

SATISFACTION SURVEY REPORT 2023  
FPSS SOCIETY



12/5/2023



## Table of Contents

THE CARE TEAM.....	5
INTRODUCTION.....	6
Do you feel the support services offered by FPSS Society meet your needs?.....	7
Do you feel the education/training services offered by FPSS Society meet your needs?.....	8
Do you feel the communication with FPSS Society (email updates, newsletters, return of messages etc.) meets your needs?.....	9
ONGOING TRAINING AND SUPPORT.....	10
In your role as a foster caregiver, is there a Support Service that you feel you need that is not currently offered? .....	10
In your role as foster parent or caregiver, is there an issue or area of concern that you would like to see addressed at the Provincial level? .....	12
Have you attended any fostering-related workshops or events during the last year? .....	14
Please select from the list below which workshops you would like to see.....	15
What times would be most convenient for you to attend training and events? .....	16
In what area of Vancouver Island do you live? .....	16
In training and workshops (in-person or virtual) are you comfortable asking questions or speaking open an honestly when Social Workers are present? .....	18
What is the main barrier preventing you from attending workshops, on-going training, or other events? .....	18
ACCESSIBILITY.....	19
Do you experience challenges in any of the following area when accessing FPSS Society Services? ....	19
In the past year, have you attended any online or virtual training, meetings, or support sessions? ....	20
Did you experience any barriers in attending online or virtual training? .....	21
ONLINE TRAINING .....	22
Would you be more likely to participate in ongoing training if it was available in an online format?... 22	
Would you attend in-person training if it followed PHO orders and had appropriate health and safety practices in place? .....	23
WEBSITE .....	24
Which features of the FPSS Society's website (fpsss.com) have you used in the past year? .....	24
How often do you access the FPSS Society website? .....	25
PEER SUPPORT .....	26
How important is peer support and networking with other foster parents? .....	26

What type/level of care do you provide?	27
How long have you been fostering? .....	28
Recruitment	29
As a caregiver, are you willing to or have you in the past encouraged someone you know to consider becoming a foster caregiver by suggesting they attend a Foster Hope Information Session or contact FFSS Regional Office?	29

# FPSS Foster Parent Support Services Society

## Service Satisfaction Survey June 2023

The FPSS Society is a grass roots, non-profit organization contracted by the Ministry of Children and Family Development to provide training and support to foster caregivers on Vancouver Island. Below you will find a list of other organizations that are part of the fostering community and a brief description of their services and responsibilities. While we would very much like to hear about your experiences with other groups/agencies, including MCFD, please understand that our ability to affect changes in these areas is limited. FPSS Society can, and does, advocate on behalf of foster parents to address the concerns, barriers, and challenges you bring to our attention. We will continue to do so.

Thank you to all the foster caregivers who took time out of their busy schedule to complete the survey and return it.

### Bias/Limitations

FPSS Society distributed this survey electronically to foster caregivers and MCFD staff through Constant Contact. Questions regarding satisfaction with the use of technology to deliver communication and training may not fully represent the opinions of all caregivers due to omission bias (caregivers not on Constant Contact email distribution lists were not included in the online form of the survey).

Foster Caregivers were able to complete the survey over the phone or by requesting a hard copy through the Regional Office.

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## THE CARE TEAM

### Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)

Provincial jurisdiction; Child protection; Study, Approve, and Close Foster Homes; Placement, Removal, and Transition of Children and Youth in foster homes; Care Plans; Standards, Policies, and Practices; Levelling of Foster Homes; Foster caregiver payments; Development and/or management of mandatory training programs such as PRIDE; includes Resource Workers, Guardianship Workers, Protection Workers, and Team Leaders.

### Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies

Provincial jurisdiction; Act on behalf of the Director (MCFD). Different agencies have different authorization. Formally known as Delegated Aboriginal Agencies.

### BC Foster Parent Associations (BCFPA)

Provincial Contract; Administer Foster Parent Insurance Program; Advocacy at the Provincial Level.

### Foster Parent Support Services Society (FPSS Society)

Vancouver Island Region; Support, networking, and on-going training for foster caregivers; Recruitment of potential caregivers; Mentors; Investigation and Resolutions Support; Events for foster families; Distribution of information, updates, resources; *The Island Connection* newsletter; includes FPSS Local Area Coordinators in Victoria, Cowichan Valley, Port Alberni, Nanaimo, Courtenay, and Campbell River.

### Foster Parent Associations or Locals

Local Communities (Roles vary in each community) Peer support; Foster Family Events; Team Building; Education Planning.

South Island Foster Parent Association (SIFPA)

Cowichan Valley Foster Parent Local (CVFP)

Port Alberni Local

Comox Valley Local

Campbell River Foster Parent Association (CRFPA)

North Island Local

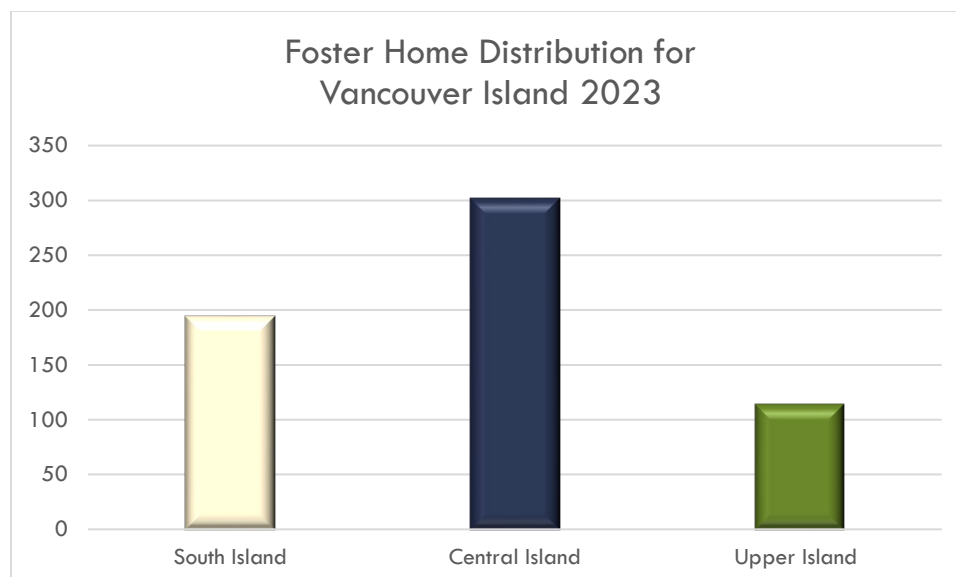
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## INTRODUCTION

The following pages contain the results of the FPSS Foster Parent Support Services Society's (FPSS Society) 2023 Satisfaction Survey. The FPSS Society circulated approximately 681 soft (electronic) copies to foster caregivers and MCFD staff throughout Vancouver Island and posted the survey on the society website at <http://fpsss.com/>. One hundred and forty-six people completed the 2023 survey. The survey was late in going out due to an extremely busy Spring at FPSS.

Survey results indicate FPSS Society is meeting the needs of foster caregivers in the areas of Support Services (92%) (increase of 2%) Education/Training Services (92%) (increase of 4.5%), and Communication (96%) (decrease of 2.4%). FPSS continued to offer Region wide, virtual training and began offering hybrid events where caregivers could attend virtually or in person. The staff and Board of Directors of FPSS Society work diligently to support, educate, and inform foster caregivers in the work they do for children in care. The survey results reflect the success of this effort.

The FPSS Society collects input from foster caregivers and other stakeholders on an ongoing basis, including workshop/training evaluations, polls, and the Annual Satisfaction Survey. Coordinators and other staff members use emails, phone/text, and face-to-face interaction to gather information about what support and training foster caregivers want and need. The FPSS Society uses this firsthand information in program planning, performance improvement, strategic planning, and resource planning. The top three responses to Support Services caregivers need that are not currently being offered are Social Activities (18%), In-Person Training (18%). Workshops and On-going Training (11%). Other included topics such as: Evening activities/training, Mental Health for caregivers, Aging out (into CLBC) are mentioned in comments. Responses also indicate there is ongoing confusion between the roles of MCFD, BCFPA, and FPSS and who works for whom. For example, certain references to resource workers (Resource workers work for MCFD, not FPSS). This gives FPSS Society guidance as it moves forward in planning workshops and on-going training for the 2023-2024 year. Many of these topics overlap and workshops on one topic address training requests in multiple areas.



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### Foster parents expressed satisfaction with three areas in particular:

#### *Support*

Always there to answer questions and help and refer to appropriate sources for information.

Always nice to have someone who has your back! Also nice to be able to call and get support if needed or have someone listen AND CARE.

Being able to talk with someone who is connected to our special often confidential concerns is very important.

#### *Education*

I really enjoyed the offers of books during Covid as well as online training offered.

I would like more training available for working parents. Maybe webinars that can be watched in the evening.

I love the online education but I get interrupted a lot of time so I love when there is a replay so I can watch it at my own pace and pause and restart!!

#### Communication

I appreciate the e-mail notifications.

I think your newsletters cover a broad spectrum which helps us foster parents ask the right questions. Thank you!

It is always nice to know what is going on even if I do not attend.

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### Do you feel the support services offered by FPSS Society meet your needs?

Yes: 93%

No: 8%

No Response: 0%

#### Comments:

- Always there to answer questions and help and refer to appropriate sources for information.
- FPSS has been an amazing support. I really appreciate Sandra and all the work she does. The training opportunities are excellent. Dan Malone has also been a great support."
- We have had great support.
- I feel like people can give us the information we need.
- FPSS is a great resource.
- The courses have been great. Would love more chances to meet face to face.
- It would be great to have outselling services, with a counselor of my choice, covered.
- They are very supportive and helpful.
- Just not enough workshops regarding older kids aging out. Or moving into CLBC.
- I have never phoned with a question and not gotten an answer.
- I would say no. Not sure what they offer.
- Very happy with all the continued support we have been receiving.
- There needs to be more support around mental health of the children.
- There is not enough information based on older kids.
- Young adults who will be moving to CLBC.
- What happens with young adults who have graduated and waiting for CLBC services.
- Provide workshops advice and guidance.
- They always find the answers to my questions.
- I feel more efforts should be put into connecting caregivers to each other so we may support each other. I know there is coffee mornings, but they are not available for working caregivers and are once a month. I would like to see more events and connections for caregivers. And how about a caregiver only app? The Facebook page is a good idea except caregivers are not free to express their concerns or problems as the social workers are involved.
- Always nice to have someone who has your back! Also nice to be able to call and get support if needed or have someone listen AND CARE
- There's an abundance of information to begin with.
- They offer a wide variety of training and support.
- I haven't used too much but am a fairly new foster parent.
- It would be nice if there was a roster of approved babysitters and respite care providers instead of it being all up to me to find people in a pinch.
- Each child is unique and should be better tailored to child.
- I love the online training that is made available to us!!
- My support worker regularly calls and does home visits. She usually can answer my questions immediately but if she can't she finds out what I need and gets right back to me.
- I would like additional support. Such as more meetings with other foster parents on evenings and weekends.
- FPSS has always been there for me with support.
- I'm glad I was introduced to this organization.
- Always happy and willing to help.
- We feel very supported.
- Always willing to help and are very supportive.
- I appreciate all the training and events!
- We have had a strong team help integrate our foster kiddo into our home including his initial BI and the CCI team.
- More additional Training offered for Safe Baby Homes.
- Being able to talk with someone who is connected to our special often confidential concerns is very important.
- As things change quickly in our field of education I am happy to see new informative courses being offered to foster parents. "
- Got some really great advice for a conflict resolution this year :)
- Very good support all round.
- For now, the online classes/ workshops are the best.
- Though I do miss the in-person classes.
- I really appreciate the different time offerings and the fact that things are available on the line

now this makes it much easier for me to participate.

