

The Island Connection

Serving Vancouver Island Foster Parents through Peer Support, Education, Networking & ongoing Training

Baby Crib Recall

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Hanging in There

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***Foster parents foster hope.
You're there for the children.
We're here for you.***

CPC PUB #40780167



FPSS Society is CARF Accredited

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The opinions expressed herein are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the FPSS Foster Parent Support Services Society or the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

NEWSLETTER:

Is published 4 times per year and mailed free of charge to any foster home & MCFD office in the Vancouver Island region.

ADVERTISING INFORMATION:

Margaret Howley, Executive Director
Tel: 778-430-5462 / Fax: 778-430-5463
mhowley@fpsss.com

Call Us
TOLL FREE AT
1-888-922-8437
Visit our website at
www.fpsss.com

Do You Need Help or Information?

The following numbers are provided for your convenience. Please feel free to call these numbers when you need assistance.

EMERGENCY "After Hours" Duty Worker (MCFD)

Contact Number: 1-800-663-9122

- Foster Parents are encouraged to call this number in the event of an EMERGENCY or CRISIS concerning a child in their care, occurring after regular office hours.

FOSTER PARENT SUPPORT LINE (MCFD)

Call Toll Free: 1-888-495-4440

Weekdays: 4:00pm to 12:45am

Statutory Holidays & Weekends: 8:00am to 12:45am

If you have an immediate concern relating to a child in your care—we're here to help you and will provide:

- Fast response for urgent issues outside regular office hours.
- Professional support, information and consultation.

PROTOCOL SUPPORT WORKER TEAM (FPSSS)

TOLL FREE 1-888-922-8437

The FPSS Society office can arrange for a support person to help you through a Protocol Investigation.

- The support person can answer your questions, attend any interviews with you, and give you information about the investigation.

FPSS SOCIETY COORDINATORS (FPSSS)

TOLL FREE 1-888-922-8437

Weekdays 9:00am to 4:00pm—Closed Weekends and Statutory Holidays

The FPSSS Coordinators are available 5 days a week to assist you.

- There are three FPSS Society Offices—Victoria (778-430-5460), Nanaimo (250-390-9686), Campbell River (250-286-0555), and one Local Coordinator in Port Hardy (250-949-7397).
- Coordinators are available to assist foster parent in obtaining current information; support services for caregivers; on-going training and development opportunities; peer support and mentoring; and BC Foster Care Education Program information.



The Island Connection is now accepting advertising from local Vancouver Island merchants and businesses.

Do you have goods or services that would be useful and beneficial to foster parents and/or community service providers?

Why not place an advertisement in this publication—The Island Connection? Businesses extending a discount to foster families will receive a 10% discount on advertising costs.

Newsletter Distribution: all Vancouver Island foster families, ministry offices and posted to our website.

Contact Margaret Howley at 778-430-5462 or Toll Free at 1-888-922-8437 for information about our extremely affordable pricing. Some restrictions apply.

Proceeds from the sale of advertising space will be used to offset printing costs and Foster Parent Special Events.

The following is a listing of Ministry approved homes willing to provide Relief Care for foster parents. This list is for information purposes only. Foster parents must make their own arrangements *with the prior knowledge and approval of their Resource Worker.*

SOUTH Island Relief Care Listing

CAREGIVER	PHONE 250-	TYPE OF HOME
Baldwin Lori	381-6971	Regular/ 0-8 yrs
Ryan Melissa & Kevin	642-3008	Regular/ 0-5 yrs
Sabadash Sheila & Ed	360-0622	Regular/0-14 yrs
Buhr Johanna & Darren	391-1878	Regular/0-5 yrs
Morley Sandy & Bob	478-8490	Level 2/0-5 yrs
Morin Heather & Bill	479-9975	Level 1/0-14 yrs
Kitcher Julie	294-0275	Level 1 / 0-12 yrs
Dyble Rob & Susan	642-5774	Level 1/ 6-12 yrs boys
Johner Lynette	474-4083	Level 1/ 2-12 yrs
Adams Karen	652-0727	Level 2/0-12 yrs
Batten Linda & Doug	642-2579	Level 2/0-12 yrs
Moore Kelly	920-9206	Level 2/0-8 yrs
Cameron Connie & Gord	385-4673	Level 2/0-9 Girls
Case Sandy & Rob	478-2782	Level 2/0-5 yrs
Shumard Laura & Steve	478-1973	Level 2/0-5 yrs
Hayward Terri	590-5051	Level 3
Fisher Heather	885-2776	Level 3
Clifford Shandra	727-6542	Level 3/ 0-10 yrs
Gerry David & Grace	383-0818	Level 3/ 0-12 girls
Dewar Maria & Bob	478-6503	Level 3/ 5-19 boys
Henderson Carol	474-7470	Level 2/ 0-12 yrs

CENTRAL Island Relief Care

Please Note: Central Island area Foster Parents are encouraged to contact their Resource Social Worker, or the Child's Social Worker when seeking relief care from Ministry approved caregivers.

UPPER Island Relief Care Listing

Cole Jacqueline	339-6710	Level 2
Anderton Ev & Warren	338-4064	Level 3
Caine Naomi	898-8218	Level 2
Smith Karen & William	897-3688	Level 2

The Relief Foster Care Rates

Restricted (for a child aged 0 to 11 yrs)	\$36.79
Restricted (for a child aged 12 to 19 yrs)	\$40.33
Regular (for a child aged 0 to 11 yrs)	\$36.79
Regular (for a child aged 12 to 19 yrs)	\$40.33
Level 1 (all ages)	\$55.60
Level 2 (all ages)	\$68.35
Level 3 (all ages)	\$90.89

Rates effective April 1, 2009

Kid's Art Wanted!

FPSS invites children and youth to submit their artwork for inclusion in our upcoming publications, including a calendar, posters, newsletters, cards and advertisements. Children whose artwork is selected for publication will receive a \$25.00 gift certificate.

Theme 1: The Seasons
Theme 2: Togetherness, Friends, School, Home, Play
Theme 3: Artist's Choice

Colourful crayon, felt pen or painted pictures preferred.

All submissions must be on letter size (8.5 X 11.0 inches) white paper.

PARENTS: Please put your name and telephone number on the back of the picture. Please remember to include **child's FIRST name only** and age. Mail to FPSS Society, 145-735 Goldstream Avenue, V9B 2X4 or scan and email to mhowley@fpss.com.

All artwork submitted becomes the property of the FPSS Foster Parent Support Services Society.



GUIDELINE TO THE FAMILY CARE RATE—2009*

Basic Foster Care Costs (per month)	Ages 0-11 years	Ages 12-19 years
Food	135.04	183.35
Housing	149.51	183.35
Transportation	67.52	76.89
Personal Needs	14.46	17.74
Recreation	33.78	35.50
Clothing	81.98	94.63
Sub-total	482.29	591.46
Additional Family Care Costs	Ages 0-11 years	Ages 12-19 years
Education	25.72	31.85
Babysitting	86.81	57.33
Transportation	61.09	60.51
Personal Spending	41.79	54.14
Gifts/ Activities	61.09	60.51
Equipment/ Recreation	45.03	54.15
Sub-total	321.53	318.49
Total Maintenance (per month)	803.82	909.95

*The amounts in each category are estimates of what is required for most children. Actual costs will vary between categories, with some caregivers spending more in some categories but less in others. The total amounts should be sufficient to cover the actual costs for most children.

Are YOU Ready for an EARTHQUAKE in BC?

British Columbia experiences over 1,200 earthquakes a year, 300 of which occur in the lower mainland and on Vancouver island. Almost all of these earthquakes are too small to be felt. However, a stronger earthquake could occur at any time. It may happen during the day or at night, on a weekend or a workday, in any season and in any weather condition.

British Columbia is vulnerable to two types of earthquakes: those **occurring within the earth's crustal plates** and those **occurring at the interface between crustal plates**. Earthquakes that originate within a plate are seldom greater than magnitude 7.5 and typically shake for less than one minute. In contrast, earthquakes that originate between plates are usually larger than magnitude 8.0 and the shaking may last as long as 3 or 4 minutes.

