

Advisor

Spring 2013



Advisor

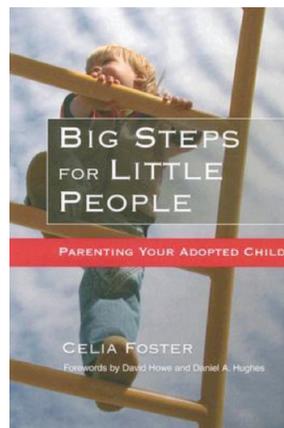
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BIG STEPS for Little People

by Celia Foster

Celia Foster, mother of two adopted children, has written *Big Steps for Little People* as a personal 'insider's guide' to parenting adopted children. Drawing on the hard-won wisdom gained through her own experiences of the adoption process and beyond, Celia offers a thoughtful account of life with adopted children and examines the issues that many families encounter, including the development of children with attachment problems and how to tackle behavioural difficulties. She combines real-life anecdotes with suggestions and strategies that other parents can put to use. This book offers support to all adoptive families and offers insights for the professionals who work with them. (Paperback, 2008)



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2013 CFFA National Conference Dates

2013 CFFA National Conference—"UNITED IN CARING" is being hosted by the Foster Parents Society of Ontario.

The dates for the 2013 CFFA National Conference are:

June 9 – 16, 2013

at Toronto Parkway North Hotel, Richmond, Ontario

More information to be announced.

We need your e-mail!

We are now sending e-mails to our foster parents on a monthly basis. To be added to our list and receive the latest news, please send your e-mail address to wayne@sffa.sk.ca

Thank-you!

2013 PROVINCIAL Annual General Meeting

will be held at 1:00 pm

June 15, 2013

Radisson Hotel

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

SFFA Executive Director's Message

As I begin to write this message, gazing out the window, I see mounds of white snow. Hmmm... and they say that today is the first day of SPRING! Therefore, I will not begin by saying how glad I am that spring has arrived, but rather to say I hope that by the time you read this message the snow will have begun to melt. It has been a long winter for everyone here in Saskatchewan!



We are working to educate the community in the important role that foster parents play in the lives of children each day.

The SFFA recognizes and applauds foster families throughout the province for the work that you do to in providing care to the children placed in your homes. We are working to educate the community in the important role that foster parents play in the lives of children each day. Foster families are professional parents caring for some of the most vulnerable children. You assist not only in the day-to-day care, you provide the child welfare workers with the necessary information when doing planning for the Ministry's children.

The SFFA is making retention of foster families our priority. Without foster parents, the foster care system would come to a halt. We need you, and the children need you!

SFFA Updates:

First Aid & CPR: Over 40 % of foster families throughout the province have been trained in First Aid & CPR. Foster parents are required to have the mandatory training completed by March 2014. If you have not yet completed training, please call

Nicole Hoffman at the provincial office by calling 1.866.276.2880.

Training Sessions: The SFFA has different training sessions available for presentation to your local Leadership Teams. If you are interested in hosting a training event in your area, please call Paul Bunz at 1.866.276.2880 and check online at sffa.sk.ca to see what training is available.

Foster Family Advocates: The SFFA can provide you with support if you need help. The SFFA Foster Family Advocates are here to listen, support, and mediate for our members. Whether it is finding out the answer to a question or attending a meeting to support you on any issue, if you would like assistance please call our office at 1.866.276.2880.

Damage Assessment: Have you had a child or youth in your foster home cause damage to your property? If so, you can call the office to assist you with making a claim to the Ministry. The first step is to report the damage to your Ministry Resource Worker and then call our office to start the process.

SFFA Website: The SFFA website can provide you with important information that will support you in your role as a foster parent. Check out the website for updates and our latest addition: the SFFA blog!

SFFA Provincial Annual Meeting: This year's meeting is being held on June 15, 2013 at the Radisson Hotel (405 20th Street East, Saskatoon). Training begins at 8:30 AM and the business portion of the meeting will commence at 1:00 PM. If you are interested in attending this year's meeting, please contact your Leadership Team (Local Association) in your area.

In closing, I would like to thank our Board of Directors, our community partners and the Provincial Office staff. Without the strong partnership and commitment from everyone, we would not have been able to reach the milestones that we have. We look forward to the continued partnerships as we strive to provide further supports to our families.

Deb Davies
Executive Director

A National Conference on Keeping Kids Safe and Connected



Keeping children safe and connected to their communities is up to all of us. Registration is now open for a first-of-its-kind conference in Vancouver April 24 and 25, 2013 that will actively examine how best to develop resiliency in children and youth while keeping them safe and connected.

Champions for Children and Youth 2013 B.C. Summit: A National Conference on Keeping Kids Safe and Connected is sponsored by B.C.'s Representative for Children and Youth in partnership with the Child Welfare League of Canada and the Canadian Red Cross.

“Research shows that the more children and youth feel safe and included in their communities, the better their outcomes as adults will be,” said B.C.'s Representative Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond. “We want to look at the emotional needs of young people and share the practical knowledge that helps us focus on strengthening awareness and skills at the grassroots level within communities across the country to prevent children from ending up in desperate situations.”

Speakers who will inspire and challenge our thinking and our responses include:

- **Sheldon Kennedy**, former National Hockey League player with a poignant story about overcoming abuse and the importance of speaking out against abuse.
- **Dr. William C. Bell**, president and chief executive officer of Casey Family Programs, a Seattle-based and internationally renowned U.S. foundation that works to provide and improve services to children and families.
- **Shane Koyczan**, an internationally renowned Canadian spoken word poet, writer and performer.
- Travis Price, Nova Scotia founder of the anti-bullying Pink Shirt Day.
- **Jody Paterson**, former executive director of PEERS Victoria Resource Society, (an outreach centre serving past and current sex-trade workers), award-winning journalist who is currently working with Cuso International in Honduras.
- **Dr. Alan Goldberg**, internationally-known sports psychologist committed to changing the landscape of youth sports through the education of coaches and parents, helping them understand what young athletes most need from the adults involved to feel healthy and successful.
- **Dr. Wendy Craig**, world's leading expert on cyber bullying, professor of psychology at Queen's University and co-director of PREVNet (Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network), a national initiative that provides youth and adults with knowledge, strategies and tools to prevent violence and promote healthy relationships.
- **Naomi Haines Griffith**, an international expert on child welfare issues and family systems specialist – challenges and inspires audiences in business, education, youth justice, mental health, child abuse prevention, and family violence systems.
- **Dr. Paul Kells**, a business and not-for-profit social entrepreneur internationally recognized for his leadership in conceiving and implementing culture change strategies in health and safety within organizations and communities.