- Yes and I appreciate the advocating you do for us all!
- There are courses that are repetitive with same teaching material, although I take all, I find additional online training beneficial.
- I had my first time in 30 yrs fostering needing support this year. I was very pleased with help, responses I got, and mainly just an ear that understood my frustration.

- I would like more opportunity to meet other foster parents in a setting outside of worktime hours.
- I love all the training offered to keep up with changes.
- Our worker seems to get all the emails to us. I just received by mail my first package from foster parents association.

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### Do you feel the education/training services offered by FPSS Society meet your needs?

Yes: 92%

No: 8%

No Response: 0%

#### Comments:

- The content offered is wonderful! but I would like to see more online workshops offered in the evenings. There have been many I'm interested in registering for, however morning and early afternoon are not an option for me and I feel like I'm missing out on so many wonderful opportunities. Another option might be to offer daytime workshops as a taped viewing and those interested can register to have the link. I'd even be willing to pay a small fee for the privilege of viewing as my schedule allows.
- I really enjoyed the offers of books during Covid as well as online training offered.
- Excellent training opportunities.
- I very much enjoy the zoom classes .
- I enjoy the opportunity for on line learning.
- I like the variety we had this year.
- I find the education and training very valuable.
- Offers everything you need.
- Just not enough work shops regarding older kids aging out. Or moving into CLBC. Wish I had more time to take advantage of them.
- Good variety of workshops.
- I'm not exactly sure what FPSS is all about.
- Very happy.
- Need more information about aging out
- Not for all age groups
- I have seen much improvement for caregiver training and education however I see a lot of repetitiveness. Some new workshops and programs would be a benefit including not just centered around youth/ children with diagnosis. How about nutritional training? Time management training? Family building connection education?
- Can always suggest training needed and they will support you in obtain[ing] it.
- I really like that there are online access. I find it hard to do in-person with my kiddos.
- For now, the online classes/ workshops are the best. Though I do miss the in-person classes.

- They cover a wide range of topics.
- I wish that there were evening and weekend times for education.
- But I would like more car seat safety taught especially to new foster parents.
- I would like more training available for working parents. Maybe webinars that can be watched in the evening.
- You have a number of resources to learn from.
- Wish there were some offered in the evenings or one Saturday a month, I work during the day Monday to Friday.
- My husband and I work full time Monday to Friday and while we've been interested in some of the trainings, they've been scheduled for times that don't work for our work schedule. Evenings are usually best for us, as we can't attend things that are scheduled between 8am and 4pm.
- Always asking what we want it learn.
- Unfortunately we often can't attend as we are both working.
- Need online courses hard to find babysitters.
- Yes very relevant and informative.
- Yes as mentioned above.
- More additional training for Baby / Safe Baby homes.
- I would like to see more courses on the judicial system so that we can negotiate this complex often scary process when some of our children in care I caught up in it.
- Always interesting options.
- There are so many training classes that cover all the issues you need to support your children in our care. If you need more information you just ask and the worker will find a course for you.
- Yes, they do. See answer to question 1.
- I love the online education but I get interrupted a lot of time so I love when there is a replay so I can watch it at my own pace and pause and restart!!



- I love the variety of offerings you have.
- I just attended the AGM and this was discussed at length.
- There are courses that are repetitive with same teaching material, although I take all, I find additional on line training beneficial.
- There is a good variety offered.
- There are lots of options for training for training.
- There seems to be something educational going on all the time so normally we are always

interested in doing. Just finding and making time is sometimes our issue. Online is always best for us.

- I find it hard to attend most of the training. The opportunities that I have been interested in are during the day. I can only attend on some evenings. Having the option to do them online at my own pace would be appreciated.

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### Do you feel the communication with FPSS Society (email updates, newsletters, return of messages etc.) meets your needs?

Yes: 97%

No: 3%

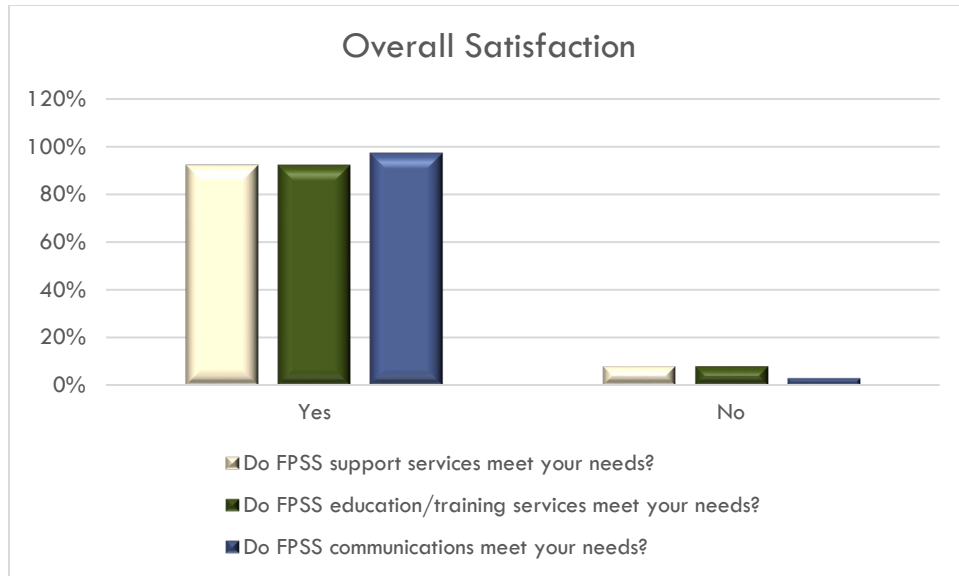
No Response: 1%

#### Comments

- I'm going to say yes because so far my needs have been minimal.
- Communication of upcoming FPSS events is great but I have heard comments from various caregivers that there are too many emails, to the point that they are not getting the attention they deserve. Is there a way to consolidate them into one or two emails a month with upcoming events and training? Reminders are also helpful but 2,3, and 4 reminders just means more emails from FPSS in our inboxes which compounds the problem.
- We have too many repetitive emails.
- I don't always receive all emails and I find it can be hit or miss. I'm glad others send me what they receive as it can be inconsistent what I receive to what others can receive.
- I have offered my services to volunteer and have not been contacted back.
- Always calls and emails often
- I appreciate the e-mail notifications.
- I like the newsletter.
- I get emails. I don't always read them.

- Yes very satisfied.
- It is always nice to know what is going on even if I do not attend.
- Sometimes it can be a bit much with so many emails coming in.
- Irregular responses.
- There is a constant flow of information and training opportunities.
- I receive a lot of information now.
- I always receive new offers of new classes.
- The communication stream is steady and very informing.
- I appreciate the emailed updates.
- I think your newsletters cover a broad spectrum which helps us foster parents ask the right questions. Thank you!
- Every time.
- Always done in a timely manner.
- Very regular!
- No issues.
- Our Worker has been the me sending us the information.

**Summary:** Overall, foster caregivers report that the Support, Education/Training, and Communication service provided by FPSS Society meet their needs. Caregivers continue to report they appreciate the convenience of online training. There is some misunderstanding regarding the roles of MCFD, BCFPA, and FPSS Society. Trends include a request for evening training and the number of emails sent. FPSS may need to look at being more concise in the emails it sends to ensure *the signal gets through the noise*.



## ONGOING TRAINING AND SUPPORT

**In your role as a foster caregiver, is there a Support Service that you feel you need that is not currently offered?**

*Social Activities: 18% In-Person Training: 18% Workshops and ongoing training: 11% Other: 10% Networking/Support Meetings: 8% Information/Resources: 7% Technical Support or Equipment (or online Training): 7% Mentoring: 5% Investigation and Resolution Support: 3%*

Comments/Other:

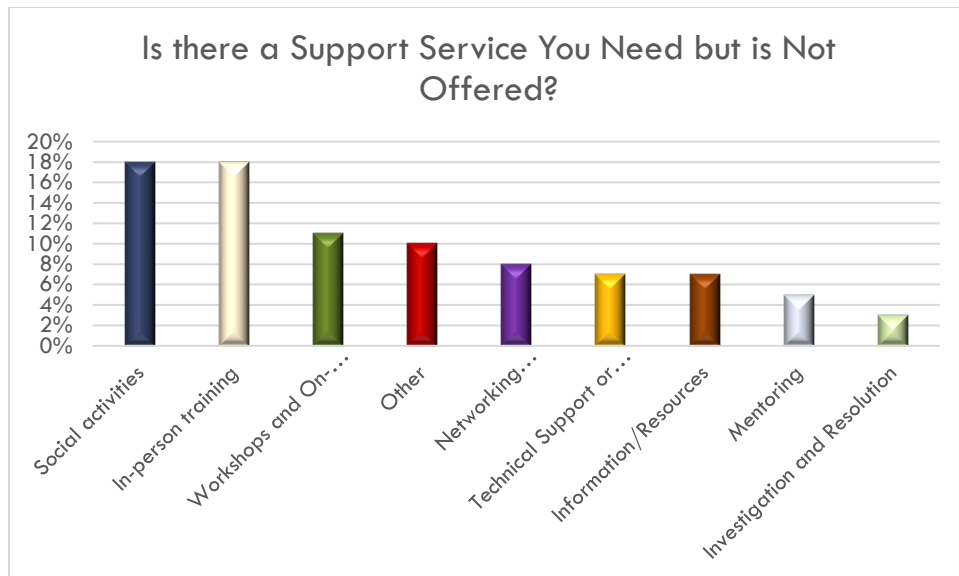
- Evenings are better as I work during the day.
- None, you folks do wonderful and much appreciated work.
- I can not think of more support services at this point.
- Information about the kids placed in my home.
- I feel totally supported by both our local FPSS rep (Judy) and Victoria.
- I cannot think of what if anything is missing.
- I think it would be very helpful for every NEW foster family to be paired with a mentor for the first few weeks of their very first placement. Though we had gone through all the training and info, it was very overwhelming when our first placement arrived and there was so much information to navigate. That was 3 years ago, but I'm thinking of new families.
- There needs to be more info on what happens when you are offered Guardianship or Adoption as it does happen and it's nearly impossible to find good info. There also needs to be more ways of meeting each other, especially newer foster homes. Support is huge.
- Training in the evening and weekends please.
- No not at this time.
- On First Nation traditions, crafts, foods etc..
- We have some of everything. Would be nice if there was more social activities and in person training.
- As above as well the Ministry making themselves available for info sharing at least quarterly early evening.
- On site childcare for in person workshops, social groups etc.
- Also, fetal alcohol is such a challenge. There needs to be more transition when the child moved in.
- Everything is working well for me right now.
- See above comments. I would also like to know why the investigation and resolution support position is not a paid position? Do you not value this position?
- We used to have get togethers once or twice a year, like a skating party or beach/playground barbeque. Since co-vid we don't have them offered. We don't even seem to meet new foster parents or even know if older ones are still fostering.
- None that I can think of at this time.