British Columbia is vulnerable to the largest type of earthquake called a **"subduction" quake, which occurs between two plates**. The Cascadia Subduction Zone is located approximately 100 kilometres west of Vancouver Island and earthquakes here recur every 550 years on average. The range of recurrence, however, varies from 200 years to 900 years. The last subduction earthquake was in January 1700 – 304 years ago.

The most powerful earthquake ever recorded in Canada is a magnitude 8.1 earthquake in the Queen Charlotte Islands--and the largest earthquake likely to have occurred in Canada is the 1700 Cascadia Earthquake with an estimated magnitude of 9.0.

What's the largest earthquake possible?

The largest earthquakes recorded on earth are subduction earthquakes-- measuring magnitude 9.5 off the coast of Chile in 1960 and magnitude 9.2 in Alaska in 1964. Generally the size of an earthquake is controlled by the length of the faults on which they occur. The longer the fault--the stronger the potential earthquake. Currently, there are no known faults capable of generating a magnitude 10.0 or larger earthquake.

Information Links

http://earthquakescanada.nrcan.gc.ca/index_e.php
<http://www.em.gov.bc.ca/Mining/Geolsurv/Surficial/quake>
http://www.pep.bc.ca/hazard_preparedness/earthquake_preparedness.html

What can I expect during an earthquake?

Hear: Sometimes you'll hear a bang or rumble before the earth starts shaking--at other times there is no discernable sound to alert you. During the earthquake, it can be quite noisy as buildings shake and objects move around and bang into one another.

Feel: Often you'll feel a slight shaking or rumbling to begin with, like the feeling of a truck going by. This may suddenly increase or dissipate within seconds. Take these few seconds to **"Drop, Cover and Hold" ...Drop under some heavy furniture or into an alcove**, Cover your head and torso as best you can to prevent being hit by falling objects and Hold onto the object covering you so that you remain covered.

See: Pets may act strange or restless before an earthquake. During a stronger earthquake, you may see trees and buildings

shaking--and possibly some damage like falling bricks, signs or windows. You may even see waves moving across the ground. Very strong earthquakes are likely to cause damage to infrastructure, roads, buildings and utilities.

Smell: You may smell gas, sewage, or smoke from fires igniting following the earthquake.

Do I know how to protect myself during an earthquake?

- ✓ Know in advance where the safest spots are at home, at work or at school, so you can go to one of these places as soon as you feel a quake.
- ✓ Indoors, the safest places are beneath sturdy furniture, beside a solid inside wall, or inside an inner hallway.
- ✓ Avoid windows. Stay away from heavy objects that can fall from ceilings, shelves and cupboards, or top-heavy furniture that could tip over. Never use an elevator.
- ✓ If you're outdoors, stay in the open, away from trees, buildings and power lines.
- ✓ You could be driving when a quake hits. Stop your car away from overpasses, bridges and power lines and stay inside your vehicle.
- ✓ Once you're in a safe place protect your head and hold on until all motion stops. Lock your wheels if in a wheelchair.
- ✓ All members of the family - especially children - should know what to do when an earthquake hits. A practice drill once a year is an excellent safety measure.

What should I do when the motion stops?

- ✓ You or others may be injured. Treat yourself first and then assist others.
- ✓ If you smell gas, turn it off. Check for any small fires. Turn off the main water tap if necessary. Be aware of other possible hazards, such as broken glass or weakened walls.
- ✓ Check your phone and hang up the receiver if it is off the hook. Don't use your phone unless it is a life threatening emergency. Phone lines need to be open for emergency responders.
- ✓ If you and your family are OK, check on your neighbours to see if you can offer assistance. You can also put a large "OK" sign in your window to let emergency workers know that they can concentrate on other houses.
- ✓ A battery-operated radio or your car radio will link you to the instructions of emergency workers and news in your community.
- ✓ Gather your emergency supplies together. Keep everyone warm, well hydrated, well fed, and rested.

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Do I know how I'll contact family members if we're separated when the earthquake strikes?

- ✓ Part of your earthquake preparedness should be to decide in advance on a meeting place. It could be your home - or a place that's more central to the places you and your family work or go to school in case the earthquake strikes during a workday.
- ✓ Agree on one out-of-area person that everyone will phone to report they are safe. Get every family member in the habit of carrying identification, medical alert information and emergency phone money and numbers at all times.
- ✓ If you live alone or need extra assistance because of a disability, make arrangements in advance for someone living nearby to check in with you if there is an earthquake. Keep a whistle on hand for signalling.

Do I have emergency survival kits in my home, car and work place?

- ✓ Everyone should be prepared to be self-sufficient for 72 hours following an emergency like an earthquake.

- ✓ Important items to have in emergency kits include: three days of food and water per person, money, a battery-powered radio, flashlight, extra batteries, candles, waterproof matches, first-aid supplies, extra prescription medications, personal toiletries, cooking utensils, blankets or sleeping bags and extra clothing.

Have I taken measures to make my home safer and protect my property from a possible earthquake?

- ✓ There are a number of ways to prevent or reduce injuries and damage.
- ✓ Install latches on cupboards, and secure water tanks, top-heavy furniture, appliances or computers and other items against movement. Refer to emergency preparedness manuals that are available in bookstores and libraries.

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Provincial Emergency Program
Emergency Management BC
http://www.pep.bc.ca/hazard_preparedness/Earthquakes_2004.pdf

Attention Infant Caregivers

BABY CRIB RECALL:

Parents and caregivers are reminded to check their baby's crib regularly before using it and are instructed not to use it if any parts are loose or missing, or if there are any signs of damage. Only parts obtained from the original manufacturer must be used for repairs. Do not repair broken parts with tape, wire or rope. Contact the manufacturer if replacement parts or additional instructions are needed.

In Canada, there have been 3 reports of entrapment and 8 reports of falls from these cribs. There have also been 32 other reported incidents related to broken plastic drop-side hardware.

Full Product Description:

- This recall involves Stork Craft drop-side cribs with plastic hardware, including Stork Craft drop-side cribs that were sold with the Fisher-Price logo. This recall does not involve any cribs with metal rod drop-side hardware. The cribs were sold in various styles and finishes. The manufacture date, model number, and crib name are printed on the assembly instruction sheet that is attached to the mattress support board.
- Stork Craft drop-side cribs: The recall includes products with manufacture and distribution dates between January 1993 and October 2009.
- Stork Craft drop-side cribs with Fisher-Price logo: The recall also includes products with manufacture dates between October 1997 and December 2004. The Fisher Price logo can be found on the teething rail, in the manufacturer's instructions, and on the assembly instruction sheet attached to the mattress support board. The logo is also on the end panels of the Twinkle-Twinkle and Crystal crib models.



For more information on crib requirements in Canada, as well as the safe use of cribs, see [Health Canada's http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/cons/crib-lits/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/cons/crib-lits/index-eng.php) *Crib Safety Booklet*. For more information on safe sleeping practices for infants, see [Health Canada's http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/advisories-avis/aw-am/sleep-sommeil-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/advisories-avis/aw-am/sleep-sommeil-eng.php) *Consumer Information - Safe Sleep Practices for Infants*.

Area Coordinator **UPDATES:**

SOUTH Island Area UPDATE

Prepared by Dan Malone

Contact Info: 778-430-5460 or svicoordinator@fpsss.com

Toll free: 1-888-922-8437

In the wake of the Haiti Earthquake, this is a good reminder that we all should be prepared for an emergency. The Ministry of Children and Family Development have a document called "Emergency Information for Foster Parents", if you would like a copy of this please contact Dan at 778-430-5460 or svicoordinator@fpsss.com.

Children and Video Games

On January 20th, Leanna Madill came and spoke to 11 foster parents on Children and Video games. This was an interactive information session on video games. She presented all negative and positive issues with videogames and some of the common misconceptions. This was a well received and gave parents lots information to think about.

Youth Team Learning Event

On January 28th, the Youth team had a learning event. Three speakers: Mona Carlson from the Métis Society, Regan Haspect from Youth Detox, and Corrina Sparrow from Surrounded by Cedar.