During two days, more than 300 conference participants will discuss issues ranging from bullying, to youth coaching practices, to the temptations of gang affiliations as they examine the systems of support that exist to address the real challenges our young people face.

Registration is now open at the conference website, with an early-bird discount available for those who register before Feb. 28, 2013. To register, visit online at www.rcy2013summit.com

Are you willing to bet on them?

As a foster parent, meeting the child's most basic needs is first priority, but it will often go far beyond that. Foster care is seen as a risk, a liability, or plain crazy by some. To an extent, they may have a point; yet, what they do not know about foster parents is that we are hooked on gambling! Not in the money sense...as working with foster children will never be a money maker, but rather we are willing to go all in on each child that we are blessed with.

Are you willing to bet on them? Do they know you have their back and will support them whether they fail or succeed? Face it, when you bet on something, the results may be disappointing at times. What each one of these children needs is the knowledge that you believe in them and will help them try and reach towards goals and dreams that they have thought of as only fantasy, in the past.

I cannot begin to imagine the life that many of these children have endured in a short number of years. And once we begin receiving our own placements, we will still only be seeing the story through their lives and words (if they share). However, not actually having had any part in that prior history that so readily molds how they are identified and think about themselves provides us the means to give them a fresh start.

That is probably not what they want to hear, "Hey, think of this as a new beginning." So, don't say it like that.



What each one of these children needs is the knowledge that you believe in them and will help them try and reach towards goals and dreams that they have thought of as only fantasy, in the past.



Rather be that place of safety that they may never have experienced. Ensure that they can live in an encouraging environment and home atmosphere. Plus, become

that someone who they can talk to if needed and know that they have a willing and listening ear who will care about them and treat them as a respectable human.

And most importantly, help them to feel valued and capable. Do you remember someone in your life that was willing to bet on you? A person who believed in what you were trying to accomplish and came along side you with their full support. For me, it was my Dad.

We may only have a temporary presence in the lives of our foster kids, so I want to make it count!

Dan and his wife are in the beginning stages of becoming foster parents. They will be completing the Foster Care Training this summer and looking to foster children ages 0-5. He writes for a blog called, Foster Care Dad, sharing the experience through the eyes of a dad. Read his blog at www.fostercaredad.com

The Government of Saskatchewan is pleased to participate in a national endeavour to address childhood obesity. Governments across Canada today launched Our Health Our Future: A National Dialogue on Healthy Weights as part of the Childhood Obesity Engagement Strategy. The Government of Saskatchewan has been actively involved in the development of this strategy and is taking steps to build on existing initiatives and identify areas for future action.

“Our province endorses the Declaration on Prevention and Promotion and the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Framework for Action to Promote Healthy Weights,” Health Minister Don McMorris said. “To address this growing concern, the Ministry of Health is developing a Healthy Weights Framework for Saskatchewan.”

The Healthy Weights Framework will explore the conditions that support healthy weights, the root causes of unhealthy weights, and suggest approaches and initiatives in the promotion of healthy weights.

Early this summer the Ministry of Health will be hosting a provincial roundtable on Healthy Weights that will bring together

Healthy Weights for Future Generations

A COLLECTIVE ENDEAVOUR



provincial stakeholders such as public, private, non-governmental organizations, community leaders and policy and decision-makers. The roundtable will explore both national and provincial perspectives and will draw from the Healthy Weights Framework and the Childhood Obesity Engagement Strategy to provide direction for future action to promote healthy weights in Saskatchewan.

The Ministry of Health has been working in partnership with the Ministries of Education and Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport, non profit organizations and regional health authorities on a number of programs and resources to promote physical activity and healthy eating

for children and youth. These resources are meant to help children, youth and their families lead healthy, active lifestyles and take an active role in improving their own health.

“Research indicates that students who are physically active and properly nourished enjoy many benefits including higher academic performance,” Education Minister Donna Harpauer said. “It is important that we work together to encourage schools, students and communities to engage in daily physical activity and to make healthier food choices. Initiatives such as the Healthy Kids School Challenge, allow us to increase awareness, and provide the support and encouragement necessary to build a healthier lifestyle for everyone.”

“What we’re really talking about here is the health and the long-term quality of life of our children,” Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport Minister Bill Hutchinson said. “There is a lot of evidence, such as the Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card, that tells us young people are not as active as they need to be. Saskatchewan is taking action now to address this challenge and is on-side with this national strategy to address childhood obesity.”

continued on next page...

A number of useful resources promoting healthy choices, health and wellness for children and youth are currently available:

Promoting Health for Children and Youth... <http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/children-youth>

Healthy Kids School Challenge... <https://challenge-edu.gov.sk.ca/>

Recreation and Sport... www.tpcs.gov.sk.ca

Healthy Kids... www.heartandstroke.sk.ca

Saskatchewan in motion movement... www.saskatchewaninmotion.ca

Our Health Our Future: A National Dialogue on Healthy Weights... www.ourhealthourfuture.gc.ca

Collaborative action is an important mechanism in addressing the root causes of preventable diseases and conditions, including childhood obesity.

“To be healthy and maintain a healthy weight, children and youth require a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity every day,” Saskatchewan in motion Manager Cathie Kryzanowski said. “Less than 15 per cent of Saskatchewan kids meet that guideline. Saskatchewan in motion supports collaborative approaches to increasing physical activity at home, at school and in the community.”



“In Canada, an alarming number of children and youth aged two to 17 years are overweight or obese - and this number is rising, putting Canada’s children at risk for heart disease at an early age,” Heart and Stroke Foundation of Saskatchewan CEO Lucy Buller said. “It is a problem that will take action from many perspectives to solve: schools have a role in providing daily physical activity and healthy foods at an affordable cost; governments can shape environments that support physical activity and provide affordable access to healthy foods; and parents can set the stage by building family traditions out of healthy eating, lots of active play and limiting their children’s screen time.”

“ON YOUR OWN” HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

Telephone

- List important numbers beside each telephone and/or program them in.
- Equip your phone with an answering device or service so it can take messages.
- Buy a phone with caller I.D. Tell your child to answer the phone only for specific callers. Let the phone take a message for all others.
- Install a wireless home monitoring system that will alert you to when your child returns home. Receive these alerts to your cell phone, office phone, BlackBerry or email. Adding a video camera can provide an extra layer of security so you can be aware even when you are not there.