- I like meeting other foster parents in person and in-person workshops.
- Not at this time. I think they do a wonderful job.
- Unsure yet.
- I think there are all of the above available is we need it.
- I'm dinosaur in computer operation and need has [hands?] on for applications that we use. Courses and meetings I miss because of my ignorance. Sorry.
- In my personal situation, as a support worker for at risk youth, my needs are met, it may differ for other caregivers.
- Everything offered is in the daytime and some F. Parents work daytimes.
- So a list of practitioners with this knowledge would lessen the overwhelming burden when looking, instead of trial and error in a time of need.
- N/A
- I keep missing my online conferences. My own fault but I would appreciate an email reminder the day before.
- Evening meetups. The meetups seem to be during the daytime.
- No.
- I can't think of any particular need.
- N/A
- No.
- I'm struggling to connect with respite care givers. Having a way to connect respite families and better yet already approved respite families would be amazing.
- I know that we can reach out if we need any assistance and appreciate that very much.
- Pretty satisfied overall.
- No every think I need is in place.
- I love that you offer zoom training.
- I like to see this type of group to be very important.
- Does not necessarily have to a social-only activity but this can be woven into the workshop fabric.
- I feel satisfied with services already offered.
- No needs identified currently.
- Training with childcare options available.
- I do like being able to do courses at home however in person once in a while would be nice.
- No all avenues have been met.
- As a newer foster parent I was only able to understand my role through work. I struggled with understanding ins and outs and what I can stand up for as a foster parent.
- Still new to fostering still figuring things out.
- This would be helpful.
- I have been through these investigations several times over my 37 years of fostering and I know how hard they are so I think some information and training might be appreciated by many foster parents.
- It always feels like you are guilty until you prove your innocence. It's an awful feeling!
- I am very impressed with the support services offered by FPSS.

**Summary:** Foster caregivers in most areas are satisfied with the support services offered in their area. FPSS Society provides services across a large area and providing training in all communities is challenging, especially when the number of participants able to attend in some areas is low. Several caregivers reported that attending daytime events is not possible due to their work schedules. Weather can also be a factor.

FPSS Society recognizes the difficulties foster caregivers face and continues to look at innovative ways to provide access to everyone. The organization has created Facebook Group pages for communities that did not have one prior to COVID. This gives caregivers another way of connecting and sharing information, challenges, and successes.

The practice of offering workshop replays and making resource material available on the LMS increases access.



**In your role as foster parent or caregiver, is there an issue or area of concern that you would like to see addressed at the Provincial level?**

Yes: 39%

No: 50%

No Response: 10.9%

Comments:

- A back to school grant for clothes etc.
- Use of cell phone and protocol.
- I was shocked at the increase in rate and of course it has been a huge help.
- The wishes and needs of the parent is often put before the wellbeing of the child(ren).
- Uneducated inexperienced support staff can't always support to the level needed.
- Child care should be easier to find.
- Doctors should be easier to find.
- Social workers should appreciate the caregivers more and understand we have multiple kids with multiple workers/families/needs plus our own families.
- Timeliness of payments, particularly relief/respire billing and mileage. Some FP have to wait anywhere from 1-3 months. We bring the subject up at every Partnership meeting and the problem persists. We get apologies and excuses but no resolution. Can the system be streamlined? There are too many desks that our billing has to pass through before a payment is authorized and paid.
- More supports for kiddos who have experienced trauma. Generally speaking the kids have a difficult time learning, foster parents and educators hands are tied, making it for kiddos to keep up with their peers.
- Fees, cost of living does not match the increasing cost of caring for children.
- Decisions regarding children and foster homes can be made with little to no knowledge. Many areas are old and out dated when it comes to fostering and need to be addressed. All children's cases need to be looked at individually. All children in care need to be heard and too often they have no voice at all when underage.
- Equal access to counseling benefits throughout the province. Some areas fund counselors, my area offered an MCFD employee who I don't think is a RCC. Even if she were, I would not trust an MCFD employee with any counseling needs.
- We need a free or cheap place of refuge for respite / relief time away from the job.
- The lack of support for youth aging out, lack of training/understanding shown by workers of the real life experience of living with kids experiencing mental health issues.
- More information sharing of the new programs for youth, what's available to the youth
- The way the kids' needs are secondary to the parents' rights. Parents are given chances at the kids' expense.
- Would like to know what Province Wide Policies are in place regarding contracts and funding. We are told this is done Province Wide but the actual

funding policies should be available to all foster parents. It feels like after we received our well over due raise the additional funding we had prior to this was cut off. We were told this would not happen but it did to many foster parents.

- More understanding, training, and support for the whole family, not just the parents! We could have been better prepared had we had know what we were getting into and how to manage and support each other.
- Much for financial support is required.
- Yes aging out should be raised to 21.
- Why children's mental health is always overlooked. Children are pushed to do what the bio parents want, even when the child stands up and voices they don't want it anymore.
- Better support in the education system especially for children with special needs.
- How to help teens in care prepare for realistic future.
- Being able to hold teens accountable for their actions. Especially when they damage property and blame it on anxiety and say have the ministry pay for it.
- I was pleased we got a raise to keep up with costs.
- Retention of foster parents. The Indigenous agencies appear to be able to offer small gestures that go a long way. Foster parents feel valued with these small gestures.
- Not yet.
- A specific length of time given provincially for emergency placements. Not just left to wait and see for foster parents.
- More supportive housing options so kids can stay with parents in a supervised way.
- Not having certain prescriptions paid for or waiting months to be reimbursed.
- When a youth wants to attend a concert or go on a vacation (even with caregiver) it gets so bogged down and there is no response for the request even months in advance. The SW can not approve on their own. It's heart breaking to see youths' disappointment.
- We should be trying to give them some fun memories and normal family adventures!
- Relief/respite availability; perhaps a go to space for fp to stay on their weekends away.
- How to negotiate your contract.
- Court judges don't like custodial sentencing so interim probation orders make foster parents jailers for our youth. If they are to spend more time at home and not allowed on street how can foster parents cope with out more resources. Also if this is what we want to see foster parents managing custodial orders.
- There are always issues we can get better at.

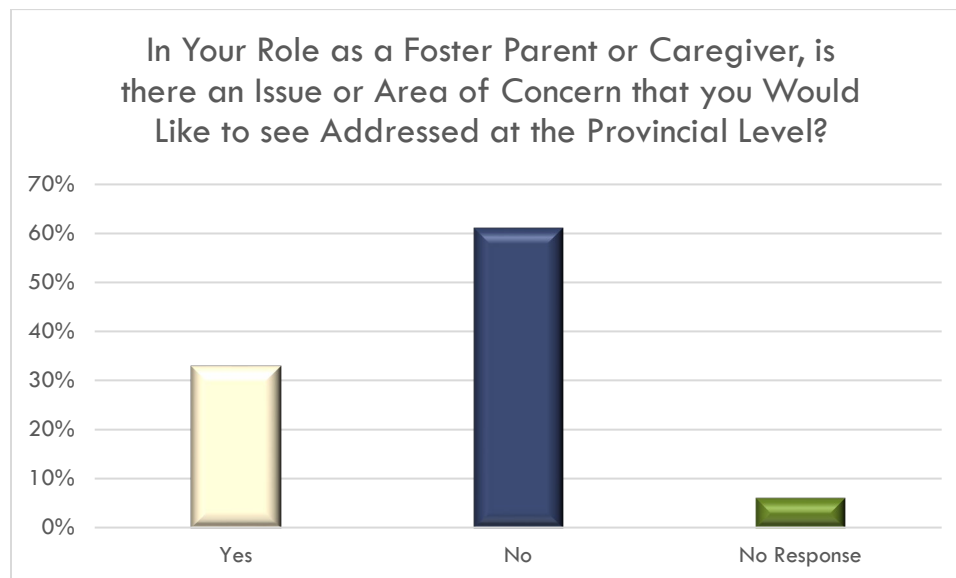
- Approval for travel is ridiculous. Even when permission to travel is requested months ahead of time, the ministry refuses to respond until one week before the scheduled travel. That is completely unacceptable.
- Also, passport applications - Passport Canada REQUIRES the long form birth certificate but the province refuses to issue it for foster kids, idiotically claiming that it's a privacy issue, but then will issue the short form and a second form that states who the birth parents are!
- More accountability and oversight of the S/Ws to make sure they do more than their "due diligence", and have the kids best interest front and centre at all times!!!!
- More support for traumatized children in school.
- More consistently between social workers.
- Additional supports for Foster parents. I'm really not sure if I would do this with another batch of kids.
- Social Workers without appropriate training and knowledge of the culture and needs of First Nations children.
- More support and compassion from resource workers.
- Allowing foster parents to be included in school communication.
- A lot of them, the whole system needs overhauling. I would like to see the pre service and in service training changed to be less condescending and more relevant to BC/Canada. It's very American focused and our systems are different (although not different enough).
- How teenagers are allowed to just switch homes because they do not like be accountable for their actions.
- How clothing allowance is distributed.
- More support to families before breakdown.
- Being a foster parent comes from the heart but it is also our job. We are not recognized in the job arena. We do not get CPP deductions due to the way our contracts awarded. This is unfair as doing this job requires our hearts and we are responsible for the welfare and nurture of children you depend upon us. We cannot drop our jobs and seek additional employment if we really care. Therefore, we are caught in a conundrum. We miss out on the benefits of others employed by the government.
- I'd like longer lasting contracts.
- And we need to hire way more social workers.
- I think all areas of the ministry need more funding to help the overwhelming work load of all workers. So there is not any more children in care that die. They are put in the wrong level foster homes and the caregivers can't cope.
- Making sure people get paid on time.

- I like to see a website for caregivers needing long term respite (as in covering during a few weeks of vacation of the caregivers).
- Something like Trustedhousesitters.com.
- Ongoing respite.
- Not anymore than what we discussed at the AGM.
- I'm sure there is but can't think of any right now.
- I think foster parents should be compensated for their caregiving, the monthly allowance is quite limited in order to support the child / youth to thrive. Basic needs are covered but there should be more support for educational and cultural activities. Also foster kids should get full dental coverage, they should not be denied orthodontic treatment as recommended by professionals.
- The number of years that Indigenous kids stay in foster care, even though there is a mandate for permanency.
- More streamlined service access. Every child in care should have a family doctor and referrals

for further services including Mental Health. Every child in care should have access to a counsellor without having a year or two waitlist. Every child in care should have access to affordable housing when they turn 19. The housing market is out of reach for our children coming into majority and find themselves homeless, putting themselves in positions of Domestic Violence to ensure housing.