It's A Girls World Video Presentation

There were three people in attendance on February 3rd for this video presentation on girls and bullying. Handouts included tools for children, parents, and teachers.

Sexually Intrusive Children workshop

On February 2nd, 14 foster parents attended the "Sexually Intrusive Children" workshop, facilitated by Gerry McDougal. Tickets were purchased by Foster Parent Support Service Society for this all day workshop with lots of information on what are appropriate and problematic sexual behaviors are for children of all ages.

E-mail Distribution List

If you would like to receive notification of workshops, meetings and news of interest to foster parents via e-mail please contact Dan Malone, South Island Area Coordinator at 778-430-5460 or svicoordinator@fpsss.com

Ongoing Training

We continue to look for relevant training available in our community. If you know of training that might be beneficial to caregivers, please contact Dan Malone at 778-430-5460 or forward them by e-mail to svicoordinator@fpsss.com.

CENTRAL Island Area UPDATE

Prepared by Mem Xavier

Contact Info: 250-390-9686 or cicoordinator@fpsss.com

Toll free: 1-888-922-8437

Spring, a season of new beginnings. Spring, a time of newness and awakenings in nature. When seeds sprout, animals return from hibernation, trees bud and the earth transitions from the cold sleep of winter to the bright sun of summer. Spring, a time of transitions. Have you ever thought about the number of transitions a child has in his/her lifetime? Come to think about it...have you ever thought about **the number of transitions that occur during a year of a child's life?** Let's see, for a school age child, it could be the transition from home to daycare or school. Changing grade level may involve a new teacher,



new friends, and depending on the grade level, possibly a new school. When summer begins more changes are soon to follow; more time at daycare, summer camps, swimming lessons and a change in daily routines.

Regardless of how big or small the change in a child's life is, stress may occur resulting in undesirable behaviours and emotional upset. As caregivers, it is very important to help the children in care to look at transition in a positive manner.

The transitions that children and youth in foster care encounter are **much more stressful than "normal" transitions other children** experience. Yet, the children are expected to behave as though nothing has happened to them. They are expected to like the new home they have been placed in. They are expected to like and get along with their new family. Lastly, they are expected to trust that **what is happening to them is "in their best interest"**.

As an adult, would we trust? Or would we question? Would we take things in stride? Or would we be angry? You might either lash out or **seclude yourself from those around you...shouldn't we expect the same from the children we open our homes to.**

As new children and youth come into your care, remember that no matter how difficult a situation they are coming from, they love their family and that familiar is always more comfortable. Help make a transition into your home less stressful by offering encouragement and support. Choose your battles and always be as positive as you can **about the child's natural family. During the period of time the child is in your care, no matter how long or short, you have the ability to make an impression that may last a lifetime.**

2009 Cowichan Valley Christmas Party

I would like to express my enduring gratitude and admiration to the foster parents and the Duncan MCFD staff who organized an amazing Christmas party for the Cowichan Valley foster children and for some of their natural families. Especially Claudia McIntyre, Francis Nuttgens, Katarina Dittus, Thomas Crossman and Roz Pringle, without their efforts this would not have been a possibility. At the 2009 Cowichan Valley Christmas party for the Foster Children there were an estimated 67 children and over 100 people attended.

Island Area Coordinator UPDATES continued:

Every child received a gift, and had their picture taken with Santa and Mrs. Claus. The gifts were donated by friends and various businesses. Kelli Etheridge from Kelli Etheridge photography donated her time and did such an incredible job of photographing the children with Santa, **without Kelli's kindness and generosity the Christmas party would not have been the same.** The most memorable moment of the Christmas party for me was seeing the natural parents of 10 children who are living in different foster homes sitting together with Santa for a family portrait; the parents were overwhelmed with joy and gratitude. It was something I felt really proud to have **been a part of and can't wait to start planning for the 2010 Cowichan Valley Foster Children Christmas Party.**

Emergency Preparedness

Due to the recent and tragic disaster brought on by many large earthquakes in Haiti, it is now more than ever, extremely important to make sure we are all well prepared for any kind of emergency. Vancouver Island is very similar to Haiti; it has been predicted for some time now that we are due for a much larger earthquake than the ones suffered in Haiti. Although our building codes and basic infrastructures are more developed it is not safe to assume that the services and resources needed to deal with such a catastrophic event will be available within the first 72 hours. In addition earthquakes are only 1 of 22 hazards identified by the City of Nanaimo. **Are you prepared?** FPSS Society will be hosting free workshops in Central Vancouver Island with guest speakers from the emergency program. Please join us in ensuring you and your family are well prepared for any emergency.

UPPER Island Area UPDATE

Prepared by Judy Hollywood Bonnet
Contact Info: 250-286-0555 or
uicoordinator@shaw.ca
Toll free: 1-888-922-8437

Spring is here! Put down those gardening tools and take a moment to catch up on events in the Upper Island over the past few months.

Partnership Meetings:

The Campbell River and Area Partnership meeting was held Jan 21st. Great turnout, it was nice to see so many foster parents and social workers in attendance. The sub-committee presented its report and recommendations. Foster parents

Changes to the Delivery of Optical Benefits for Children in Care and Youth on Youth Agreements.

Effective January 1st, 2010, there have been changes in the delivery of optical benefits for children in care and youth in Youth Agreements. Please note that there are no changes to the funding limits for optical benefits.

The change is intended to simplify the process of accessing optical, dental, and orthodontic benefits, as each of these benefits will be accessible with the use of a single Pacific Blue Cross card. The new cards will be distributed to foster families prior to January 1st, 2010.

The optical funding limits will remain as follows:

Up to \$300 per year for standard frames and lenses, and;

Up to \$450 per year if high-index lenses are required.

For more information, please see the Health Supports for Children in Care and Youth Agreements Guide, available at www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/foster/pdf/health_supports_cic.pdf or contact the Medical Benefits Program at 1-877-210-3332.



interested in receiving a copy of the report and the partnership meeting minutes can contact me at uicoordinator@shaw.ca. Thanks go out to the resource team for connecting with the foster parents and encouraging their participation.

The Comox Valley and Area Partnership Meeting was on January 27th.

This was a combination partnership meeting **and procrastinators' Christmas party.** Thanks to all who attended and brought food to share. Yum, yum! Also, thanks to Ian for his report on a variety of collaborative initiatives MCFD is engaged in with various Comox Valley community partners. There was a request from the resource team that foster parents contact their resource workers with any changes to their email addresses. Foster parents can contact me at uicoordinator@shaw.ca if they would like a copy of the minutes.

Training:

North Island FASD Info Session was held in December. We thank Diane Bell for her presentation.

CR Foster Parent Alliance:

The November group was rescheduled to February 10th with guest speaker Mary Catherine Bellamy, FASD Key Worker, speaking on Advocating for Your Child in School. There is a hand-out package available from this event. Foster parents can contact me for a copy. The next CR Alliance meeting is scheduled for May 26th, from 10:00am to 1:00pm. Foster parents

can bring general questions and concerns to a Resource Team social worker. Also there has been a request to set up child-minding so foster parents can attend this event. If there is enough interest something could be arranged. Please call me with your ideas or for details.

NI Foster Parent Support Gatherings:

These events continue in Port Hardy on the last Thursday of the month. Parts One and **Two of the "A Safe Environment for Children in Care" series were presented in January and February.** Be sure you call Valerie Ramchuk to register for the final session **entitled "A Time and Place for Healing". Congratulations! We want to say "well done" to a Port Hardy teen and his foster family.** This young person has worked hard to become a role model in his community. He was honoured to be selected as an Olympic Torch Barrier in Port Hardy in January!

Communication...Join the Email List!

ATTENTION new foster parents and C&YSN foster parents! If you wish to receive email notification of local training events and news of interest to foster parents please email your Upper Island Area Coordinator to join the foster parent email distribution list. You can also request a welcome Gift Bag **containing information about FPSS Society's programs and services.** If you are no longer providing foster care and would like to be removed from our email list please contact me. I can be contacted at 250-286-0555 or uicoordinator@shaw.ca.