Security

- Provide secure locks for all doors and windows.
- Store matches, lighters, medications, household cleaners, and other toxic substances in a safe place. Make sure they are clearly labelled and in their original containers.
- Lock up alcoholic beverages, and check to make sure they do not mysteriously disappear.
- Store firearms and ammunition separately and under lock and key.
- Use light timers so your child doesn’t come home to a dark house.

Fire Safety

- You must have a smoke alarm on each level of the house (or for homes on one level, near the kitchen and all bedrooms). Test them to make sure they all work.
- Replace any broken electrical cords and use no more than two plugs per outlet.
- Keep your hot water heater below 54°C to prevent scalding.

First Aid

Assemble a basic kit with your child, explaining what each item is and how to use it. Include:

- box of different-sized bandages for small cuts;
- sterile gauze pad for larger cuts, with adhesive tape to hold it and small scissors to cut the tape;
- tweezers to remove slivers;
- peroxide to clean cuts and cotton balls to apply it; and
- digital thermometer to check for fever.
- Keep a cold pack in the freezer.

Power Outages

- Keep a flashlight or two (and extra batteries) handy.
- Provide a few items that can run on batteries, e.g. radio, clock, electronic games.

Information provided by the Canada Safety Council (<https://canadasafetycouncil.org>)

Court Appearances and the Importance of Documentation for Foster Parents

Posted by ForeverMommy to Fostering Love



Foster parents are sometimes required to testify in court. This was never mentioned during all the hours of education and training I've had to undergo to get and maintain my foster parent license. It's not that there is any special technique that foster parents need to know, or specific protocols that need to be followed, but I've discovered there are a few things a foster parent can do to make the most of court appearances.

Depending on the facts of the case and on the judge, foster parents might make somewhat regular appearances. For my first six foster children, I was never required to physically appear in court. I had to write several letters to the court for one child, stating my opinions as his caregiver, but those were delivered by the child's case manager. However, for my two current foster children (a half brother and sister who are part of a larger sibling group), I've had to attend several hearings, including two for termination of parental rights. Foster parents' observations are valuable, and they should expect to be involved in representing the interests of their foster children.

I've always tried to keep a good record of important events in my foster children's lives. As the

As the frequency of my required court appearances increased, I learned how important it is to write EVERYTHING down.

frequency of my required court appearances increased, I learned how important it is to write EVERYTHING down. No matter how silly it might seem at the time, having a record of how your foster child acted after returning from visitations, when he started having nightmares, what birthday presents he did (or didn't) receive from his father, and how often you took him to visit his grandmother outside of the pre-arranged visits could all come in handy later.

I document a lot of that information in e-mails to the children's case managers and guardian ad litem. I try to send a "weekly update" e-mail to everyone who might be interested; even if there is nothing important to report, I let everyone know that the kids are doing well.

I also keep every scrap of paper that has anything to do with the foster children: medical records, school papers, and reports from therapists. In the case of foster children, it's better to have too much information than not enough. I've been asked to provide

information to the children's case manager, guardian ad litem, and even the court countless times. I was once asked to bring copies of all of my foster daughter's medical records to a court hearing, and it was so nice to know that I had everything in one place, ready to go.

It's been my experience that the court is less interested in my opinions about the child or the child's parents than in having me report provable facts. Were my foster daughter's immunizations up to date when she was placed in my home? How often does my foster son attend speech therapy and what kind of progress has he made since being placed in care? How do the children act after returning home from a visitation with their biological mother? The more information I have written down or filed, the easier it is for me to answer these questions. I always skim through my notes before I attend a hearing, just to make sure that I have everything fresh in my mind.

For the foster parent, court hearings may be opportunities to gain new information. Case managers get busy and might not remember to tell the foster parents every new development in the child's case. The case manager might omit mentioning something not out of neglect but because it simply doesn't seem important. For example, I heard something at one of the termination of parental rights hearings that seemed to everyone else like an inconsequential detail of an event that happened a long time ago, but for me, one of my foster son's strange behaviors suddenly made perfect sense. If I hadn't sat through the hearing, I'd have never understood what was bothering my foster son.

An important part of being a foster parent is advocating for the child. Foster children need their best interests represented not only at school or at the doctor's office, but in the courtroom, as well. Keeping good records for my foster children and being willing to testify about that information is an essential part of what I do as a foster parent.

Reprinted with permission from: <http://www.adoptivefamiliescircle.com/blogs/post/foster-parent-court-appearances-importance-of-documentation/>

Property damage claims

What happens if a child has damaged our home? Do I need to have insurance?

Foster families are expected to carry sufficient insurance to cover the value of their property. Deductibles for such insurance must fall within a normal range. You must take reasonable measures to assure that your property is protected from damage and that the children in your care are instructed in the proper care of property and provided with appropriate supervision.

While the primary source of compensation must be through insurance, the Ministry does not wish foster families to experience undue hardship due to damages by children placed in their care. As fully approved foster homes, members of the SFFA are eligible for coverage under the insurance "rider" that the SFFA purchases, which applies when a claim is not valid or collectible under the foster family's personal insurance due to the criminal or willful acts of the foster child. This "rider" does not cover damage to vehicles. Personal insurance on property and possessions must also be carried by the foster family.

In the event that the damage is not covered by personal home insurance or the SFFA liability insurance rider, foster families may seek compensation from the Ministry of Social Services. The foster parent(s) should notify the SFFA of any damage or loss caused by a foster child or children in their care. The SFFA will arrange for an Independent Damage Assessor to carry out an assessment of the loss or damage. An assessment will be completed to determine the origin, details of damage and the cost associated with the loss.

Following the completion of the assessment, the Damage Assessor will provide the Ministry of Social Services with a detailed report, outlining the damage amount the foster parent is seeking for the Ministry's consideration and possible reimbursement.



2013 National Foster Family Week

The 2013 National Foster Family Week is in the 3rd week of October, from the 20th to the 26th. It is the week we recognize foster parents/families across Canada.

Hundreds of popular celebrities were once placed in foster care as children, a little known fact about many stars that consumers hardly remember or do not even know about. Thousands of children are placed in foster homes in the United States each year, so it comes with little surprise that eventually a few of them become super stars with childhoods in foster care.

Widely known for his time at Saturday Night Live and his roles in Beverly Hills Cop and the Nutty Professor, actor and comedian Eddie Murphy spent one year in a foster home along with his older brother. This happened to the Murphy brothers once their father had passed away and their mother became too ill to care for the young boys.