- We need more funding for Respite. I myself have not had respite available since December.
- Returning children home while they are still actively reporting abusive situations on home visits because of voluntary care agreements. At what point does it no longer become voluntary.
- Fair treatment of foster parents.
- I think the province needs to make it a priority to have more social workers to support resources and children in care. There is way too much turnover and not enough stability.

**Summary:** Foster caregivers report issues they would like to see addressed at the Provincial level. Some of these are concrete, practical items (funding, respite, hiring more social worker) while others are more aspirational (fair treatment of caregivers).



### Have you attended any fostering-related workshops or events during the last year?

*Virtual Workshops and On-going Training: 58% Social Activities: 42% Community Training: 25% In-Person Workshops and On-Going Training: 21%None: 16% Networking/Support Meetings: 14% Safe Babies Caregiver Training: 14% PRIDE In-Service: 13% PRIDE Pre-Service: 12% Investigation and Resolution Training: 6% Mentor Training: 4% Other: 1%*

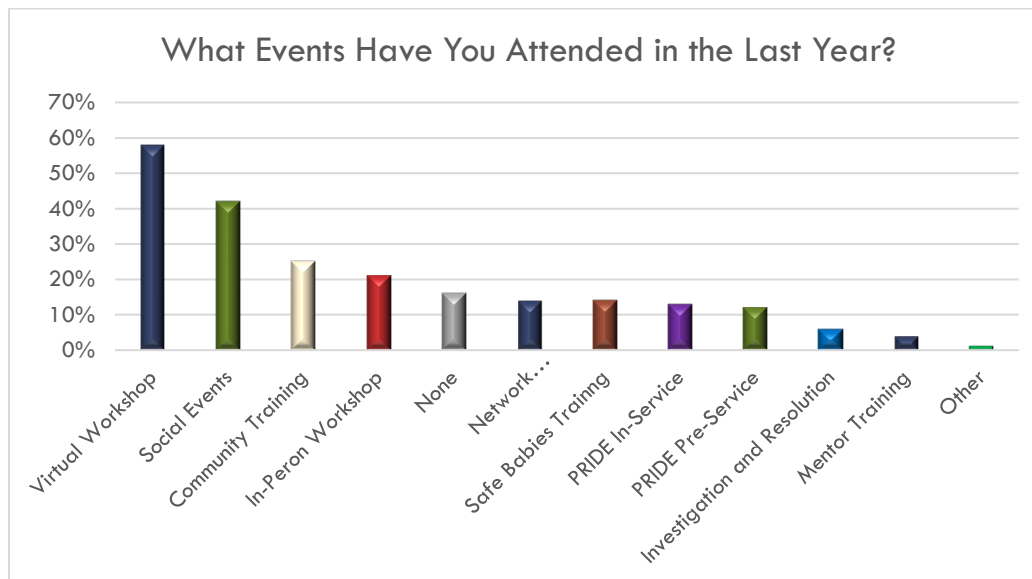
#### Comments:

- I realize that this content has been offered, however some evening times would be great.

The TBRI has been very flexible with their times offered and I have participated in these.

- I really don't think it is appropriate to use a Christian based organization for training. From what I can see this organization has evangelical leanings and I don't hold much hope that they would do much but tolerate or try to change any 2slgbtqia+ folks like me.
- Building relationships with social workers.
- Some of these subjects are covered, just ones I'm interested in.
- There has been Life books. But I was not able to attend. I hope to in the future.
- More about FASD.
- Many of the ones that I haven't makes I taken before, however review is always a good idea.
- The ones I have selected are ones that I currently would like to review.
- I am always searching for resources to increase my understanding of transitions grief and loss of the children in my care and our own family. I'd like to know more about how grief can present in children of different ages.
- We are new to fostering.
- I think you do an excellent job of providing the children with the needs they require. The only thing I'd like to see more of is communication with the caregivers as to what the child's future care plan/possible placement time lines are. Just to make it easier to plan our lives and help prep the child for life changing events coming their way.
- All plans are in place.
- TBRI training would be very valuable to caregivers.

**Summary:** Foster caregivers report that they most frequently attend Virtual Workshops and Training, as well as Social Events. These are opportunities for caregivers to network and offer/receive peer support. They cite challenges in accessing training due to busy schedules.



#### Please Select from the List Below Which Workshops You Would Like to See

Neurodiversity: 49%

Managing Difficult Behaviour: 46%

Building Positive Relationships with Biological Families: 29%

Creating a Sense of Belonging for Children and Youth in Care: 29%

Gender Identity and/or Mental Health in Children: 29%

Trauma Informed Care: 26%

Separation, Grief, Loss: 26%

Transitions; Aging Out of Care: 25%

MCFD Policies and Standards Training: 25%

Medications commonly prescribed to children and youth in care: 24%

Self Care; Vicarious Trauma: 23%

Health Issues: 22%

Plans (Care Plans, Safety Plans, Behavioural Plans, Support Plans): 21%

Sexual Orientation: 20%

Cultural Agility: 20%

*Suicide Awareness and Prevention:* 15%  
*Insurance Rider:* 14%  
*Substance Use and Misuse:* 13%

*Life Books:* 10%  
*Recording and Reporting:* 10%  
*Other:* 5%

Comments:

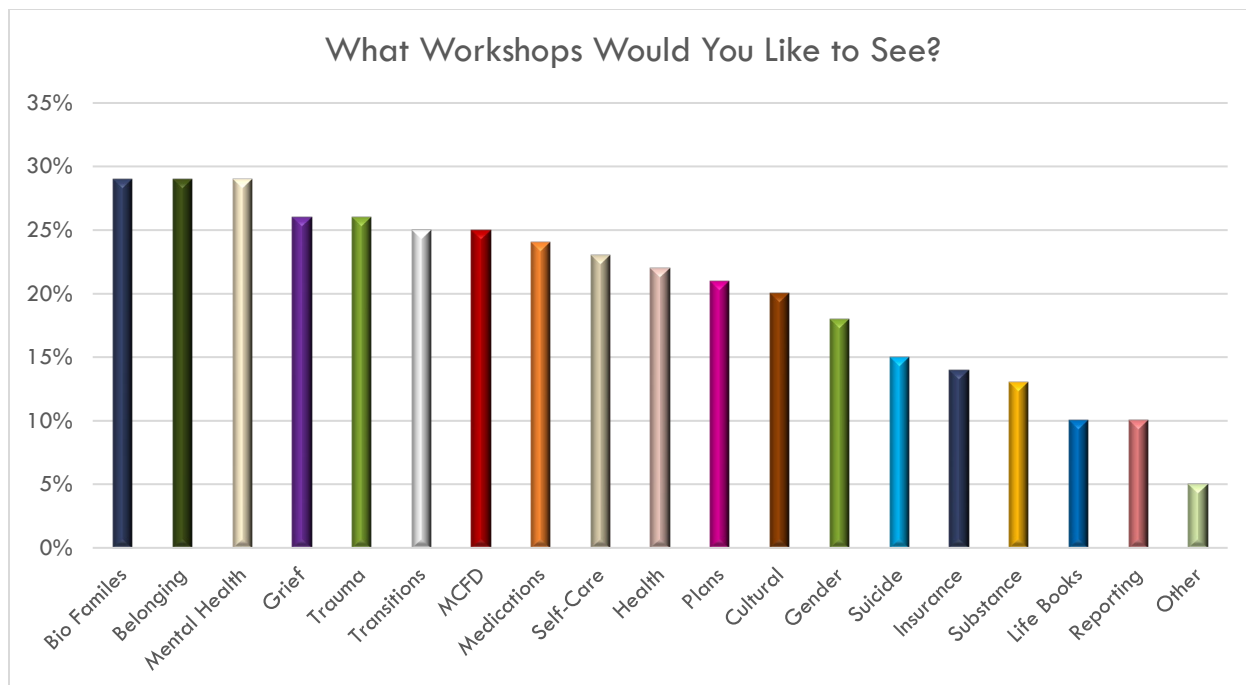
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- TBRI training would be very valuable to caregivers.
- There has been Life books. But I was not able to attend. I hope to in the future.
- We are new to fostering.

**Summary:** Foster caregivers on Vancouver Island care for children and youth with a wide range of complex needs. In addition to training needed by all foster caregivers on topics such as Trauma Informed Care, Grief and Loss, and Managing Difficult Behaviour, foster parents may also benefit from specialized training in Neurodiversity, Addiction, FASD, and Transitions. FPSS Society continues to provide a range of training in various communities throughout the year. FPSS Society is now offering region-wide, virtual training so caregivers can attend training outside their own community. In collaboration with Dr. Jo Axe at Royal Roads University, FPSS has developed a Trauma-Informed Transition Training Program. There are four specialized pieces to this program: Transitioning Indigenous Children and Youth back to Community, Transitioning from Fostering to Adoption, Fostering to Independent Living, and Transitioning from Foster Home to Foster Home.

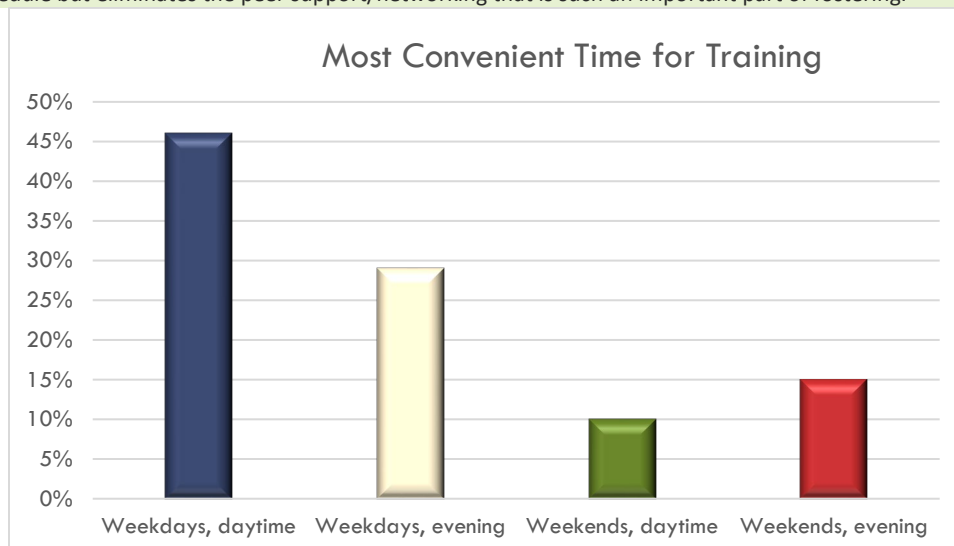




### What times would be most convenient for you to attend training and events?

*Weekdays, daytime:* 46%  
*Weekdays, evening:* 29%  
*Weekends, daytime:* 10%  
*Weekends, evening:* 15%

**Summary:** Foster caregivers who work full-time face a challenge in attending daytime training; other foster caregivers can attend training only when the children in their home are at school. In all communities, FPSS Society tries to offer events in both the daytime and the evening to accommodate foster parents' diverse schedules. Finding appropriate childcare is a challenge for foster parents caring for children and youth with complex needs. Virtual training reduces some barriers (travel, childcare) but not others (busy schedule, employment commitments). Replays further increase access as they can be done on the caregivers' individual schedule but eliminates the peer support/networking that is such an important part of fostering.