South Island News & Events

FASD Caregiver Support Group
 Wednesday, March 3rd, 9:30am to 11:00am
 Wednesday, April 7th, 9:30am to 11:00am
 FPSS Society Office, 145-735 Goldstream Avenue.
 All caregivers are welcome to attend these support sessions!
 For more information please contact Dan Malone at 778-430-5460

Safe Babies Workshop

Wednesday, March 23rd, 9:00am to noon
 FPSS Society Meeting Room, 145-735 Goldstream Avenue
 All foster parents welcome!



Caring for the Caregiver
 9:00am to 10:15am
 Facilitator: Dana Kinney
 Aboriginal Cultural Awareness for Caregivers of Babies
 10:30am to noon
 Facilitator: Corrina Sparrow

Wednesday, April 29th, 7:00pm to 9:00pm
 Speaker or Event to be announced.
 Please watch your email for details

Foster Parent/MCFD Advisory Meeting
 Tuesday, March 2nd, 9:30am to 11:30am
 FPSS Society Office, 145-735 Goldstream Avenue.

- Our local executive meets with Ministry Staff to discuss issues and concerns that are presented to them by foster parents. If you have anything to you would like added to the agenda please contact Sandy Case at 250- 478-2782.

Foster Parent Coffee/Support Morning
 MCFD Office 345 Wale Road in the Youth Room

- Thursday, March 4th 9:30am to 11:30am
- Thursday, March 18th 9:30am to 11:30am
- Thursday, April 8th 9:30am to 11:30am
- Thursday, April 22nd 9:30am to 11:30am

Take a break from it all and please come and join us for coffee, tea, goodies and a great time to share the joys of fostering, meet other foster parents, and collaborate on problem solving. On-site babysitting is provided.

Foster Parent/Resource Team meeting
 MCFD office 345 Wale Road (2nd floor boardroom)

- Monday, March 15th, 9:30am to 11:30am
- Monday, April 12th, 9:30am to 11:30am

This is a chance for all foster parents to meet with resource social workers and be informed of ministry updates, staffing changes, policy changes, foster parents questions answered, and at each meeting there will be a different guest speaker. On-site babysitting is provided.

South Island
 Foster Parents Association (SIFPA)
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
 Monday, April 26th 7:00pm to 9:00pm
 Place to be announced via email

- * *Please come and join us for a fun evening.* We will hold a short AGM followed by an evening of socializing, food, and door prizes.
- * We are always looking for people to join this dynamic group of foster parents either as committee members or as a casual voice.
- * SIFPA meets every two months and plans the Back to School Picnic, the Halloween party, the Christmas party, and the Easter Egg Hunt as well as hosts clothing exchanges, coffee parties, and information sessions.

Annual Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday, April 3rd—12:00 noon to 2:00pm
 GOLDSTREAM PARK PICNIC SHELTER

This is a great opportunity to meet new foster parents and to connect with other foster families. Please bring your whole family and join us for a hot dog, chips, and juice AND an EASTER EGG HUNT. We will also have crafts and face painting. Remember to bring change for parking and to dress for the weather.

Call Nicola at 250-744-4119 for more information.



Lifebook Work Session

FPSS Society Meeting Room
 145-735 Goldstream Avenue

Show and Tell

Wednesday, March 31st, 7:00pm to 9:00pm
 Please bring your Life books to this work session and be prepared to share your "Hassle Free" approach/ideas/strategies to share with others.

Scrapbook Layout Workshop

Wednesday, April 21st, 9:30am to 11:30am
 Facilitator: Rachel Christensen

Bring your pictures in and come do an activities page in your children's life book (all paper supplied)
 Remember your pictures. Door Prizes!

To register please contact Dan at 778-430-5460 or
svicoordinator@fpss.com

A Fond Farewell for Thomas Crossman, FPSSS Protocol Support Team Worker

Thomas is taking a well-earned sabbatical from his volunteer protocol support work. We have been extremely fortunate in having Thomas as part of the Protocol Team for almost 10 years, and we are very thankful for his generosity of time, energy and spirit. While Thomas will no longer be working the frontline of Protocol Support, he has graciously agreed to share his knowledge and experience in a Mentoring and Training role with our Team.

At a recent Protocol Support Team meeting in the Duncan Craig Street MCFD office, we had an opportunity to present Thomas with an Appreciation Certificate and the gift of a memory frame to acknowledge his contribution to foster parents. Team Leader Lynda Schofield had many kind words, and also presented Thomas with a gift of appreciation. There were about 25 FPSSS, MCFD and foster parents in attendance.

WANTED: Protocol Support Workers

FPSS Society is currently recruiting volunteer Protocol Support Workers for the Vancouver Island Region, particularly Nanaimo and Ladysmith area.

Are you ... • An experienced foster parent? • A good listener?
• Discreet and objective? • Interested in the child welfare system?

If so, then you may want to consider joining our Protocol Support Team. Training and out-of-pocket expenses are provided. Please call 1-888-922-8437 to learn more.

Thank you, Thomas, for Everything!

Foster parents are very special people, and as I'm sure we all know, these Rare Birds are hard to find.

Foster parents who take on the role of Protocol Support Workers are *extraordinarily* special people – who are even harder to find – these are rare Rare Birds, indeed. Thomas Crossman is one of these.

Thank you, Thomas, for everything.

- ~ For being there for your fellow caregivers
- ~ For taking precious time from your busy life to offer your support
- ~ For your empathy
- ~ For your objectivity
- ~ For your knowledge, experience and wisdom
- ~ For your sense, your sensibility and perhaps most importantly, your sensitivity.

Thank you, Thomas, thank you for everything.

We're going to miss you, Buddy and we wish you all the best in the years to come.

Sincerely—VI foster parents and the FPSS Society

What Can You Do About Organizational Change Resistance?

People resist change for various reasons such as:

- Old and routine is known and comfortable
- Not knowing the reason for change
- Not knowing what is expected of them
- Not knowing how to change
- Perception of imbalance between giving and receiving
- Taking change personally!
- Fear of getting hurt by the change
- Need time to integrate and get comfortable with the change

Tips for dealing with your own resistance to changes:

- Problems are a natural side effect of the change process
- Controlling your emotions increases your control over the situation
- **You're either part of the solution or part of the problem**
- Management has to make some tough decisions, and it is impossible to keep everyone happy
- If the organization is changing you need to be changing too
- You have the power to choose your own response to change

Tips for dealing with other people's resistance:

- Resistance is a natural human reaction. It is healthy and serves a purpose
- We all resist changes that we do not perceive as safe
- Resistance is always accompanied by emotions
- To overcome resistance, we have to work through the underlying emotions
- Resistance can be acted out in different ways such as outburst of anger, withdrawal, persisting negative behaviours, etc

- We can deal with resistance effectively or ineffectively
- Ineffective strategies to deal with resistance can produce the appearance of results but the moment the pressure is gone the process is reversed
- Ineffective strategies to deal with resistance create mistrust and low moral, which are detrimental to sustainable change
- Effective strategies to deal with resistance often require patience, consume more time and energy but produce sustainable change, build trust and support collaborative behaviours

Ineffective Strategies to Deal with Resistance:

- Discount the resistance
- Pressure to conform
- Persuasion techniques
- Threats

Effective Strategies to Deal with Resistance:

- Create safety to express concerns
- Listen and encourage expressions
- Hear it all
- Ask for specifics when you hear generalities
- Ask for input in finding alternative ways to meet the same objective
- Get agreements
- Follow through and follow up

Excerpt from:

<http://www.organizational-change-resistance.com>

Central Island News & Events

COWICHAN VALLEY

Coffee Group/ Workshop

Monday, March 22nd 10:00am to noon

2471 Beverly Street, Duncan

Alexander Centre (behind the elementary school)

Coffee group/workshop with guest speaker Elaine Ashby

As requested at the Partnership meeting in December, a look at what is covered under the caregivers insurance rider.

Monday, April 19th 10:00am to noon

2471 Beverly Street

Alexander Centre (behind the elementary school)

- For more information or to suggest a specific topic you would like to discuss please contact Mem at 250-390-9686.

