

# BRING UP Nebraska

Raising strong, stable kids is a job  
for all of us.



Pinwheels for  
**PREVENTION**

**Prevent Child Abuse**  
Nebraska

Supported by the Nebraska Child Abuse  
Prevention Fund Board

## FOR FRIENDS/NEIGHBORS:

Family, friends, and neighbors are critical to thriving children and families. Social connections are positive relationships that provide emotional support and advice.

Parents need friends. Having other people to rely on is important for every parent. This means people to lean on, learn from and laugh with.

### NURTURING AND ATTACHMENT

Compassion is contagious. When parents help other parents during stressful times, they are supporting healthy attachment to their children. Nurturing and attachment comes much more easily and naturally to some parents at specific times. However, everyone can benefit by good examples, encouragement, and genuine offers of help.

For example, offering to help exhausted new parents may help increase bonding with their newborn. Neighbors who offer to organize a block potluck or backyard ball game help promote healthy social interactions.

### KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING/CHILD DEVELOPMENT

If you're looking for an awesome gift for a new parent, consider a book or app that offers practical child development information. There are plenty of excellent resources for parents on how to better relate with their children at every age and stage.

For parents of infants and young children, one good mobile app is [Staying on Track](#), a free app available through iTunes.

For families with children ages 10-15, here is an [excellent resource](#).

## PARENTAL RESILIENCE/SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Friends are imperative to both of these important protective factors. What helps make someone resilient? Getting a break from stress. And a network of friends—close and casual—are a good way to get a break.

### **Make time to connect**

This doesn't have to be expensive or complicated. Just take the initiative to plan time for your parent friends to meet—for dinner, coffee, a game, a TV show—whatever. The important thing is that friends are connecting.

### **Check-ins**

New parents, or families that are going through tough times don't always need a lot, but they will benefit by knowing you're there for them. Just check in and let them know that you're there if they need you. The simple act of reaching out lets them know they're not alone.

### **Sharing stories**

When you're having parenting challenges, but it seems like everyone else's family is perfect, you can feel very lonely—or like there's something wrong with you as a parent. Friends can help by empathizing—just listening without judgment and even without offering your opinion can help. It's much easier to deal with stress when you can share it. Some of your friends may have made it through similar struggles.

## CONCRETE SUPPORTS FOR PARENTS

As a friend and neighbor, you can offer a meal or other small resource to another family. But even if you don't provide something tangible, you can share information on what's available in the neighborhood and community.

And, if you see your friends and their families struggling, you can provide encouragement or offer to go with them to a service provider.