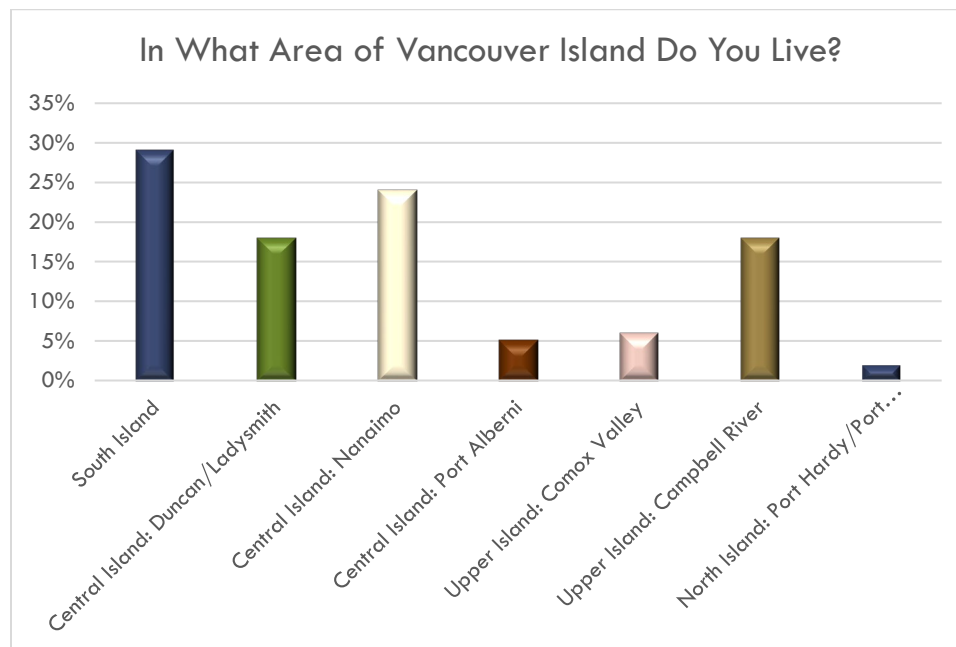


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## In what area of Vancouver Island do you live?

<i>South Island:</i>	<i>29%</i>
<i>Duncan/Ladysmith:</i>	<i>18%</i>
<i>Nanaimo/Parksville:</i>	<i>24%</i>
<i>Port Alberni:</i>	<i>5%</i>
<i>Comox Valley:</i>	<i>6%</i>
<i>Campbell River:</i>	<i>18%</i>
<i>Port Hardy/Port McNeill:</i>	<i>2%</i>

**Summary:** Involvement in training and meetings varies from one community to another. In some areas, foster caregivers are actively involved and well-connected, in other areas they work more independently. FPSS Society attempts to respect these differences while ensuring that all foster caregivers are supported and connected in a format that meets their needs. Online training allows caregivers in one area to attend events they might not be able to attend in person.



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## In training and workshops (in-person or online) are you comfortable asking question or speaking openly and honestly when Social Workers are present?

Yes: 86%...No: 2% Sometimes: 26%

- At times foster parents seem to know more than the social workers. Many social workers are out of touch and removed. It would be nice to see way more social workers taking these courses and using the knowledge.
- I personally love it when I see that social workers are attending the training. I think there is so much benefit to being on the same page.
- I prefer online training.
- I think I'm good asking questions and getting an end result.
- I'm glad when social workers attend workshops then we understand each other much better. It's hard when we receive training with new information and the social workers have not had the same opportunity.
- It depends on the topic.
- My present circumstances only allow for online training/ workshops.
- Need training session on how to zoom and do that.
- Probably depends on what the workshop is about. e.g. learning about car seats absolutely no problem.
- Since I'm nearing Retirement, I'm far less inhibited but it's uncomfortable when caregivers are younger and more concerned about how we are perceived.

- We always have friendly groups.
- We are all a team to learn and grow.
- We need more of this to become comfortable.

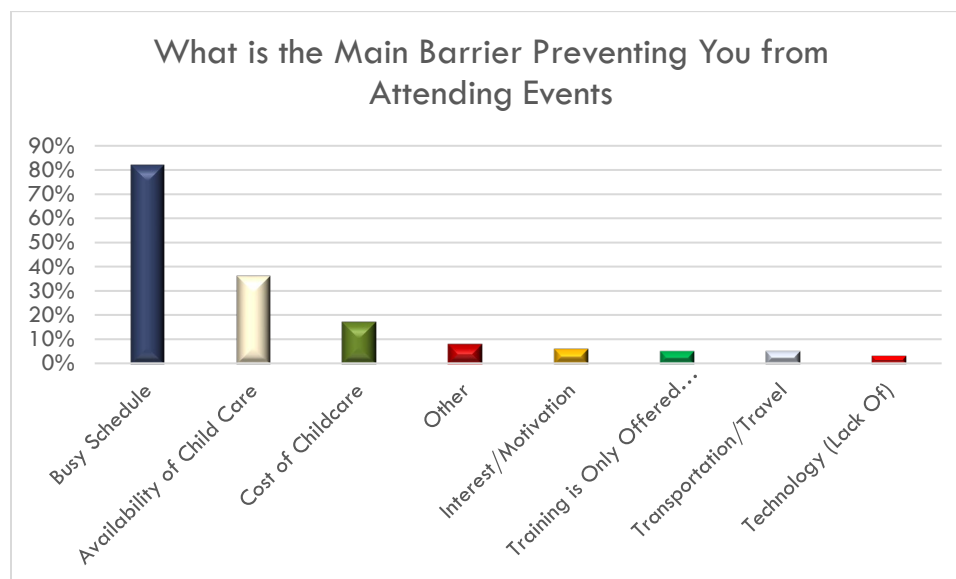
### What is the main barrier preventing you from attending workshops, on-going training, or other events?

*Busy Schedule:* 82%  
*Arranging Childcare:* 36%  
*Cost of Childcare:* 17%  
*Interest/Motivation:* 6%  
*Transportation:* 5%  
*Other:* 5%

#### Comments/Other:

- Finances
- Homeschooling schedules
- I also work and children visits and medical appointments.
- I love online training. I am very busy and adding travel time to go to in person training makes it much more difficult to attend.
- I think having workshops taped for replay has been great.
- I'm enjoying zoom.
- No barrier.
- No issues.
- No reason other than scheduled appointments.
- None.
- Online works best for me.
- Online works well for me.
- Sometimes topics are just not applicable for infants.
- There are no barriers at this time.
- Times the workshops are offered is a barrier for me as I'm only available late afternoon or evenings.
- With most workshops offered in Langford and you don't get home from work until 5pm, feeding the family and living on the Saanich Peninsula a person can never get there in time for the workshop.
- Work.

**Summary:** The most commonly cited barrier preventing foster caregivers from attending training is time. Many foster caregivers work outside the home in addition to fostering, and their schedules are full. FPSS Society's ability to remove this barrier is limited. FPSS Society attempts to offer training at various times to allow the maximum number of caregivers to attend. Online training has made this easier but has not completely removed the barrier. Evening classes may still be a challenge for caregivers that have children or youth who are in the home and require attention during the scheduled training time. Training and meetings scheduled in the evening often have low registration, and facilitators are often only available during the day.



## ACCESSIBILITY

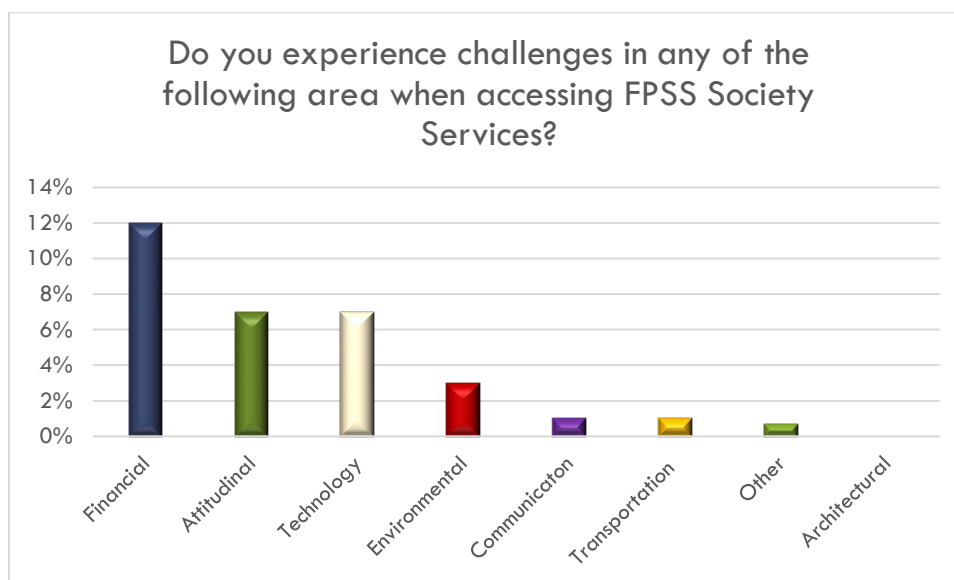
### Do you experience challenges in any of the following area when accessing FPSS Society Services?

Other: 14% Financial: 12% Attitudinal: 7% Technology: 7% Environmental: 3% Communication: 1% Transportation: 1% Architectural: 0%

#### Comments

- All good
- Caring for many children means that available spare time is sooooo limited. Sometimes I just can't cope with even thinking of anything related to kids so I can reset myself and be relaxed when they come home from school.
- Everything has been well done, although I haven't been to any in person training.
- I find it hard to keep up with technology.
- I find the FPSS staff to be courteous, friendly and helpful. I appreciate all you do!
- I have no babysitters to look after my children.
- I have personal needs around weakened immune system.
- I personally have no issues have great support.
- N/A (x2)
- No challenges (x4)
- No issues.
- No problems with FPSS service logistics.
- No problems. Your availability online etc. works for all,
- None (x11)
- Not really.
- Some of the training takes a few weeks, my schedule changes frequently. Can sign up or get half done and everything changes around and am not always able to continue.
- Some people become teachers to work with children. That is their love. Some people become doctors to work with children. That is their love. I became a foster parent to work with children. That is my love. It does not mean that I am an educated or have no other options. It would be nice for the world to recognize this that people do this job because they care. We are certainly not acknowledged by the outside or the government for this service that we willingly give.

**Summary:** FPSS strives to ensure its services and supports are accessible to all caregivers. The use of person-first, culturally safe language is considered when the organization creates ads, Social Media posts, posters, brochures, and other documents. Venues for in-person training are accessible. FPSS is offering tutorials/support for caregivers who would like to become more comfortable with the virtual platforms (Zoom, Skype, Teams) used to deliver services.