Life Books Sessions

Tuesday, March 23rd 10:00am to noon

Tuesday, April 27th 10:00am to noon

2411 Trillium Terrace, Duncan

Studio 11 Designs

- **Come and work on your lifebooks with Linda Giles! Linda's store** has many great scrap booking supplies, and Linda is very helpful and creative.

NANAIMO AREA

Workshops/coffee groups

CVFASD Action Team Presentation

Monday, March 15th 10:00am to noon

102-6421 Applecross Road, Nanaimo

FPSS Society Meeting Room

- The Cowichan Valley FASD Action Team will be presenting a skit for Nanaimo caregivers on what it means to live with FASD. The presentation involves 5-6 characters in different roles (teacher, foster parent, sibling, person living with FASD, etc.) as they relate to the disorder.
- The presentation will identify the challenges, and frustrations associated with FASD. It will also highlight greater understanding and willingness to work towards strategies. The presentation was written and will be acted out by people who are actually living with FASD.
- There will be a time for discussion, questions and answers after the presentation.

Emergency Preparedness

Monday, April 12th 10:00am to noon

102-6421 Applecross Road

FPSS Society Meeting Room

- Join Karen Lindsey, the Nanaimo Emergency Coordinator to identify over 20 different emergency hazards in the Nanaimo area, including earthquakes.
- This workshop will cover what you need to know to be prepared for the first 72 hours of a major emergency, and how to prepare an emergency kit that will give you and your family a better chance of survival.
- Brochures and other information will also be handed out free of charge to all caregivers.

NEW Child and Youth Mental Health Series

SOCIAL SKILLS

Module 4 of 5

Wednesday, March 17th

9:30am – noon or 6:00pm – 8:30pm

FPSS Society meeting room

102-6421 Applecross Road, Nanaimo

The INTAKE PROCESS For Referring a Child to the Child & Youth Mental Health Team, and More!

Module 5 of 5

Wednesday, April 14th

9:30am to noon or 6:00pm to 8:30pm

FPSS Society meeting room

102-6421 Applecross Road, Nanaimo

Created especially for foster parents, this series of modules covers various child mental health topics. Child and youth mental health clinicians will be hosting interactive presentations for caregivers in central Vancouver Island.

If you attend all five modules you will be presented with a certificate from the CYMH Team. However, you are more than welcome to attend select modules of your choice.

The modules will be available in the morning and evening for your convenience. We have already covered three modules; depression, anxiety, and behavioural **management. You won't want to miss the remaining** modules; social skills, and the intake process for referring a child to the Child and Youth Mental Health Team.

Registration is a must for this event. Please register with Mem at (250) 390-9686 or by email to cicoordinator@fpss.com for either session as soon as possible. Hope to see you there!

Safe Babies Support Groups/Workshops

Safe Babies Caregivers will be notified by phone and e-mail regarding upcoming workshops.

Thursday, March 11th 9:30am to noon
and

Thursday, April 29th 9:30am to noon

102-6421 Applecross Road, Nanaimo

FPSS Society Meeting Room

Nanaimo Life Books

Thursday, March 25th 10:00am to noon

and

Thursday, April 22nd 10:00am to noon

102-6421 Applecross Road, Nanaimo

FPSS Society Meeting Room

- **Please bring your child's Lifebook, photos and creativity for** some fun at our monthly scrapbooking group.
- Call Mem for more information.

Central Island News & Events

PARKSVILLE & AREA

Parksville Support Group
For support group information, please contact Bonnie Lamarche at 250-954-4737.

PORT ALBERNI & AREA

Port Alberni Support Groups
Emergency Preparedness Workshop
The Alberni Valley United Church on Church Street
Thursday, March 18th, 9:30am to noon.

- **Please join Laurie L'Heureux, the Port Alberni Emergency Coordinator** to identify the different emergency Hazards in the Port Alberni area, including earthquakes.
- This workshop will cover what you need to know to be prepared for the first 72 hours of a major emergency, and how to prepare an emergency kit that will give you and your family a better chance of survival. Brochures and other information will also be handed out free of charge to all caregivers.

Foster Families Needed!

VICTORIA, DUNCAN LADYSMITH & NANAIMO Foster Info Session



VICTORIA

Tuesday, March 2nd— 6:30pm
Juan de Fuca Library
1759 Island Hwy

DUNCAN, LADYSMITH
& NANAIMO AREA

Call 250-390-9686 for date & location
Call toll free 1-888-922-8437
for more information

www.fosterhope.ca

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FPSS Foster Parent Support Services Society



Road Safety Cycling

Here's the deal. If you're going to ride a bike, you need to observe a few rules to keep you safe from injuries:

Do a bike check.

Before you start pedaling, make sure your bicycle is in good condition - ask a parent or adult to give it a check-up. Are your brakes working? Is the seat secure and the right height? Your bike should also have a bell, light and a reflector so other people on the road can hear and see you.

Gear up. Wear a bike helmet.

It will protect your head in case you fall. And check to make sure it is on properly. You want the helmet to be level on your head, not tilted back or sideways and you want the strap to be snug. Just do a two-finger salute. Your fingers should cover the space between your helmet and eyebrows, as well as the space between your chin and the chin strap.

Follow the rules of the road.

Learn the rules of the road and obey them. Like people who drive cars, cyclists must ride in the same direction as the road traffic, stop at red lights and stop signs, use

signals, and yield to pedestrians. Understanding these rules will also help you tell ahead of time what other people on the road - cars and other cyclists - will likely be doing.

Use hand signals.

Using the proper hand signals, tell other users of the road if you are planning to turn left or right, or if you are about to stop.

Slow down.

Don't speed - it's very dangerous, especially on wet, slippery roads.

Plan your route.

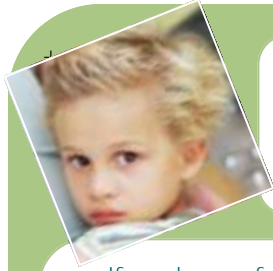
Before you head out, map out the safest route with as few cars as possible. Whenever you can, use bike lanes or paths, and follow the buddy system: always ride with at least one friend. And make sure you tell someone - a parent or another adult - where you're going and what route you're taking.

Ride single-file.

When cycling with your friends, ride in a line, not side by side. This will help keep you farther away from cars.

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/injury/en/route4-eng.php>

Upper Island News & Events



Becoming a Foster Parent in the Comox Valley

If you have a friend, co-worker, neighbour, or childcare provider interested in becoming a foster parent in the Comox Valley please have them contact Donna Rushton, RSW at 250-334-5820 to learn how, and to find out about up-coming Foster Parent Information Sessions.

COMOX VALLEY & AREA

Foster Parent Network (FPN)

Mark Your Calendars!

The 3rd Wednesday of each month

Wednesday, March 24th, 10:00am to noon

Lewis Centre's Tsolum Building (tentative)

This is a chance for foster parents to connect with one another in a positive, supportive, informative and fun atmosphere with others who can relate.

- Please contact the Judy Hollywood Bonnet Upper Island Area Coordinator at 250-286-0555 or e-mail uicoordinator@shaw.ca for more information and/or to help organize. Children are welcomed.

Foster Parent/MCFD Partnership Meeting

MCFD Boardroom

Foster parents will receive a notice in the mail confirming the date and time of the next meeting.

- All foster parents, social workers, MCFD support staff and C&Y Mental Health are invited to participate in the partnership meetings.
- This is an opportunity to address your concerns, receive updates, discuss fostering trends and learn.

Foster Parent Relief Care Listing & Information Package

Jill Beech in Courtenay and Brad Hercina in Campbell River are foster parents who have kindly agreed to maintain a local relief care listing of approved and non-approved homes for foster parents to access.

- Please call Jill at 250-338-1261 or Brad at 250-202-1207 to access these lists.

"Foster Parents Guide to Relief Care"

To learn more on how to recruit, screen and orientate relief caregivers while meeting the Foster Parent Standards on alternative care arrangements, please call your resource social worker or the Upper Island Area Coordinator at 250-286-0555 for your copy of the "Foster Parents Guide to Relief Care" package.

