31/24:

- 2,209 individuals served
- Over 500 referrals made to community partners
- An average of 25 youth participate in mental health workshops monthly provided by our local mental health center
- An average of 8 to 10 families participate in our Play & Learns monthly
- Provided homeless prevention services to over 70 families at risk of homelessness in six-month span.

## 1ST YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

A great time for our community to come together and celebrate!

All are welcome!

THURSDAY  
JUNE 20TH  
3PM - 5PM



Enjoy Popsicles



Play Family Games



Celebrate Community



# Play and Learn Impact Story

Myself and my children, age 5 and 3, had a fantastic time at July's play and Learn hearing from our local police officers about stranger danger. Myself and my husband are both justice impacted individuals and our children have had the experience of officers 'taking us' away from them. My daughter had especially held onto that memory and was developing a strong fear of the police. Being able to experience law enforcement in this positive environment and learn how they help keep us safe has begun to lessen that fear and created a much more positive outlook towards law enforcement. The officer and his family staying with us and participating in the bubble making part of this play and learn also helped myself and my husband humanize our local officers, essentially lessening our fear of them as well.

POLK COUNTY  
**FRC**  
FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS

POLICE  
CROOKSTON  
STATE OF MINNESOTA  
PROTECT & SERVE  
SINCE 1879

CROOKSTON

**KIDS  
SUMMER  
EVENT**

JULY  
29th  
4PM-5PM

COME MAKE YOUR OWN BUBBLES WITH US!  
SNACKS & DRINKS PROVIDED!

HEARING FROM OUR LOCAL OFFICERS  
ABOUT SAFETY!

218-230-2926 | www.co.polk.mn.us/frc | CROOKSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY-110 N ASH ST. CROOKSTON, MN 56716

# Peer Recovery Services

## Peer Recovery services provided at the Family Resource Center

- Certified Peer Recovery Specialists help people with substance use disorders and mental health conditions. This service is a good fit at the FRC because it helps people connect with resources that can help them succeed in recovery.
- They provide support to parents to help navigate the child welfare system and school systems by attending meetings and also serve as a role model.

An example of the Peer Recovery Specialist work is she is supporting a mother with her recovery who is working towards reunification with her elementary age children. This mother is also interested in being a part of the Parent Advisory Committee at the FRC.

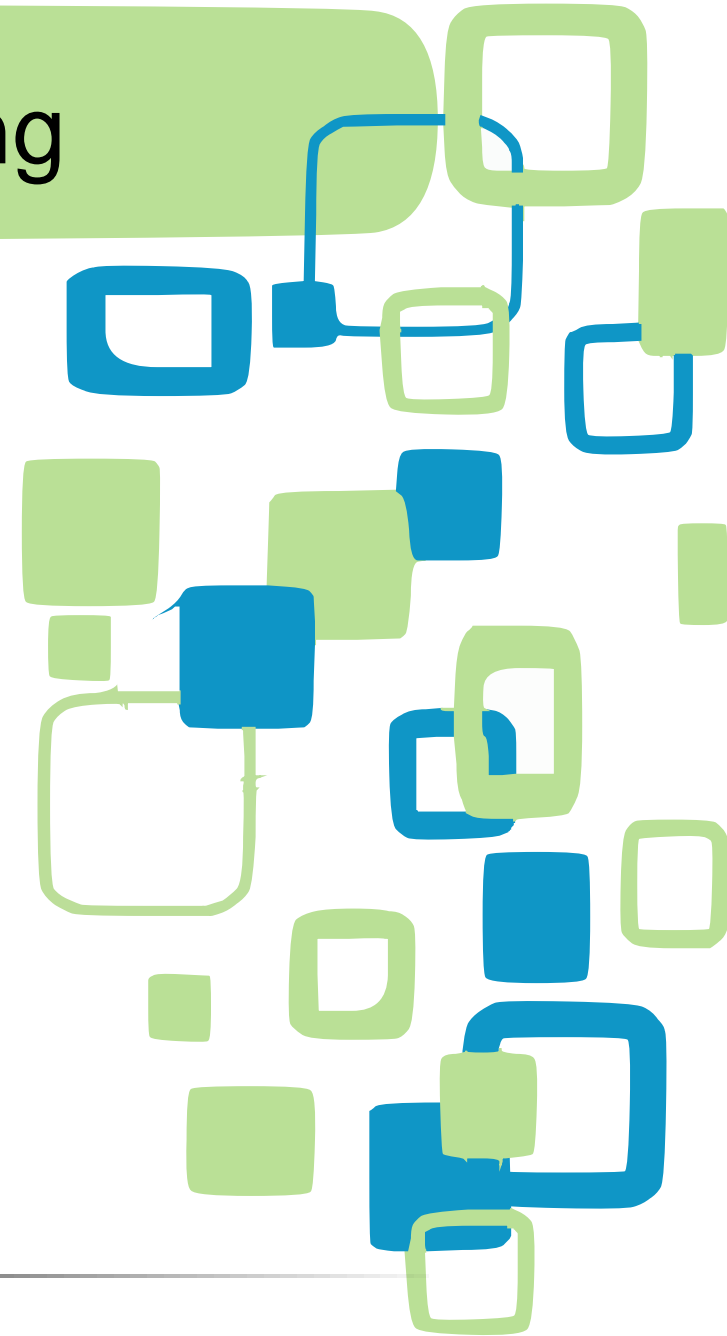


# Family Resource Center Funding

Braided funding has been the strategy used to support Polk County Family Resource Centers. The funding streams have come from the following:

- American Rescue Plan Act funding (ARPA)
- SAUER Foundation
- Opioid Settlement funding
- Homeless Prevention Aid

\*In-kind support from the Crookston Public Library and the East Grand Forks school district by providing the office space.





THANK YOU!

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Family Resource Center Cultural Navigator