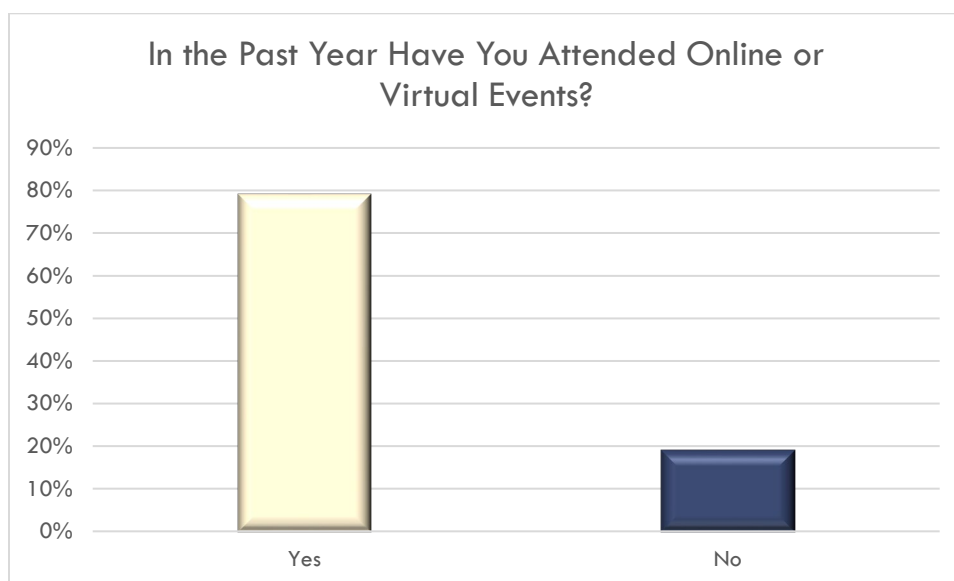
### In the past year, have you attended any online or virtual training, meetings, or support sessions?

Yes: 40.6% No: 19%

#### Comments

- A online session on children using the internet safely.
- CCI and Mandt.
- Had done several.
- I Attended meetings over zoom.
- I chose most workshops around FASD as our BC adopted daughter lives with FASD.
- I have done many of the courses you have offered this year online. I am thankful that they
- are available for me to attend in my home environment.
- I would say at least a dozen, both in person and online.
- ICM meetings.
- Online training for the most part has been excellent.
- TBRI hope for the Journey .
- This is my preferred format.
- 

**Summary:** Shifting service delivery to a virtual format has been successful overall but there are challenges that must be overcome. The organization continues to become familiar with the features of these platforms. Coordinators are finding a path through the new normal and slowly determining what works best for the caregivers in their community. Where appropriate, FPSS offers hybrid workshops where caregivers can choose between attending in person, or through a virtual platform. Some foster caregivers are not comfortable speaking openly and honestly in a virtual setting.



#### Did you experience any barriers in attending online or virtual training?

No: 38% Busy Schedule: 28% Preference for In-Person training: 8% Comfort with Required Technology: 3% Other: 3% Lack of Reliable High-Speed Internet: 3% Comfort in Speaking or Asking Questions in Virtual Format: 2% Lack of Required Technology: 1%

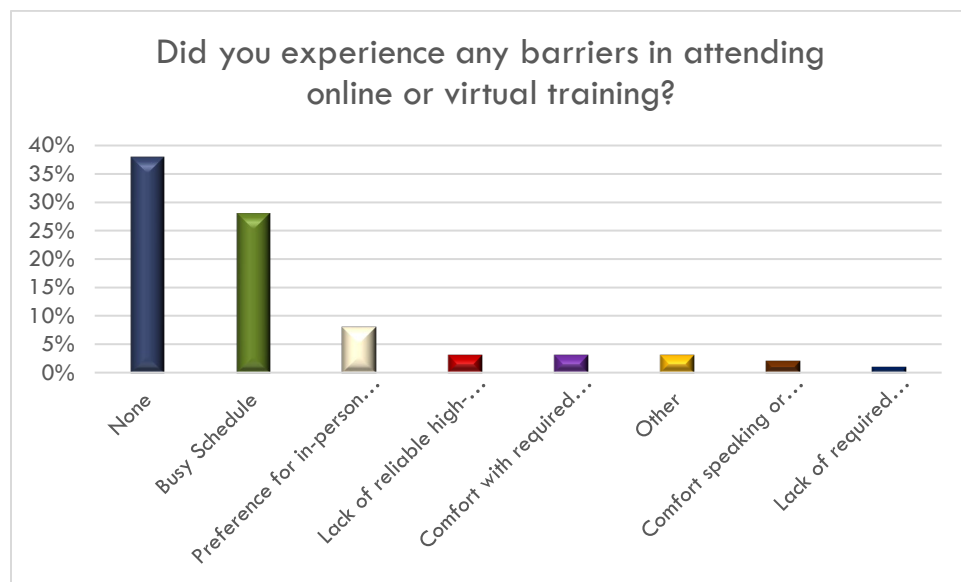
#### Comments

- Although sadly I did mix myself up and forgot to register for an event that I was very interested in. It would have been a review of the topic, and there will be more opportunities at another time.
- Everything has been great. At times some of the guest speakers aren't very prepared and hard to follow.
- Got a new baby, their needs came first. I tried, had to mute and just listen on a couple and not participate.
- I do my best to negotiate the internet and the zoom. Foster support is usually in place to help with the for example turn off your mic.
- This really is an asset .
- I find the discussions that we naturally have when we meet in person are so much richer than when we are on zoom. I'm way more comfortable adding to the discussion in person, and it flows more naturally. I find the presentation by the speaker can still be super effective but the discussion with other caregivers is not the same. I miss that.

- I will always prefer in person, but sometimes it is easier online.
- No not at all. You have to take the time it's in our best interest.
- Only have evenings.
- Sorry to respond so repetitive, but more evening opportunities please, or having replays available for all workshops.
- The time of some of the topics when a person works full time.
- We live in Gold River and our internet isn't great.

**Summary:** As seen in earlier sections, the most common barrier foster caregivers face in attending training and other events is time and personal commitments. Online training reduces barriers for some caregivers but does not add more hours to the day. Political, Social, Economic, and Legislative environments are still shifting and re-evaluating post pandemic and thus flexibility is required in much of the organization's service delivery work. The fostering world is just one piece of a large, complicated puzzle we are all trying to put together, in the dark, without a picture of the final version.

Caregivers continue to emphasize the difference between in-person and virtual training in terms of meaningful connections and sharing.



## ONLINE TRAINING

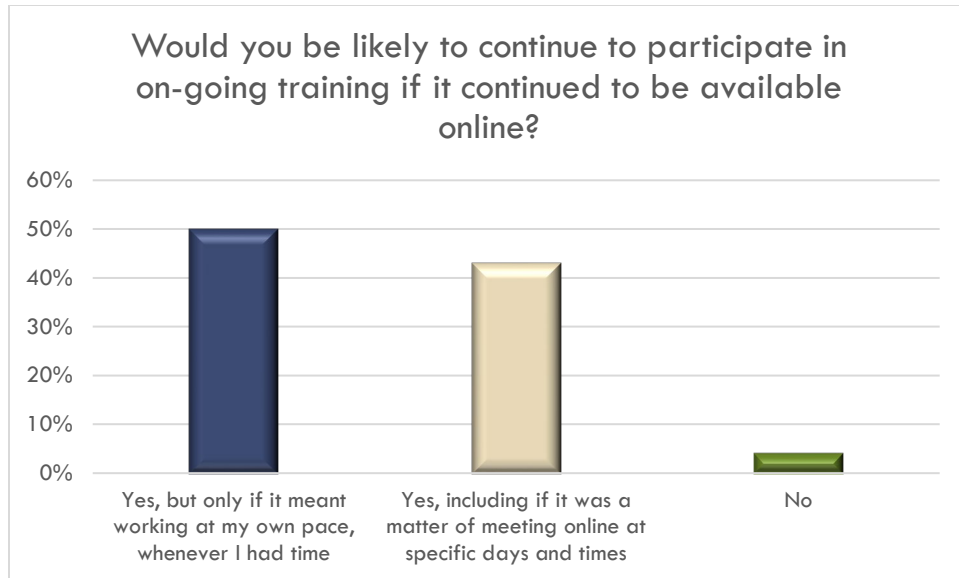
**Would you be more likely to participate in ongoing training if it was available in an online format?**

Yes (At my own pace schedule): 50% Yes (At scheduled dates and times): 43% No: 4%

### Comments

- No 4%
- Yes, including if it was at specific days and times (44%)
- Yes, but only if it meant working at my own pace, whenever I had time (e.g. replays) 50%

**Summary:** Caregivers would attend on-line training at predetermined days and times, as well as at their own pace. The difference in the two groups (50% versus 44%) is less than what may be expected based on comments in previous sections regarding busy schedules and unavailability during the day. Caregivers also indicate they place value on in-person interaction with peers.




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**Would you attend in-person training if it followed PHO orders and had appropriate health and safety practices in place?**