Safe Babies Caregiver Meeting (4th Tuesday every second month)
Tuesday, March 23rd, 10:00am to noon

Topic: Aboriginal Infant Development

For location of meeting please contact Mary Catherine Bellamy, Upper Island Safe Babies Coordinator, at 250-703-6135.

This is an opportunity for Safe Babies caregivers to network, support, brainstorm and learn about emerging issues in caring for infants who have been exposed to drugs and alcohol.

CAMPBELL RIVER

Become a Foster Parent in Campbell River



FOSTER PARENT INFORMATION SESSIONS

Call Lisa at 250-286-7542 for date & time

MCFD Office, 929 Ironwood Road

If you know anyone interested in becoming a foster parent, please encourage them to attend the Foster Parent Information Session or invite them to call Lisa Falk, RSW, at 250-286-7542 to learn more about fostering in Campbell River.

Safe Babies Caregivers Support Meeting

(Third Tuesday each month)

This is an opportunity for Safe Babies caregivers to network, support, brainstorm and learn.

Tuesday, March 16th, 10:00am to noon

- Topic: Aboriginal Infant Development

Tuesday, April 20th, 10:00am to noon

- Topic: Working with Birth Families

The Robron Centre, 740 Robron Street

The Family Place Room (A127)

- For more information please contact Mary Catherine Bellamy, Upper Island Safe Babies Coordinator, at 250-703-6135



Upper Island News & Events

Joint Education Committee meeting
Meets monthly, 9:00am to 10:30am
MCFD office on 929 Ironwood Road

- Foster parents and social workers are invited to participate in these meetings where we identify and plan training events for the fostering community.
- Please contact Upper Island Area Coordinator at 250-286-0555 for up-coming dates.

FASD Caregiver/Foster Parent Support Group
(First Tuesday of the month), 10:00am to noon
The Robson Centre, 740 Robson Street
The Family Place Room (A127)
Tuesday, March 9th (note second Tuesday this month only)

- Topic: Sensory Integration Supports for Children and Youth with FASD
- Tuesday, April 6th, 10:00am to noon
- Topic: Education supports for Children and Youth with FASD

All foster parents caring for children affected by FASD are invited to join other caregivers for support, learning and exchanging parenting strategies. Refreshments provided.

For more information please call Mary Catherine Bellamy, FASD Key Worker, at 250-203-0488.

First Aid Training *Are You Interested in Taking Emergency First Aid Training?*

Visit www.nic.bc.ca or www.sja.bc.ca to view the training schedules in your area.

The FPSS Society will subsidize first aid training for foster parents so the cost to foster parents will ultimately be \$25 after proof of payment.

Please contact the Judy Hollywood Bonnet, Upper Island Area Coordinator at 250-286-0555 or uicoordinator@shaw.ca for more information on this subsidy.



North Island News & Events

Becoming a Foster Parent in North Island

If you have a friend, co-worker, neighbour, or childcare provider interested in becoming a foster parent in North Vancouver Island please have them contact Salla Sukow, RSW at 250-949-8011 to learn how, and to find out about up-coming Foster Parent Information Sessions.

N.I. Foster Parent Support Gathering
(Last Thursday of each month)
Thursday, March 25th, 6:00pm to 8:00pm
Port Hardy – location to be confirmed

Valerie Ramchuk, N.I. Behavioural Consultant for Caregivers, facilitates these evening gatherings where foster parents can network, learn, support and be supported.

- Please contact Valerie at 250-956-3134 to confirm location, to suggest a topic or a guest speaker.

Welcome Books

Welcome Books is a simple transitional tool introducing a child or youth to their new foster home. Welcome Books contain pictures of where the child will eat, sleep, play and rest along with captions about your home, your family, your interests, your pets and your neighbourhood.

- If the idea of making a Welcome Book appeals to you please contact the Upper Island Area Coordinator at 250-286-0555 or e-mail uicoordinator@shaw.ca for more details.

Are You Interested in a Clothing Exchange?

- Foster parents have expressed an interest in participating in a clothing exchange. Just bring in **some clean, gently used clothing that you've grown tired of or out of**—for the whole family—and you can swap with other foster parents. Any items left over will be donated to a **local women's charity**.
- Please contact Jackie Kervin, NI Local Coordinator, at 250-949-7397 if you would like to do so. **If there's enough interest then we will start planning!**



Vancouver Island Regional PARTNERSHIP Meeting Summary:

VI Regional Partnership Meetings are held 2 to 3 times per annum, with participants from throughout the region—foster parents, FPSSS, MCFD, and community agencies. These meetings provide an opportunity for open and frank round table discussion regarding foster parenting; infants, children and youth in care; on-going training; ministry changes and policies; issues and concerns; suggestions and possible solutions.

The following is a summary of the discussions/decisions of the Fall meeting. The next Partnership Meeting is scheduled for March of 2010.

CLBC Update—Pam Miller CSM

The target date for services to transfer over to the MCFD is Oct 31/09 with moving on Nov 2nd and 3rd. Service plan submitted to province regarding how the VI region plans to deliver the services based on the governments guiding principles. This includes using the case management model instead of facilitators. How the model is delivered in each office will vary dependent upon the number of children (about 70 in Central and North Island), long term special needs agreements, case load, number of staff transferring over, etc. The details have not been ironed out and the transition will be a hectic time. Foster Parents are welcome to contact their Community Service Manager (CSM) with their questions.

Protocol Report Summary Update—Curtis Cameron MCFD

Curtis Cameron presented the handout “Quality of Care Reviews and Investigations in Foster Homes – Annual Report 2008 for VI Region”. **Suggestions for additional information to track:** How many foster parents who have completed the BCFCE Program are involved in QOC’s? Do these foster parents access relief care? Do these foster parents access support?

Draft Post Service Survey—Terrena O’Connor and Margaret Howley

The draft handout “Post Service Survey” was developed by the MCFD and the FPSS Society to identify commonalities in the reasons why people quit fostering; to determine if these reasons can be mitigated, decreased or eliminated; to **determine the caregiver’s level of satisfaction with their fostering experience;** to gain a regional perspective on issues; and, to provide an opportunity for foster parents to provide feedback. This **acknowledges the foster parent’s skill and the services they have provided.** This will

aid with the retention and recruitment of caregivers. This survey will not replace the **social worker’s exit interview.** The target completion time including compilation will be January 2010 and will be reviewed at the March meeting. The survey would be available through Survey Monkey, hard copy, conducted in person by MCFD RSW or FPSSS Coordinator and available on-line. CSMs will take the document to the management team.

Beds and Homes in other communities as Resources—Pam Miller

This is a case-by-case scenario and foster parents needs to communicate their empty bed concerns with their RSW and, if necessary, the Team Leader about future placement prospects including out of town options should that team be contacted by another community looking for available **beds.** The paramount concern is the child’s best interest and if they are living in a different town it is harder to access family visits, schools, friends, doctor and counseling appointments, decreased in-person contact with RSW when a crisis arises.

Safe Babies Program Up-date by Margaret and Terrena

The Safe Babies Program will be rewritten - MCFD/FPSSS/VIHA partnership. Should be completed in Spring 2010.

Welcome Books—Erica Beech

The committee was provided with an activity plan for foster parents to compile their welcome book, an article and sample pages. View sample pages on the Iowa Foster & Adoptive Parent Association website at www.ifapa.org/resources. If you want Welcome Books in your area contact Judy at 250-286-0555 or uicoordinator@shaw.ca for more information.

Definition of Partnership:

- a cooperative relationship between people or groups who agree to share responsibility for achieving some specific goal

Definition of Round Table:

- a meeting of peers for discussion and exchange of views

Retention and Recruitment Program Update—Lisa Argue, Mem Xavier Da Silveira

Lisa and Mem gave an overview of the recruitment programs in their areas purchased by that regions MCFD, program has also attracted responses from the Upper Island. Provided everyone with information session sample packages. The group participated in a brainstorming session soliciting input from the committee for retention and recruitment ideas which will be compiled and shared with everyone at the next meeting.