Legendary country music singer and songwriter, Willie Nelson, also grew up in foster care. His mother abandoned him shortly after she gave birth to the boy, followed shortly by his biological father thereafter. From this point on Willie Nelson took refuge in foster care by extended family members, a feature common for the time.

Marilyn Monroe also spent time in foster homes. For nearly the first seven years of her life, Norma Jean Mortenson, grew up with in a foster home headed by a couple in California. After illness struck her foster family, she was then transferred to the state and housed in Los Angeles County Orphans Home. She would visit several others before she would marry just after she turned sixteen.



Famous fictional comic book character, Superman, was also a foster child. Superman's adoption by John and Martha Kent after his spacecraft landed near their home meant that the archetype of Superman's character would become the world's first interplanetary foster child. Raised there throughout his adolescence, Clark Kent grew up to become the most powerful superhero we have all known for years.

Human Rights activist and minister, Malcolm X, also grew up in various foster conditions. After white supremacists had killed his father, his mother was placed in several mental illness facilities. This left Malcolm Little with no other option than to join the ranks of thousands of young African Americans that continue to grow up disproportionately as foster children.

After her mother became too mentally ill to care for her,

Charlotte Ayanna would spend several of her teen years from one foster home to another. She would eventually become Miss Teen USA and a successful actress starring in such films as Kate and Leopold, Love the Hard Way, and Training Day, with Denzel Washington. Her book titled *Lost in the System* details much of her experiences in and out of foster homes as a teen.

Few realize that many foster children have gone on to become massively successful. These few celebrities and former foster children are a testament to this fact. There are hundreds of other actors, celebrities, businessmen, comedians, artists, and athletes who were once a part of the foster system. As hundreds of children continue to enter this system, we can all expect more celebrities and stars to emerge.

ArticleSource:<http://www.ArticleBlast.com>

Foster parenting in film and television

by Isla Campbell

Fostering and adoption aren't issues that are tackled by the Hollywood movie studios very often. Nor are you likely to see them crop up on your television screen. These issues are so charged that few writers and producers feel that they can really handle them comfortably. But while most filmmakers shy away, a few brave production teams decide to meet the fostering head on and tackle both sides of the story. The movies *I Am Sam* and *Antwone Fisher* and the television show *The Wire* are among the few productions that have really confronted the issue.

The 2001 movie *I Am Sam*, starring Sean Penn, Michelle Pfeiffer and Dakota Fanning, tackles the issue of foster parenting although its focus is primarily on father Sam Dawson, a developmentally disabled man played by Sean Penn. The story focuses on Sam's enduring struggle to raise his daughter and fight for his right to be a father to her under pressure from the authorities who wish to place her into foster care. *I Am Sam* reminds us that fostering is never a clear cut issue, and that there are complications and emotions both for the birth families and foster families, as well as for the children themselves.

A year later, *Antwone Fisher*, the directorial debut of actor Denzel Washington, also tackled the issue of fostering head on. The movie follows the story of Antwone, played by Derek Luke,

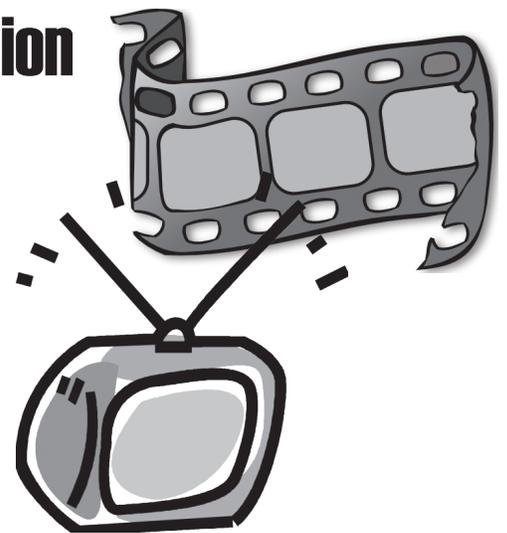
who recounts his experiences to his therapist, played by Denzel Washington. Antwone is fostered as a young man but is unhappy in his foster home. As an adult he joins the navy and after many years confronts his foster family over the treatment he received from them and eventually tracks down his biological family. The movie is based on a true story, adding an extra layer of poignancy.



The movies *I Am Sam* and *Antwone Fisher* and the television show *The Wire* are among the few productions that have really confronted the issue.



HBO's critically acclaimed drama *The Wire* turned its focus on institutional dysfunction in Baltimore's schools in its fourth season and in turn on the lives of the children within it. Over the course of the season we see the



positive influence that Randy's foster mother has on her boy until a vicious rumour results in her getting caught in the crossfire of a gang war. At the end of the season we witness retired police commander Bunny Colvin take Namond, the son of a notorious gangster, under his wing as he fosters him in his own home. In the relentlessly bleak world of *The Wire*, Namond's story is one of the few that culminates in a happy ending.

The picture of foster parenting presented by these movies and *The Wire* is multi-layered and complex, reflecting both the ups and downs of the fostering experience. In some ways it is odd that it is HBO's cynical and bleak drama that shows the true potential of a good foster home for a child in need.

Isla Campbell writes for a digital marketing agency. This article has been commissioned by a client of said agency. This article is not designed to promote, but should be considered professional content. Article Source: <http://www.ArticleBlast.com>



What to *Teach your Children* about **Bicycle Safety**

Following are some of the most common causes of bicycle injuries:

Driveway rideout

A youngster rides out of the driveway and gets hit by a car. Very often these incidents involve younger children: the median age is less than 10.

Does your driveway present obstructions to the view of passing motorists, such as bushes or trees? If so, trim them back. Most importantly, teach your child about driveway safety. Go outside to the driveway and have him or her practice the following steps:

- Stop before entering the street.
- Scan left, then right for traffic.
- If there's no traffic, proceed into the roadway.

Running the stop sign

Most cyclists who get hit riding through stop signs know that they are supposed to stop. They just don't see why, or they get distracted. Impress on your child that, running stop signs is very dangerous. Take your child to a stop sign and explain what it means, emphasizing the following:

Many Canadian children age six to 16 ride bicycles. Children start cycling as play when they are very young. As they grow older and become more experienced, the transition from toy to transportation is made. With increasing independence, parents have less control of where the bicycle is ridden and how it is used.