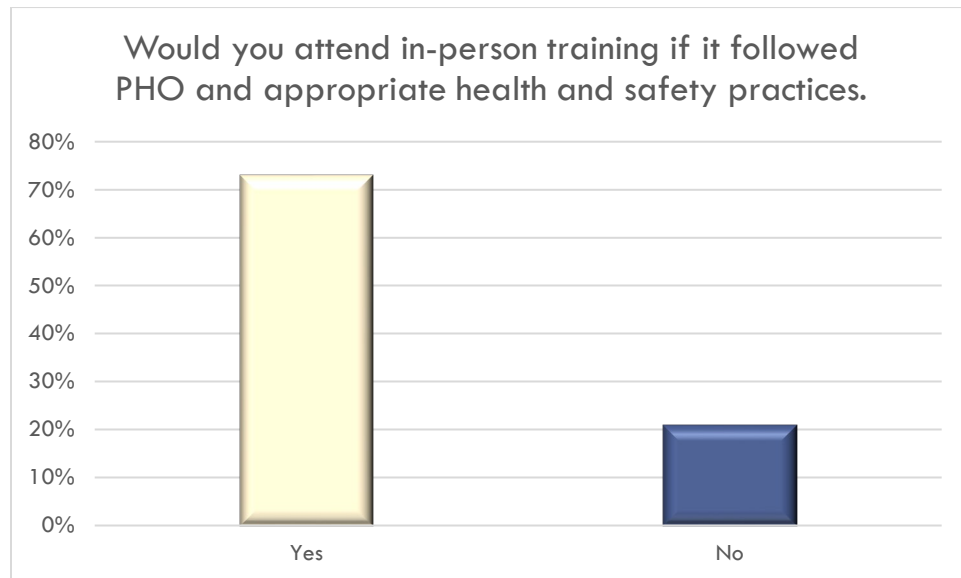
Yes: 73% No: 21%

**Comments:**

- Absolutely we need to return to pre covid times.
- But I really do enjoy the online as well as it makes it easier to participate more frequently.
- Depending on where it is and how it fits with the school schedule. I am available while the kids are at school.
- DEPENDS ON TIME AND DATE.
- Depends on time of day. Either during school hours or evenings then yes!
- Depends topic and time of day
- Due to time restraints.
- I am so tired of masks and all the public health restrictions. I hope they don't bring them back. It makes it hard to hear and no one looks friendly. In an online session people are safer if there are problems again.
- I currently have a 10 month old and 20 month old so in person is impossible.
- I said no but not because I am worried about health and safety but because it is VERY difficult to do it with younger kids.
- I would attend irrespective of pho orders provided I'm in good health.
- I would be interested yes!.
- I would say yes but only like a pre-covid environment.
- I would try to.
- I'd rather stay online than participate with masks and social distancing, so yet another potential barrier to in person I suppose.
- If I have to.
- Maybe. Prefer online.
- My health restrictions.
- Need to supervise an aging person.
- No I'm going to retire soon.
- Not because of that. My time and kiddos doesn't work for in-person.
- Not really "no", but "less likely". I find it easier to attend online, as adding travel time takes up more of your day.
- Personal limitations around weakened immune system.
- Possibly, but life is busy!
- The cost of babysitting is to much also travel adds to the cost.
- We do not live on the island.
- We would try to we have small children.
- Work in daytime Mon-Fri.
- Would prefer online at my own pace.
- Yes but I prefer online.
- Foster parents support group.
- I don't have face book so I feel somewhat isolated on gatherings
- I don't use Facebook, Twitter or Instagram so I don't really know.
- I would love to see more consistent emails of courses coming or being offered. Most FPSS events are held during school and work hours which makes them hard to attend.
- Local rep emails regularly.

- Resource showing the different flags for the LGBTQIA2S+ and different terms and definitions.
- The calendar seems to not be compatible with mobile devices. It is scrambled.

**Summary:** While some caregivers are eager to return to the in-person training and events of the pre-Covid world, others have discovered that the on-line training better suits their schedules and homes. For caregivers in remote areas (Gulf Islands) virtual training allows them to participate in events they would otherwise be unable to attend.



## WEBSITE

Which features of the FPSS Society's website (fpsss.com) have you used in the past year?

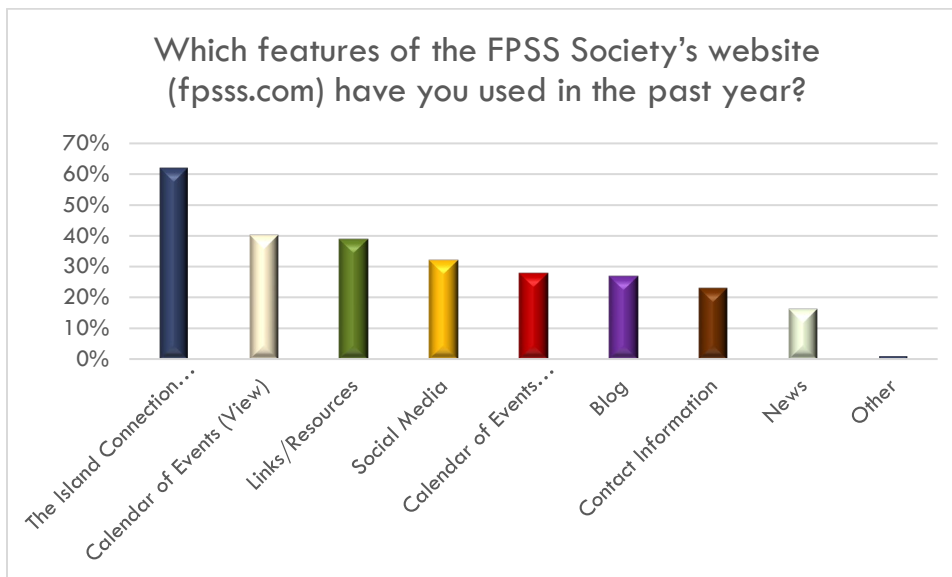
<i>The Island Connection newsletter:</i>	62%
<i>Calendar of events (view):</i>	40%
<i>Links or resources:</i>	39%
<i>Social Media platforms (Facebook, Twitter):</i>	32%
<i>Calendar of events (download):</i>	28%
<i>Contact information for FPSS Society:</i>	23%
<i>News:</i>	16%
<i>Other:</i>	1%

Comments/Other:

- Didn't even know it existed? I just use the magazine sent in mail or emails I receive.
- However I read the Island Connection newsletter which is delivered to my inbox. I love that its so easy for me to access and I don't have to remember because it comes to me.
- I read the emails.
- I usually only access it when I am looking for something specific.
- I will check it out more.
- If I'm looking for something.
- Never.



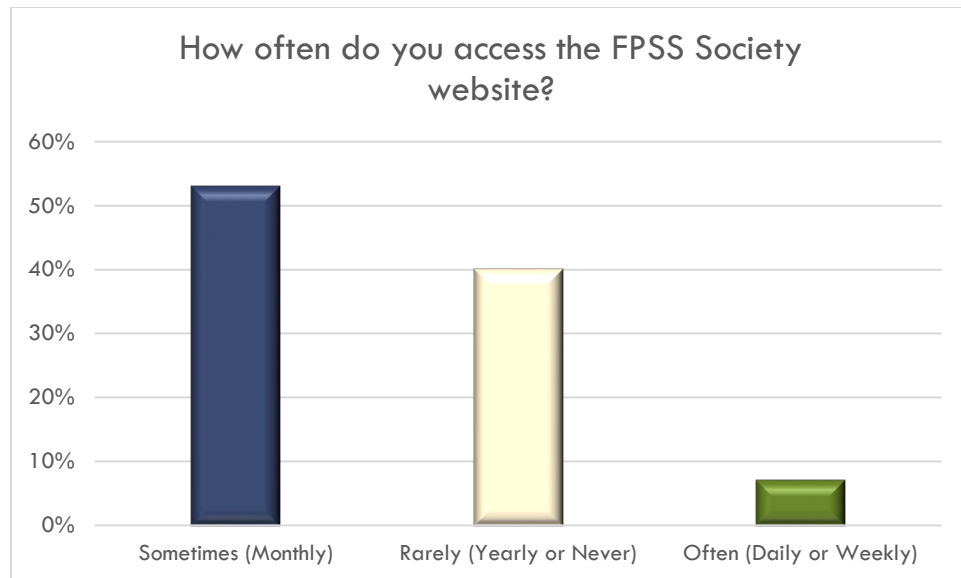
**Summary:** Most foster caregivers who access [fpsss.com](http://fpsss.com) do so to view *The Island Connection*. Event calendars are viewed and downloaded from the website. Use of social media platforms is gradually increasing over time. This provides guidance on where FPSS Society should focus its resources.



#### How often do you access the FPSS Society website?

Sometimes (Monthly): 53%  
 Rarely (Yearly or never): 40%  
 Often (Daily or weekly): 7%

**Summary:** Most foster caregivers who completed the survey report accessing the website monthly. This also provides guidance on where FPSS Society should focus its time and funds regarding [fpsss.com](http://fpsss.com). As nearly a third of caregivers access the website rarely or never, FPSS Society needs to maintain emphasis on providing hard copies of the newsletter, email distribution lists, phone, and face-to-face connections with foster parents to keep them informed of training, events, and changes to policy and practice.



## PEER SUPPORT

### How important is peer support and networking with other foster parents?

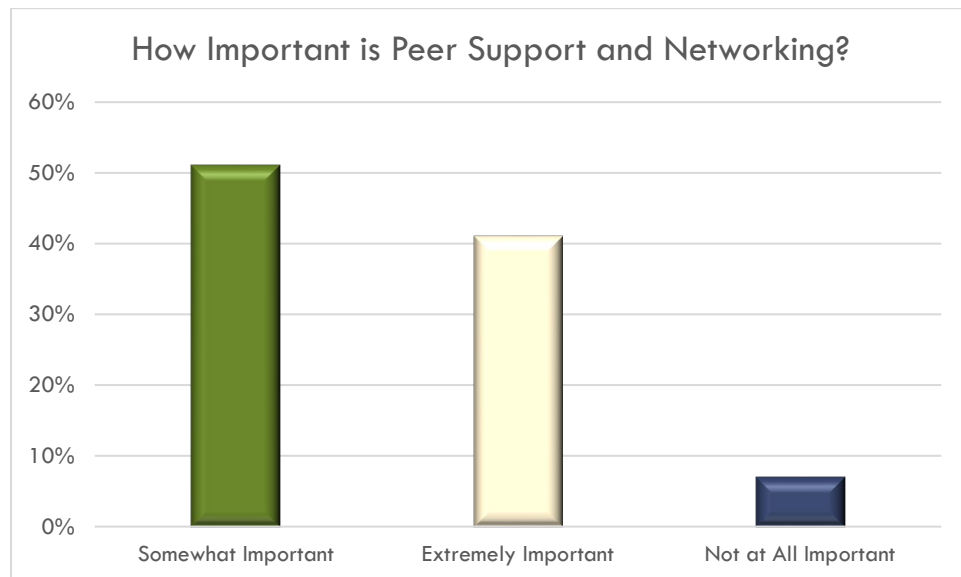
*Extremely Important:* 41%  
*Somewhat important:* 51%  
*Not at all important:* 7%

#### Comments

- How jobs are home-based so having a network is very important. It keeps us current. It keeps us focused and it keeps us being able to move forward.
- I find pre 2020 I knew quite a few other foster caregivers and had opportunities to interact with them and now I know only maybe 2 or 3 others and only connect regularly with 1 of those.
- I find with all the kids schedule, it doesn't work. Except when there is an organized activity. Ex, child and youth in care.
- I haven't been successful.
- I keep in contact with my daughters previous caregivers. And use them for respite for my gusted babies because I know and trust them.
- I think it is very important but very difficult to coordinate schedules/.
- I think that it can be very useful, however, I find that many foster parents are not showing up to do this. I'm not sure why.
- I would like in between likely and extreme.
- I'm a lot younger than the people that go. It's uncomfortable.
- In a small community it is easy to do.
- It would be nice but have found it often turns into a bitch session:/.
- My circumstances don't really give me the freedom to participate in peer support or networking.
- Sandy Case is my rock.
- Sometimes it's good to ask another parent who's gone through the same issues for advice.
- This is lacking in our area.
- Wish there was way more. I don't know many foster parents and I would love to know way more.

**Summary:** Foster caregivers who completed the survey reported they value the opportunity to meet and interact with other foster caregivers. This emphasis is a reoccurring theme on most questions in this survey. Meetings, social events, and ongoing training not only offer information and practical strategies but, more importantly, they offer and opportunity to share the challenges and rewards of fostering on a more informal basis. When foster caregivers face particularly difficult days, it is the relationship with their peers that they often turn to for support. FPSS Society strives to provide these opportunities on a regular

basis, in a variety of formats, and to ensure all foster caregivers are connected to peers through face-to-face, email, or phone contact. This is both more important and more challenging given the realities of the post COVID-19 world.