International Foster Care Organization (IFCO) and IFCO 2011— Margaret Howley

IFCO is a global organization whose mission is to ensure that every child will have the right to a home. Margaret is the FPSSS representative and chairperson for the committee hosting the next conference in Victoria from July 10th to 15th, 2011. There is representation from several foster and family serving agencies throughout the province and Canada. The committee is working in partnership with MCFD. Funders are Adoptions & Permanency Trust Fund Victoria Foundation and MCFD. Visit their new website www.IFCO2011.com for the details. Margaret advises there will be ample opportunities for social workers and foster parents to get involved.

Provincial Caregiver Support Services Framework Project Up-date: BCFCE, Recruitment and Retention—Terrena O’Connor and Margaret Howley

The work was done on March 31st, 2009, for BCFCE Program and is awaiting further direction at the provincial level. Nothing new to report on the progress for Recruitment and Retention committee.

Social Worker Appreciation Week ~ March 8th through 14th

This is an excellent opportunity to take a few moments to recognize our social workers' commitment to the safety and well-being of children and families in our community.

On a daily basis, our social workers make critical decisions, affecting the lives and futures of those they serve as they fulfill our mission of protecting our children and strengthening our families. They are dedicated advocates.

Social workers make so many positive contributions to the lives of children and families day after day – efforts that are too often not adequately recognized.

As foster parents and members of our community, each of us needs to take a moment to think about the challenges, decisions,

emergencies, and accomplishments that make up the daily routine of our social workers.

We need to thank them for their very important work in keeping our children safe. Whether our thanks are conveyed formally or informally, we need to remember that a word of appreciation, sincerely expressed, can go a long way in acknowledging the gratitude and respect we feel for our social workers and the critically important service they provide.

To each and every Social Worker in the Vancouver Island Region:
"For all you do, we thank you."

Submitted by Margaret Howley
 FPSSS Executive Director

In Praise of Social Workers

by Thomas L. Crossman
 Foster Parent
 December 2009

A river of troubled children
 Go passing by us all
 The foggy veil that covers them
 Masks their wanton call

So many signs of trouble
 So many signs of need
 Too many people turn away
 Who will get them freed?

What kind of special person
 Would reach into a fire
 Grasp a hand, and pull it up
 To what do they aspire?

Yet they ask not for recognition
 Nor for special praise
 They help the children recapture life
 In so many different ways

In spite of all the protests
 In spite of all the cries
 They stay the path, they hold the line
 They continue to advise

So many children benefit
 So many families survive
 Because of social workers like you
 Have come into their lives.

Dedicated to the hard working
 people at the Ministry of Children
 and Families, Duncan



Once you
 choose
 hope,
 anything's
 possible.

Christopher Reeve

SOCIAL WORK

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 Enriching Lives

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BC ASSOCIATION OF
 SOCIAL WORKERS

BC Foster Care Education Program Schedule Winter 2010

Code	VICTORIA		NANAIMO		PORT ALBERNI		COURTENAY		CAMPBELL RIVER	
S1-1	Jan 11 M	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 8 F	9:30-12:30pm	Jan 13 W	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 11 M	6:30-9:30pm	<p>Did you know ...</p> <p>What is one of the first questions foster parents will be asked during a Protocol?</p> <p><i>"Have you completed your BC Foster Care Education Program training?"</i></p>	
S1-2	Jan 14 Th	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 8 F	1:00-4:00pm	Jan 20 W	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 13 W	6:30-9:30pm		
S1-3	Jan 18 M	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 15 F	9:30-12:30pm	Jan 27 W	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 18 M	6:30-9:30pm		
S1-4	Jan 21 Th	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 15 F	1:00-4:00pm	Feb 3 W	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 20 W	6:30-9:30pm		
S1-5	Jan 25 M	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 22 F	9:30-12:30pm	Feb 10 W	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 25 M	6:30-9:30pm		
S1-6	Jan 28 Th	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 22 F	1:00-4:00pm	Feb 17 W	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 27 W	6:30-9:30pm		
S1-7a	Feb 1 M	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 29 F	9:30-12:30pm	Feb 24 W	6:30-9:30pm	Feb 1 M	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 4 M	9:00-12:00pm
S1-7b	Feb 4 Th	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 29 F	1:00-4:00pm	Mar 3 W	6:30-9:30pm	Feb 3 W	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 4 M	12:30-3:30pm
S1-8a	Feb 22 M	6:30-9:30pm	Feb 5 F	9:30-12:30pm	Mar 10 W	6:30-9:30pm	Feb 8 M	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 11 M	9:00-12:00pm
S1-8b	Feb 25 Th	6:30-9:30pm	Feb 5 F	1:00-4:00pm	Mar 17 W	6:30-9:30pm	Feb 10 W	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 11 M	12:30-3:30pm
S1-9a	Mar 1 M	6:30-9:30pm	Feb 12 F	9:30-12:30pm	Mar 24 W	6:30-9:30pm	Feb 15 M	6:30-9:30pm		
S1-9b	Mar 4 Th	6:30-9:30pm	Feb 12 F	1:00-4:00pm	Mar 31 W	6:30-9:30pm	Feb 17 M	6:30-9:30pm		
Code	VICTORIA		COWICHAN TRIBES		PORT ALBERNI		COURTENAY		PORT HARDY	
S2-1	Mar 8 M	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 13 W	6:30-9:30pm	April 7 W	6:30-9:30pm	Feb 22 M	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 11 M	6:00-9:00pm
S2-3	Mar 15 M	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 20 W	6:30-9:30pm	Apr 14 W	6:30-9:30pm	Mar 1 M	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 18 M	6:00-9:00pm
S2-5	Mar 13 Sat	9:30-2:30pm	Jan 27 W	5:30-9:30pm	Apr 17 Sat	9:30-2:30pm	Feb 27 Sat	9:30-2:30pm	Jan 23 Sat	9:30-2:30pm
S2-2	Mar 18 Th	6:30-9:30pm	Feb 3 W	6:30-9:30pm	Apr 21 W	6:30-9:30pm	Mar 3 W	6:30-9:30pm	Jan 25 M	6:00-9:00pm
S2-4	Mar 22 M	6:30-9:30pm	Feb 10 W	6:30-9:30pm	Apr 28 W	6:30-9:30pm	Mar 8 M	6:30-9:30pm	Feb 1 M	6:00-9:00pm

To REGISTER: Contact Eva Vowles toll free 1-888-922-8437 or direct line 778-430-5459

BC FOSTER CARE EDUCATION PROGRAM:

Series 1: 36 hours / 9 modules:

Each module threads together core themes of teamwork, child and youth development, communications, guiding **children's behaviour, family support, diversity and inclusion**, and the Ministry of Children and Family Development Guardianship Model. In many cases, modules will refer to or draw upon content from previous modules so it is recommended that Series 1 modules be taken in the sequence below.

Series 1: 36 hours / 9 modules:

- S1 - 1 Caring for Children: Overview—3 hours
- S1 - 2 Communication Skills & Self-Awareness—3 hours
- S1 - 3 Effects of Caregiving—3 hours
- S1 - **4 The Child's Family**—3 hours
- S1 - 5 Observing, Recording, & Reporting—3 hours
- S1 - 6 Child and Youth Development—3 hours
- S1 - 7 Attachment, Separation, & Loss—6 hours
- S1 - 8 When Children Experience Abuse & Neglect—6 hours
- S1 - 9 Guiding Behaviour of Children & Youth—6 hours

Series 2: 17 hours / 5 modules:

- S2 - 1 Cultural Responsiveness—3 hours
- S2 - 2 Aboriginal Children in Care—3 hours
- S2 - 3 Substance Misuse Awareness—3 hours
- S2 - 4 Intro to Fetal Alcohol & Neonatal Abstinence Syndromes—3 hours
- S2 - 5 Suicide Awareness—5 hours

To REGISTER for the next Series
—SPRING 2010 CLASSES—



Please Call
Eva Vowles, BCFCE Coordinator
At 1-888-922-8437

Foster Parents Are Professionals

by Jo Ann Wentzel, www.fosterparents.com

My dictionary describes a profession as one requiring training and specialized study. A person engaged in that occupation is considered a professional. So, why not foster parents? For many year now, I have been fighting for foster parents to be considered professionals. As a foster parent I went through the experiences of being talked down to and considered a non-professional. I think the fight must go on since foster parents deserve the classification of 'professionals.'