The attitudes you, as a parent, instill in your children from a young age will determine how they will ride for years to come.

Starting out

Make sure your child's bike and helmet are the right size. He or she should be able to straddle the bike with both feet on the ground; a bike that is too big or too small is a safety hazard. Ten-speed bikes are not a good idea because small hands often cannot make the handbrakes work. Buy a bike with a coaster brake. As a minimum, your child's first bike should be equipped with a bell and reflectors.

For young children, set the following hard and fast rules:

- No playing on the road.
- No riding on busy streets.
- No riding at night.
- Stop for all stop signs.
- Ride on the right with traffic.
- Make your own decisions.

Common dangers

The majority of bicycle injuries do not involve motor vehicles. Most are falls, collisions with stationary objects, and collisions with other bikes or pedestrians, which result from the bicyclist losing control, and most occur less than five blocks from home, in familiar surroundings.

But the most serious incidents involve motor vehicles. In most collisions involving child cyclists, the child's action is a key factor. He or she may have violated a law or may simply have poor road sense. Teach your children as if their life depended on the lessons.

It does.

- Stop at all stop signs regardless of what is happening.
- Scan both directions for traffic.
- Wait for any cross traffic to clear.
- Proceed when safe.
- Above all, practice what you preach!

Turning without warning

These collisions occur because the bicyclist makes an unexpected left turn without scanning behind for traffic or signaling.

Teach your children to walk their bikes across busy streets, at least until they have some advanced training and are old enough to understand traffic. In the meantime, for residential street riding, you can teach them to always scan and signal before turning left. Go to a playground to practice riding along a straight paint line while scanning behind. Stand alongside and hold up two fingers on your hand after the child rides by. Call their name. After 10 or 15 minutes of practice a 10 year old should be able to look behind and identify how many fingers you are holding up, all without swerving.

After dark

Most crashes in which a car coming up from the rear hits a bike while overtaking happen at night. These overtaking accidents can be serious. Most, however, involve older cyclists; the median age is about 20.

Rule out night riding for your youngster. It requires special skills and equipment. Few kids

have either. Make your child understand that, if he or she gets caught out after dark on a bike, the only thing to do is to call you for a ride home. Maybe you could tape telephone money to the bike so that, in an emergency, your child can call.

For adults and teenagers, the first requirement is to be visible: use bright lights and reflectors, and wear light-colored clothes with reflective tape. The second requirement is to watch your shadow in the headlights of overtaking cars. If your shadow moves to the right as the car approaches from the rear, this means it is moving left to pass you. If your shadow stays right in front of you, it means the car is headed straight for you. Get out of the way!

Following the leader

Many car/bike collisions take place when children are following each other. The first one may run a stop sign and get through. The second one may get hit. This Group Think behavior is hard to counter.

Teach your child always to assess the traffic situation for him or herself. When a group is riding around, each cyclist should stop for stop signs. Each one should scan to the rear before making left turns.

Head injuries

Less than 20 per cent of reported bicycle injuries involve collisions with cars. Most occur in falls, or as a result of riders losing control.

A bad fall can result from a skid, catching a wheel in a crack or even getting a shoelace caught in the chain.

In a spill, the forehead usually hits the ground first. Head injuries cause most bicycle-related deaths and can result in serious injury such as brain damage. Up to 88 per cent of serious head injuries could be prevented by wearing a helmet. It is critical for your child to wear a bike helmet that fits properly and is certified by CSA International.

When choosing a helmet, your child should try on several helmets carefully. Level the helmet over your child's forehead and adjust the chin strap to fit snugly and comfortably. It should protect the forehead without slipping forward or backward; and it should not move unless the scalp moves. A trained salesperson will help you ensure the fit is right.

Insist your child always wears a helmet when riding. (It goes without saying that parents must set an example by always wearing theirs when cycling.) Remember, a helmet only works when you wear it!

Never forget that example is the best teacher.

- Get into the helmet habit.
- Always stop at stop signs.
- Practice what you teach.

Information provided by the Canada Safety Council (<https://canadasafetycouncil.org>)

Individual Health & Dental Plans

You're in good shape, and that's good news. It means it's the perfect time to think about how to protect yourself and your family against the financial setbacks that a health problem could entail. Costs related to medical and paramedical services, dental and vision care can mount quickly eating up your savings in no time.

Canada has a good public healthcare systems, but it doesn't cover everything. So group health and dental plans are there to bridge the gap. Here is how you can sign up!



Are you an In Home Support Worker?

- Your plan can include you, or you and your family
- Your plan includes healthcare benefits, dental coverage and prescription drug coverage

To sign up on the Group In Home Support Plan, contact Kendra Mazer at the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association office (306) 975-1993



Are you a Foster Family?

- Customize your plan to cover you, or you and your family
- Health plans include coverage for massage therapy, physiotherapy, chiropractors, and vision care
- Add on Dental plans. Coverage includes up to \$1,000 per person per year. You'll be covered for checkups, cleanings, x-rays, fillings, dentures, crowns, bridges, and more
- Add on Prescription Drug coverage to include drug costs not covered by your provincial health plan
- Add on Hospital Cash in the event of an extended hospital stay it provides cash for out of pocket expenses like in room television and phone

For a quote, please contact janea@jbdFinancialPlanning.com or (306) 979-5000



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

217 – 3501 8th Street East Saskatoon, SK S7H 0W5

979-5000 Fax: (306) 956-3141

jbdFinancialPlanning.com www.jbdFinancialPlanning.com

Become a member of the CFFA or renew your membership

The Canadian Foster Family Association is a registered charity and receives no government funding. The association is maintained through membership fees, fundraising initiatives, and donations. The members of the CFFA Board work hard all year long to provide support to the provincial and territorial organizations across Canada. Each province and territory has a member (Director) on the CFFA Board so that issues from across Canada are addressed. To continue the great work of the CFFA we need your support!

A donor membership costs only \$20.00 for a year.

You will receive our newsletter *The Bulletin*, that will keep you informed of what is happening in the various provinces and territories and, more importantly, support the work of the CFFA!

Appeals/Conflict Resolution

When foster parents disagree with a decision made by a caseworker, they will notify the caseworker, who will arrange a meeting with the foster parents to discuss their concerns within five working days.

Following the meeting, if the foster parents believe the matter has not been resolved, they may notify the caseworker, who advises his/her supervisor.

The supervisor contacts the foster parents to discuss the matter and will arrange a meeting with all parties in an effort to come to a mutually satisfactory resolution. The meeting takes place within five days of the supervisor's contact with the foster parents, or as soon as practicable.

