



## **Mission of the Crisis Nursery**

The mission of the Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery is to end child abuse and neglect and create strong, healthy families.

## **What the Crisis Nursery Offers the Community**

The Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery was founded more than 35 years ago to promote child welfare in Hennepin County. The Crisis Nursery serves as a trusted resource to offer short-term respite care to children (birth – age six) whose parents are experiencing crises such as homelessness, joblessness, domestic abuse, emotional exhaustion and extreme poverty. Trained Family Advocate staff maintain a 24/7 crisis hotline and triage calls to offer crisis counseling and community referrals. When appropriate, these Family Advocates work with parents to place children at the Nursery so they can address the immediate crisis in their life. Children are able to stay for up to three days at a time, and up to 30 days during a calendar year. Parents who place their children in the Nursery and who are allowed the time and space to resolve their crises are better positioned to set and achieve goals that will make their home a healthy, safe place. These parents also feel empowered to seek help in maintaining a nurturing home environment. Our Home Visiting programs, along with our Parent Education and Support groups, provide additional mental health resources, in-home counseling, and extended support to our State’s most vulnerable families.

## **The Nursery Way**

The Nursery Way is an intentional, developmentally- and trauma-informed intervention that uses three days of protective care and respite for both parents and children to prevent child abuse and neglect. This dedicated program also provides security, restores predictability, soothes trauma-related arousal, and provides care that helps children and strengthens families. This brief intervention assumes care that is intentional, focused, collaborative, and has expected outcomes.

## **Why a “Nursery Way”?**

Our work and the care we provide is unique because it addresses the fact that children and parents coming to the Nursery are highly stressed and vulnerable, affecting their development, reactions, and behavior. The Nursery Way acknowledges that these children and parents need a different kind of support and more focused strategies than might be used in other settings. Thus, staff need additional skills and support to do this work.

Research tells us that stress makes children and parents more open to new experiences that can be an opportunity for growth and change—thus a child’s stay at the Nursery can be part of a larger intervention to promote resiliency for both the child and the parent together and lead to further prevention of child abuse and neglect. The Nursery Way provides the bridge between research and best practices to support stressed children and families.



## **What do we know about the families served by the Crisis Nursery?**

### **Of the parents and children served by the Crisis Nursery:**

- 93% are single parenting moms
- 84% live on less than \$10,000 annually
- Approximately 41% of families are homeless
- Many struggle with mental illness
- Many have had negative experiences with 'systems'
- Many families have experienced domestic violence

## **Components of the Nursery Way**

### **We provide the parents and children with:**

- An intervention that assumes care that is intentional, focused, collaborative and transparent.
- A window of opportunity for a distressed child to use adult support to learn about social/emotional development.
- An understanding about their child(ren)'s developmental age-appropriate needs and expand their capacity to manage stress.
- Increased parental empathy and effectiveness to support parents in gaining a better understanding of their child's experiences.
- An opportunity to overcome the potential devastating, long-term effects of trauma, and improve the overall health and well-being of the family.

### **We assist staff who does this challenging work to:**

- Increase their competency in addressing symptoms of stress, and integrate theory into culturally responsive/ trauma-informed, relationship-based practices.
- Gain access to reflective observation and consultation in positive ways that helps them understanding the impact that stress/trauma has on the family using four lenses (trauma/stress lens, developmental lens, attachment lens and cultural lens).
- Promote their skills as observers and increase their ability to make meaning of what they see in the parent and child, and the interaction between the two; In hope of making their work more purposeful meaningful and impactful.
- Demonstrate trauma informed strategies to build coping skills, and promote social and emotion development in young children impacted by trauma (e.g. supporting regulation, building supportive relationships).
- How to partner with parents to increase their knowledge and understanding of their child's developmental needs. Therefore, decreasing parental stress and building the families capacity to cope with trauma.