A good foster parent goes through many hours of training every year. You are required to educate yourself on a number of pertinent issues. Every year, new information, concepts, programs, and issues are brought forth. A foster parent is required to study these just to do their job. If training makes one a professional, an expert, than surely the foster parent should be considered so. When others are heard to say, *but they are just foster parents*, I start to lose control.

Lots of foster parents have worked with kids for decades. How many "professional" people do you know that study that long to be a doctor, lawyer, or teacher. We consider these people professionals, however.

What people tend to forget is the fact that in addition to training, required and otherwise, foster parents must learn on the job every day. It becomes a necessity for new topics to be mastered with every new foster child. You may be immediately forced to learn about specific learning disabilities, behaviors, and illnesses.

A foster parent searches out information needed and begins to study the facts until they are well versed on the subject. An older, more experienced foster parent will already have studied hundreds of topics, while a beginning foster parent will need to learn everything and quickly.

As a new foster parent I knew little about drugs, but as an experienced foster parent I knew much more than I cared to know. I learned the general symptoms of a child on drugs and also the symptoms of each individual drug. Eventually I recognized many drugs by sight, knew the street names, and what they sold for. I even knew by whom and where they were being sold sometimes. The point is by necessity I became an expert on the subject.

Foster care requires a proficiency in behaviors and the accompanying acronyms that describe these disorders. Most foster parents develop an amazing medical knowledge since you regulate the health and monitor the medication of those children placed in your home. You must know CPR and first aid and be able to qualify in the Red Cross testing of these skills. A foster parent knows about a variety of medications and how to determine if they were really taken or not.

Today's foster parent must be pretty aware of all the educational options for kids. It is imperative that they know what the rights of the children are in the expectation that they receive an adequate education. You must understand Personal Education Plans and often act in the place of a parent when making educational decisions.



When foster kids challenge the law, they usually lose. The foster mom or dad is probably the one to make sure they have an adult present when being interrogated. They know a great deal about court proceedings since they attend hearings so often. They must learn the process and often know as much as lawyers about possible resources for the children. Community service spots, restitution possibilities, programs with available space, and even which judge is best for which kid is common knowledge to the foster parent. They may have researched facilities and can advocate for their kids when the decision is being made as to where to put them.

You add to this that foster parents must understand, be able to function in, or least have knowledge of youth culture and you start to see how versatile these folks are.

The foster parent is an efficiency expert feeding large amounts of people and running a huge household on a limited budget. An expert at scheduling, they balance more meetings, appointments, and activities than a business executive does. The foster care chauffeur has figured out how to drive everyone, everywhere in different directions and get them all to their respective places on time. The schedule some foster parents keep would wilt the toughest person.

Together, foster parent couples have studied enough topics to earn several degrees, but where is their diploma? Some certification is now available, but it is still a far cry from the degree.

Yes, the lawyer, doctor, and teacher have a great deal of knowledge and do deserve the professional designation. Usually, they are only experts in one general area. Foster parents need to be master of many areas.

So, foster parents act like and expect to be treated like professionals because you are. The rest of the world will recognize it someday. Till then, some of us do consider foster care a profession and all of you professionals. I salute you.

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Hanging In There For The Long Haul

Article by Jo Ann Wentzel , www.fosterparents.com . Printed with permission.

It seems sad that we live in a time when some parents biggest concern about parenting is what their rights are in regards to their children. They want to know at what stage are they allowed to "wash their hands" of their own kids. They need to know if they are responsible for a runaway teen's escapades while those kids are loose in the world. Their questions indicate, they are no longer able to parent these kids. They cannot hang in there for the long haul.

When you are downtrodden daily, when county agencies make you feel like dirt because you have no money or you can't handle your kids, when you live in fear for yourselves and your children, you have lost the ability to run the full race of parenting. These parents have become ineffectual. Their children have become victims.

Parents who have become so frustrated that their only response to the situation is how does this affect me as parents, have probably lost the battle. When the focus starts to change to the parents rather than the child, we are heading for trouble. The child is the one with the problem, he needs the help. When we concentrate on the parent, we sometimes neglect the plight of the child.

It is understandable that some parents will eventually reach the "end of their rope." It is also accepted that not all parents are equipped to handle the problems of an out-of-control teenager. Many parents have not had their own needs met, so cannot continue to worry about their kids. They wonder when, it will be their turn. Years of dealing with courts, police, and probation officers can dampen the enthusiasm of any parent. When a person has tried everything they know how to try and has consulted all the so called "experts" with little result, the only answer left is to give up. These parents are worn out, their energy depleted, and their spirits plummeted to the depths of hell. They are scared and desperate. They need answers, but more important they need a vacation from the responsibilities of parenting. It should not be so, but it is the case. These parents must be relieved of their parental duties in order to not do further harm to their kids. I don't mean this as a slam to the natural parents who cannot cope, unless they have really not tried. There comes a time when we cannot go it alone and if we have done all we can do, what is left? This is usually where foster care comes in.

When we reach this point, this is where a foster parent is most valuable. If we get involved in the family too soon, before the situation has reached this point, foster care may be effective, but the parent will still not have learned how to parent. They have acquired no coping skills. In the beginning stage of trouble with kids, the help should be from outside sources rather than removing the child from the home. Helping a father or mother learn how to parent can correct the situation before out-of-home placement becomes necessary. On the other end of the spectrum, is the scenario where we wait until it is too late. If we wait till the situation is out-of-control, the child may never return home. In all three cases, foster parenting may be effective for the time the child is in the foster home. The difference seems to be when the child returns home. Timing appears to be everything.

The exhausted parent who has tired of the battle is in no shape to go on, until a much needed respite from the problems is provided. The foster parent should be prepared to foster for the long haul, but certainly long enough for a natural family to regain their bearings. Any foster parent who feels he is unable to go the distance will probably add to the problems of that child if they take them on knowing they cannot make it to the finish line. I grant you sometimes we do not know, but most times there are signs that tell us whether this could be a long term placement or not.

The worse thing that could happen to a foster kid who has to be removed from their family and home, is to be sent to a foster home that is likely to be a short placement when they need a long term one. I believe problems perpetuate themselves when the changes keep continuing in this young person's life. These kids are most often in need of stability. Any improvement seen in those we foster comes from consistency and stability. A child will not work on issues until he feels safe and stable. He cannot feel that way if he is constantly shuffled from placement to placement.

When a foster parent gives up on a kid, it is a re-run of what happened with his own family. His parents abandoned him ,in his mind, and



now, so have these new folks that he was beginning to trust. He feels worthless, not capable of being loved. His self-esteem is lowered and his trust level is disintegrated. He knows for sure now, that no one cares about him. He is convinced he is no good. This may result in some self-fulfilling prophecy.

I sympathize with parents and foster parents alike who live with these kids. It is not easy to be around kids who swear at you, call you names, and are abusive. It takes great amounts of stamina to deal with children that have been sexually abused or neglected or abandoned. They take every ounce of strength and seem to require every fiber of your being to care for them. I have lived with chemically dependent teens and rode that seesaw of emotion with those kids. You never know where they are mentally, emotionally, and for that matter, physically. When you have a child who skips school, you worry what they are doing with that time. You fear they will never receive the education they need to provide for their own future. Dealing with kids that are delinquent thrusts you into some very unsavory situations. You also get to know lawyers, police, and judges on a personal basis. Nothing you wish to brag about in public. The uncertainty parents live with everyday definitely takes its toll. But, somewhere and somehow, we must be there for these children. We must be the ones whom they can count on. We must be the family they want and desperately need. We must go one step farther however, we must help those natural parents learn to parent.

I believe that being there for the long haul means getting that child ready to return home. This requires returning to a place where parents know how to parent. Who better to help those parents than foster parents. Foster parents do not have all the answers, but they know how to parent. Their instincts can be trusted. I want to personally thank all the parents and foster parents who have gone the distance. You truly do deserve a trophy.

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