If there is not a satisfactory resolution, the foster parents may request to meet with the Director, Service Delivery or designate. The Director, Service Delivery or designate arranges a meeting with the foster parents and may include the caseworker and supervisor if appropriate. The foster parents may invite their Saskatchewan Foster Families Association support person. The meeting will be held within fifteen working days after receiving the request, or as soon as practicable.

Following the meeting, the Director, Service Delivery or designate should meet with his/her worker and supervisor, arrive at a decision, and advise the foster parents in writing of

the decision within five working days, or as soon as practicable.

In those situations involving decisions to close the foster home, if the matter is not satisfactorily concluded at the service centre level through the Conflict Resolution process, the foster parents may contact the Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association to invoke the appeal process.

Following notification of an appeal, the Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association immediately informs the appropriate Director, Service Delivery and the Director, Service Delivery, Central Office to advise of the appeal. The Director, Service Delivery, Central Office arranges a meeting with an independent adjudicator, who is appointed and contracted by the Ministry to hear the appeal.

The adjudicator conducts his or her review into the concerns by gathering information from all sources, including the foster parents, Ministry employees, and SFFA employees. When the review is concluded, the adjudicator records the information he or she has gathered, completes a report and submits it to the Executive Director, Service Delivery. The Executive Director, Service Delivery, reviews the information and makes a final decision, based on the recommendation of the adjudicator.

PEER SUPPORT Program



The SFFA coordinates a Peer Support Program, which consists of foster parent volunteers who work to facilitate and maintain an effective communication system between the foster families, social workers and the Ministry of Social Services. Peer Support Persons can provide confidential, empathetic and non-judgmental service surrounding issues of foster care. A Peer Support Person can provide resources, current information regarding policies and assist foster families in resolving matters of dispute between themselves and the Ministry of Social Services.

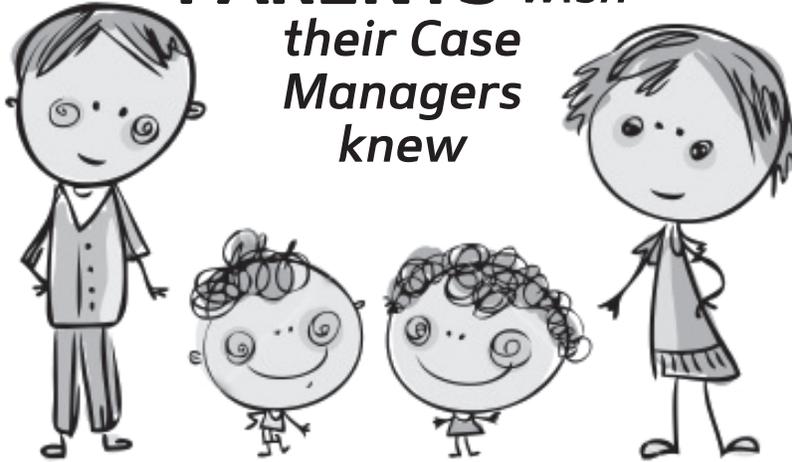
Volunteers of the Peer Support Program are experienced foster parents who are trained and monitored by the SFFA. They must sign an Oath of Confidentiality and commit to the duties of the program. All volunteers work to promote and encourage practices and procedures which support foster families and fostering in Saskatchewan.

New Mileage Rates

Effective October 1, 2012, mileage rates are now 40.86 cents per kilometer or 44 cents per kilometer north of the 54 parallel.

10 THINGS FOSTER PARENTS wish

their Case Managers knew



by Mike Berry

Last night my wife and I had the honor of hosting our monthly adoption support group at our home. We do this once a month and it's always refreshing. While the group is made up of adoptive parents, most have been, or currently are, active foster parents. As we sat around our dining room table, enjoying one another's company, I posed this question to the group- "What are some things you wish, or wished, your case managers knew?"

If you are unfamiliar with how the foster care system works, each child who enters the foster care system is assigned a case manager and that person is the liaison between the state and the foster family the child is placed with. In the decade that we have been foster parents we have had the joy of working with some phenomenal case managers and the frustration of working with some very bad case managers. Here are 10 things the support group said last night:

1. We know the children the best

We spend every waking moment with the children you placed in our homes. Some of us have had, and will have, placements for months, even years. They bond to us and that's a good thing. Please trust us when we tell you things about them and we make observations. We know them really, really well because we're doing life with them. That's not to say that you don't know them because we know you do. But when you have the role of first responder to strong emotional outbreaks, meltdowns and fear, it gives unique insight.

2. We actually live by a schedule

Although it seems like we're available at the drop of a hat, we are not. Many of us have jobs outside of our home. Please show up on time for visits & follow-ups in our home. We can't always adjust our schedule because you got out of court later than you thought and now you're over an hour late. Many of us have other children and they are involved in other activities. Please be respectful of that.

3. This is NOT a job, it's a way of life

It's our family. We do not get holidays off, there are no financial gains, and no one is rolling out the red carpet for us. In fact, they're staring at us and they think we're weird. They don't get us. We're okay with that but we need you to understand this. This is our life, 24/7, and sometimes it is so difficult that we don't know if we can make it another day.

4. Point us toward good resources

We need support groups, literature, and a listening ear. If there are any good conferences that you know of, don't let us stumble upon them, give us a call or send us an email and give us the scoop. This helps us know that you are there for us.

5. Communicate with us

There are certain things we need to know. Please do not withhold important information about the child from us. Especially if there was extreme trauma or abuse. Having this type of information helps us navigate tough situations or meltdowns. We need to hear from you, and we need you to return our calls. We feel alone in this more than you know. We are looking to you for support.

6. Be honest with us

If you don't know the answer, that's okay. We're fine if you tell us that you have to find out and that you'll get back to us. It's really frustrating when you try to give us an answer that may not be the truth or you make something up just to satisfy us.

7. We're foster parents by choice

We do this because we want to better the lives of children from difficult places. This is a thankless endeavor and we know that. But we entered into it willingly.

8. Paint a realistic picture of our current situation

If there's a chance the child will be staying longer, please do not tell us that it "Will only be a few days and then he'll be moved to a family member's house," or "She's only staying for the weekend," or "This will only be a 48-hour deal," or "This is an overnight placement." We're okay with an "I don't know," answer. Remember, we chose to do this, so we can handle vagueness or the unknown.