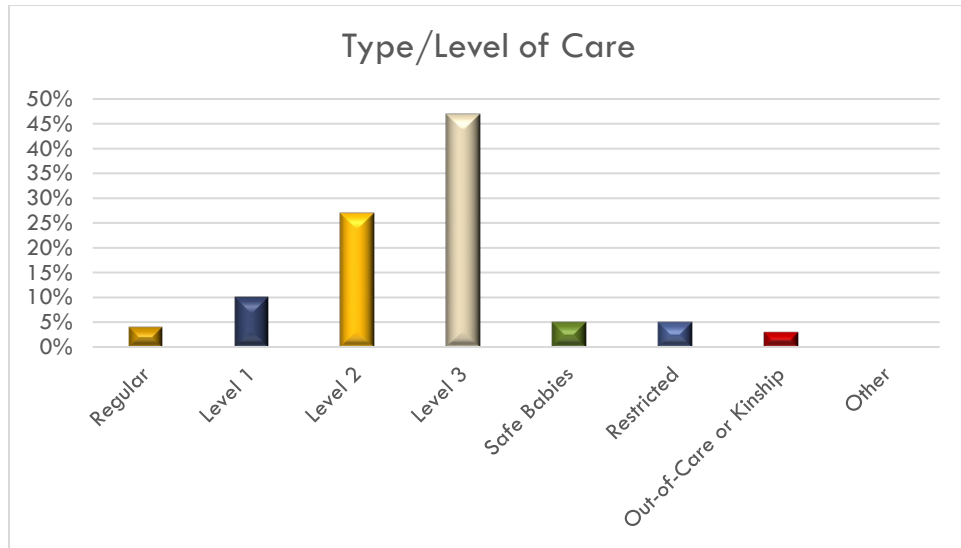
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#### What type/level of care do you provide?

*Regular: 4% Level 1: 10% Level 2: 27% Level 3: 47% Safe Babies: 5% Restricted: 5% Out-of-care or Kinship: 3%*

#### Comments:

- 3 and safe babies
- And Safe Babies
- Both level 3/2/1 and Kinship
- Currently as a support worker for at risk youth.
- I mostly do level 2 but have had level 3 for a few days to help out.
- I think it's this one
- I'm level 2 safe babies, I have done restricted care and currently trying to level up to 3.
- Indigenous agency, I have both a level 2 and 3 child at the moment
- Level 1
- Level 2 and , kinship
- Level 2,safe babies, kinship
- Level 3 safe babies
- Respite also
- Safe babies, respite/relief, kinship, Afterhours
- Started 31 years ago
- Always have had youth"
- We typically do safe baby - age 7.
- 0-3 kids at a time.
- Will there be a Safe Babies training coming soon?



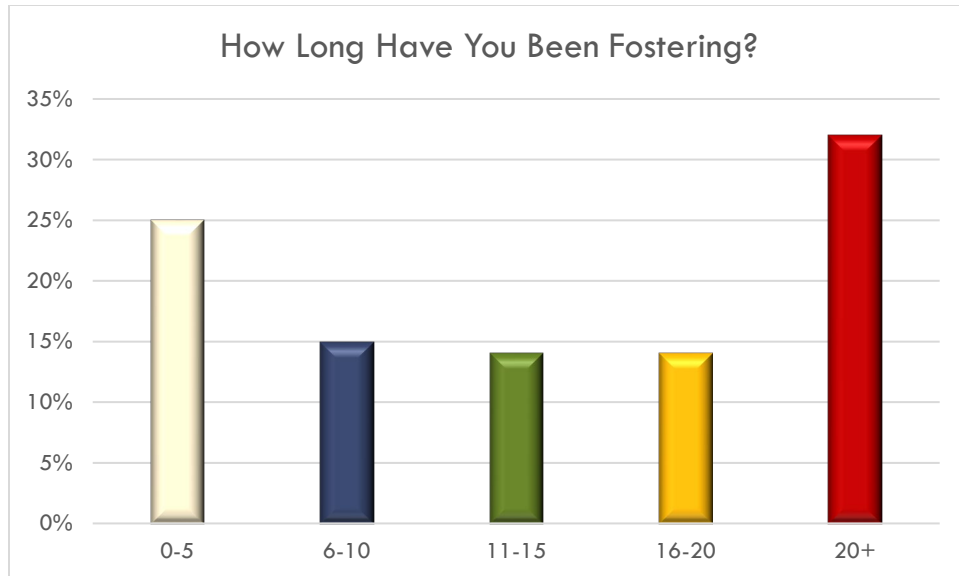
**Summary:** The majority of caregivers who completed the survey provide Level 3 support. This is a reflection of the complex needs of the children and youth coming into care as well as the experience and skills of current caregivers. The need for foster caregivers who have the experience and skills to provide appropriate care to these vulnerable children and youth creates challenges in recruiting the new caregivers. Those who work with children and youth with support needs as a profession do not always want to bring these challenges into their personal home. Those who have the skills and experience discover that dealing with a child with support needs for a short time in a school setting is quite different from living with the child 24/7. They quickly learn that what they can do as a foster caregiver may be quite different from what they can do as clinician or education assistant.

### How long have you been fostering?

0 to 5 years: 25% 6 to 10 years: 15% 11 to 15 years: 14% 16 to 20 years: 14% 20+ years: 32%

#### Comments:

- 30+
- almost 6 years
- Enjoyed every minute of it.
- I have been restrictive to 2 children, siblings.
- Plus in the past a few times.



Summary: The responses from caregivers who completed the survey show clearly that caregivers have been fostering for many years. This is concerning as many of them will be retiring soon and will take a wealth of knowledge with them. In addition to recruiting new caregivers to replace those retiring, FPSS would be wise to find ways to keep connected with these caregivers who can act as Elders (Facilitators? Mentors?) in the fostering community and pass on their knowledge.

## Recruitment

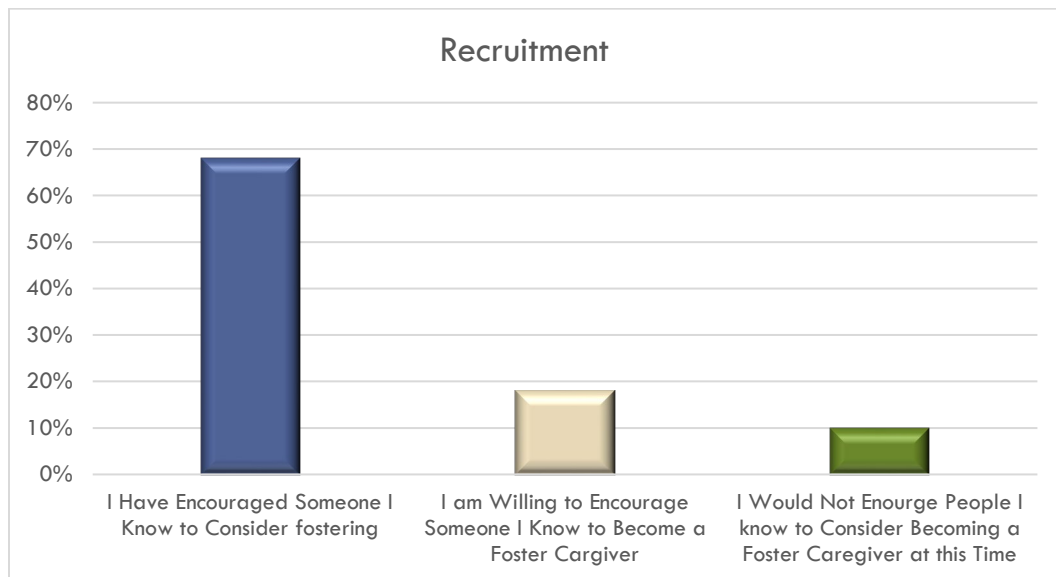
**As a caregiver, are you willing or have you in the past encouraged someone you know to consider becoming a foster caregiver by suggesting they attend a Foster Hope Information Session or contact FPSS Regional Office?**

*I have encouraged someone I know to consider fostering: 68% I am willing to encourage someone I know to become a foster caregiver: 18% I would not encourage people I know to consider becoming a foster caregiver at this time: 10%*

### Comments:

- Elsewhere.
- Fostering is not always easy. I would only encourage if I knew the child, parents.
- Honestly being a foster parent is the hardest thing I've ever done in my life. I can't in good faith recommend that somebody else do this. I have an unusually strong support in my partner who is an experienced social worker. But if I wasn't partnered with her I don't know how I would do this.
- I have passed along the information to individuals who have approached me for information on how to become involved, but I do not "recruit" people by talking about fostering and encouraging them to consider fostering.
- I love what I do and I encourage people often to become foster parents but the reality is MCFD and the social workers are often very difficult to work with and is my full time job.
- I really just can't think of anyone at this time who could take fostering on.
- I struggle to encourage people to become foster parents, although we need foster homes, some social workers make it an impossible job.
- I would love to have easy to share Facebook posts featuring the next one or two upcoming info sessions for my area or the island. I have looked recently and the graphic did not fit on a Facebook post nicely in any way, and when you clicked the link it went to a page that was not immediately particularly helpful. Or to the event but even then the details were not super obvious and easy to find. Dates, times and fosterhope.ca for further info, something like that would be wonderful.

- I'm an advocate for fostering.
- It would have to be someone who could handle the treatment of foster parents by MCFD. I would have to be honest about the struggle through the years. Your status with MCFD can change in a moment's notice. The children are amazing.
- It's a hard job. Kids are wonderful, some workers not so.
- You do your best and sometimes it's not enough
- It's such a beautiful thing to do.
- My dental assistant last week said she was very interested. If she'd been on a lunch break, I'd have dragged her over to a Resource worker on the spot.
- Not sure how to answer this one. I would but sadly it is very hard to work with social workers and many people don't have time to advocate heavily for services for these kids. I hear so many talk about how unsupported they felt and how hard they have to fight for small amounts of support. Hard to convince others to join something that is very outdated and needs to change for the better.
- Our time with Fostering has been a very positive one. We have had all our questions and needs met.
- Right now she does Relief for me.
- The province doesn't listen to problems we have
- There is not enough support from social workers. Don't feel children and youth's needs are provided for properly.
- Not enough support for new caregivers.
- Very difficult times, at the moment. In past have encouraged others but now, hesitant because of the lack of supports for a new foster home and the challenging behaviours that a child/teen comes with.
- We are in our early 30s. Most of folks our age can't afford to buy. Rent is astronomical. MCFD is unreliable in support. We will be closing our home when our kids age out.
- Yes, lots of foster caregivers come because they know someone who fosters. But I don't think any pressure should be put on caregivers to recruit. Not our job.



**Summary:** Foster caregivers completing the survey are open and honest about the challenge of fostering and working with the ministry. For the most part, they are positive about fostering but cautious in whom they would encourage to consider becoming a foster caregiver. They are aware of the unique set of skills required to foster. Many of those who attend Foster Hope Information Sessions report hearing about the need for more foster homes through friends or family. Foster caregivers continue to be a valued resource in the recruitment of new caregivers.





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