

NURSE MADDIE

Growing up in a big family, nurse Maddie knew she always wanted to work with families and kids. While she loved her previous position as a nurse on the hospital's kidney transplant floor, she yearned for a role in which she could nurture relationships with families and feel as if she was making more of a personal impact in her patients' lives.

When she was introduced to Nurse-Family Partnership ® (NFP) at Kent County Public Health in Michigan, it was a natural fit.

Maddie stresses it's the relationship aspect of the program that really drives her and makes NFP so successful. While a 2.5-year program might sound like a lot initially, Maddie says it absolutely flies by.

"Being able to build a working relationship that lasts 2.5 years is so rewarding," says Maddie. "In a hospital you only get 12 hours with a patient. With Nurse-Family Partnership you get to build substantial, meaningful relationships so everyone thrives."

Being welcomed into the mom's home is something Maddie does not take for granted and is one of the biggest trust building aspects of the program. She understands the home is a sacred place and acknowledges it's a privilege to walk alongside a mom in her journey in her own space. "I've been able to see how hard life is on so many and together we put things into perspective. Meeting in a mom's home gives moms a feeling of comfort and really is key when it comes to building a relationship from every side."



Nurse Maddie (shown right) helps new moms like Traci (shown left) be the best moms they can be.

She finds it sometimes takes a full year for a mom to figure out how to be a parent, truly comfortable with parenting choices and confident in her role. She loves being able to move beyond that year into the space where moms learn to advocate for themselves too.

"Through pointed guidance, referrals and suggestions, I help them figure out who they want to be as a mom, and the PERSON they want to be, mom aside. It's all so complex and it's a delicate balance figuring out how to be both."

Extended family involvement is always encouraged through the NFP program as a part of building a successful network of support for moms. With a nurse at the helm offering guidance, the program is set up for the mom to lead and determine her own hopes and goals. "I think moms thrive when given unbiased support."

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Maddie lists her successes off freely including a mom who graduated high school recently after struggling and another who overcame health issues and graduated college. She also mentions challenges including helping moms leave abusive relationships, overcome housing crises, navigate the foster care system, and seek treatment for mental health issues. "I see struggles and successes and work with my moms to, persevere and evolve. Our moms deserve all of the support and all of the credit too."

Maddie notes the ending of a relationship within Nurse-Family Partnership is often bittersweet. "I've seen moms go through the process and come out on the other side stronger. I've seen their confidence built and know they can continue without me. So, while it's hard saying goodbye, being able to also say 'you've got this!' is easy. I believe in my moms and they believe in themselves."