9. We're doing you a service

You are lucky you have us. So please treat us with respect. That goes for our time too. When we ask you for assistance or send you emails, please do not act like we're an inconvenience. We know your job is hard and we are not downplaying that. It's just that we are on the front lines of this whole ordeal and we have to handle emotions and fear that children in our placement experience regularly.

10. We have a lot of fears

We fear someone walking in and taking our kids. We fear the power you have over us. We fear one of our children accusing us of something untrue and you believing it. We know this is just fear and not really true but it sure feels like it's true at times!

We collectively recognize that many case managers do know these things. In fact, we agreed that we have all had the pleasure of working with some truly amazing people in the foster care system. However, there are many days where we've felt alone as if no one understands the struggles we have. The heart of this post is NOT to criticize but to enlighten and help.

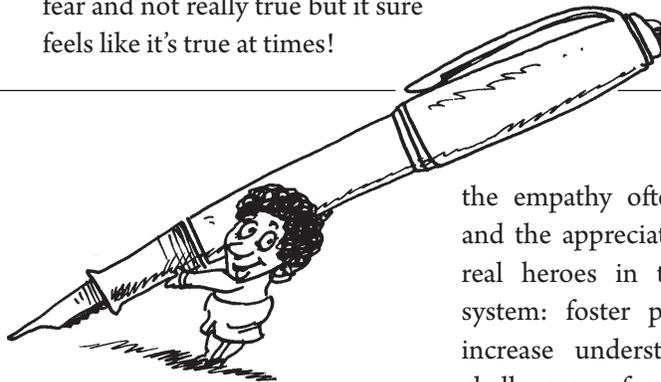
Mike Berry is the creator and lead blogger of Confessions Of A Parent. (<http://www.confessionsofaparent.com>) He has been a parent for over a decade and a blogger/writer for 4 years. He also serves as the Executive Director of Family Life Ministry at East 91st Christian Church in Indianapolis, Indiana.

10
things

CASE MANAGERS wish Foster Parents knew

by Connie Hayek

A blog post titled "10 Things Foster Parents Wish Their Case Managers Knew" was published by a blogger named Mike Berry a few weeks ago.



The list included some excellent reminders of the challenges faced by foster parents. As I was reading, it struck me that this is a two-way street. As a former case worker, myself (and my colleagues) often felt misunderstood by foster parents. In the spirit of collaboration and increased understanding, the following list is offered. This is not in defense, to make excuses, or to counter the foster parents' list. Rather it is offered to express

the empathy often unexpressed and the appreciation felt for the real heroes in the foster care system: foster parents; and to increase understanding of the challenges we face daily. My belief is that with mutual understanding we all can better serve vulnerable children and families.

1) We (caseworkers) know that you have the most difficult job in the child welfare system. Most caseworkers would not want your job regardless of the compensation (which, by the way, is much less than it should be in most cases). As a case manager who later became a foster parent, this is a lesson learned firsthand.

continued on next page...

....continued from page 17

Being a case manager was tough but providing foster care is, by far, more challenging. Caseworkers may not say this often enough, but every good case manager knows it to be true.

to visit their parent may not seem like a good idea but when we are ordered to do so or agency policy requires it, we have no choice but to follow the policy or court order.

Granted, this is an extreme example and over time, my caseload was lowered. In the many years I have worked in child welfare, I have seen a steady lowering of caseloads. However, in many jurisdictions they are still 2 to 3 times the recommended level.

Secondary trauma can occur when a professional experiences stress or symptoms of trauma when working with traumatized children and families. For more information on trauma in child welfare systems, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network has excellent information and resources.

2) By virtue of the structure of the child welfare system, case managers have many 'bosses'. The list of people who caseworkers 'report to' may include judges, attorneys, and review boards in addition to the direct supervisor and administrators within the child welfare agency. Unfortunately, the order of priority often leaves foster parents feeling left out or ignored.

The bottom line is that, given a choice between responding to a supervisor, judge, or foster parent, the latter often lands at the end of the list. I wish that were not the case but the structure of the child welfare system forces difficult decisions on a daily basis, including, at times, which call to return or whether to spend time in court, in the office, or in the home of a foster parent.

This also means that we may need to do some things that are unpopular with a foster parent (and we don't always agree with either). Taking a young child to known drug neighborhood or jail

3) In most jurisdictions, case managers carry caseloads which far exceed recommendations of every professional organization and accrediting agency knowledgeable of child welfare. This is not a mantra repeated by people who are looking for sympathy. It is the reality of child welfare agencies.

When I started as a case manager, my caseload was six times that recommended by the Council on Accreditation. In order to visit every child on my caseload monthly as was mandated by the child welfare agency, I would have had to work a minimum of 80-100 hours a week. And that is assuming that there would be no emergencies.

This challenge was compounded by the fact that, throughout much of my casework career, there was a 'freeze' on overtime usage. The child welfare agency would not approve overtime and the policies prohibited working overtime without pay (although this rule was often ignored).

4) Case managers, as well as foster parents, often are dealing with secondary trauma, also known as vicarious trauma or compassion fatigue. This can negatively impact our ability to do our jobs effectively. Fortunately the last few years there has been a movement to acknowledge and address the trauma associated with child welfare work. However, despite the progress, only a handful of jurisdictions have established trauma-informed workplaces.

5) Although our time may be limited, it helps us to be informed as things start to sour, rather than receive a call after things have fallen apart. We appreciate that you are trying to handle the 'little things' that arise but it helps us to know about the challenges along the way. Hopefully things will improve but when they don't, we are better able to understand the progression of problems if we've been informed along the way. Keeping a log or jotting down some notes to share during our visit helps us to recognize the red-flag issues as they arise. We might recommend additional services to prevent the 'big blow-up' if we know about the smaller challenges.

6) Documentation helps us to help you and in decision-making. A daily behavioral diary, pictures of the aftermath of a tantrum, the recorded voice-mail message from the biological parent, and the notes from school all can help us. Not only does it give us valuable documentation of the challenges, it can also help us in identifying services that may help you in dealing with difficult behaviors.

7) If your case manager does not immediately return your calls, there may be any number of reasons. I cannot speak for all caseworkers on this but I know that there were times that the reason was, in part, because I trust foster parents to be capable of handling difficult situations. When there were a list of calls to return, those most in need made it to the top of the list. The seasoned foster parents that I trusted most might be shuffled to the 'somewhat less urgent' pile. It would be my preference that this type of prioritization were not necessary, but often it is.

8) You are right, we don't always 'get it'; please do explain in detail. When we go to court or back to our supervisors, we need to be armed with concrete examples. It is easier to convince a supervisor/administrator that you need extra respite time when they understand that you and your spouse are sleeping in shifts because Joey has slipped out of the house in the middle of the night four times in the last two weeks. It's not that we didn't believe you; we just need to be

able to justify the approach or resources requested with several layers of bureaucratic obstacles.

9) Case managers are not created equal. As in every field, there are good caseworkers and some not-so-good caseworkers. Please don't assume we are all the same. Just like you, we are learning about individual children and families as we go and most of us are trying to do our best to meet multiple demands in a thankless job—just like you. Keeping an open and honest dialogue can help both of us negotiate the challenge of the 'bureaucratic parenthood' known as the child welfare system.

10) Although it may not always appear to be true, most case managers do genuinely care about the children and families on their caseloads. At times, caseworkers may seem cold and uncaring, may make a decision you don't agree with, or they may not respond with the degree of empathy that you might expect. While it may seem that some caseworkers don't care about the kids, most of the time caseworkers are struggling to insulate themselves from the never-ending pain they see in the eyes of children in foster care. Like foster parents, we often are faced with tough and emotionally charged situations routinely. The bottom line is that we all want the same thing—for kids to be healthy, happy, safe, and loved.

Retrieved February 13, 2013 from <http://www.interestsofchildren.wordpress.com>

LEGAL SERVICES EXPENDITURES

Legal Documents:

DID YOU KNOW?

1. The department shall pay actual fees for the following legal documents:

- birth, marriage and death certificates when required for court purposes or to complete the children's services file
- required certificates for adoption applicants who are receiving financial assistance;
- passports for children in care
- court transcripts

2. If the child is a temporary ward an application for a passport can only be made after consultation with the parent. The parent and the Regional Director should sign the passport application.

Some Practice Guidelines:

Youth 16 years of age or older complete their own passport applications.

The caseworker completes the application for children under 16 years.

- follow instructions closely omitting the names of the parents
- state the child is a ward of the Minister of Social Services
- the application should be signed by the caseworker, and by the caseworker's supervisor, as guarantor.

Passport pictures of the child must be obtained. The necessary fee for the passport must be enclosed with the application.



CANADIAN FOSTER FAMILY ASSOCIATION

Art Contest Guidelines

Who can enter:

All children and youth living in foster homes between the ages of 2-19 years of age (including the natural children/youth of foster families).

Categories: 2-6 years 7-12 years 13-19 years

When and where the posters will be judged:

The winning posters from each province/territory MUST be delivered to the CFFA Poster Contest Chairperson at the Annual CFFA Conference held in different locations in the spring of each year.

The CFFA Directors will judge the posters during the National Working Group and the winners will be announced at the CFFA Annual General Meeting.

Guidelines for the posters:

The following guidelines MUST be followed in order to qualify for the Contest.

- The Poster must be a letter size, card stock (thicker weight) paper – measures 8.5 by 11 inches or 216 by 279 mm.

- The printed name, address, phone number, and interpretation shall be on the back of the Poster. This information shall also be printed on a separate piece of paper and attached to the back by a paper clip.
- A caption or other words of the Child or youth are welcome.
- The first and second place Provincial and Territorial Winners from each category shall be eligible for the CFFA judging.
- The Director from each Provincial/Territorial office can bring the posters to the Conference or they can be mailed to the CFFA Poster Contest Chairperson no later than June 1st, 2013:

**Mary Smith, CFFA Poster Conference
Chairperson (902-443-7716)
29 Rosedale Ave, Halifax NS B3N 2J2**

Please Note: Upon receipt of posters they then become the property of the CFFA and may be used for CFFA purposes. *“Thank you in advance for your participation in this event.”*

A CONTEST FOR ALL SASKATCHEWAN TEENS!

A Book Trailer Competition

March 1 - 31, 2013

In celebration of Teen Tech Week (March 10-16), the Saskatoon Public Library and Regina Public Library are challenging teens from each city to go head-to-head in a unique book trailer competition!

Think you have what it takes to be a filmmaker?
Show us what you've got!

What's a Book Trailer?

It's like a movie trailer—for your favourite book! Of course, since movie trailers use actual footage from the film, and books do not have footage, you have to create the visual content yourself.

Who can enter the competition?

Saskatchewan residents between the ages of 12 and 18.

At the end of March, our judges will view all submitted book trailers and select the top three entries.

Life Books

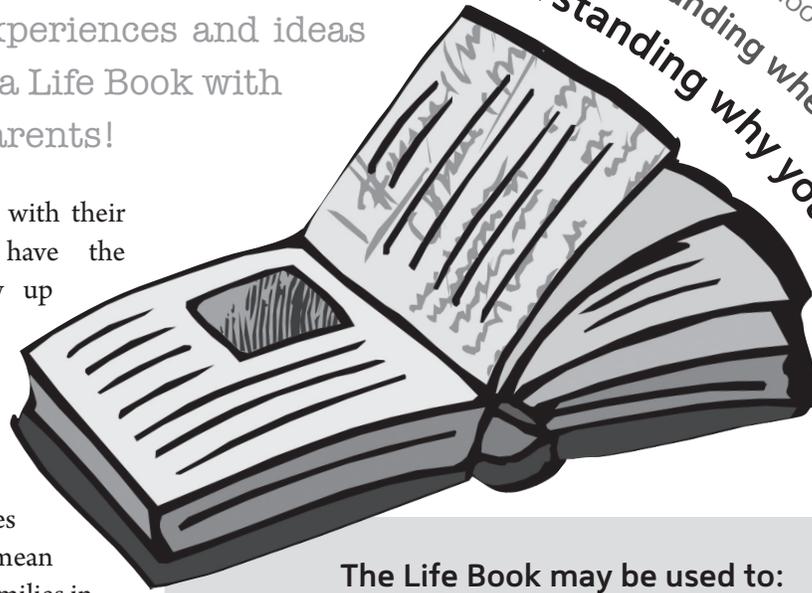
Share your experiences and ideas about making a Life Book with other foster parents!

Children who live with their birth families have the opportunity to grow up surrounded by the history of events in their lives. Children who come into care are often denied this opportunity. Changes in placements can mean living with different families in different neighbourhoods. Long periods of time spent in care can mean that the past may be confusing or forgotten. Children have a right to know who they are and where they have come from. Life Books can help children understand and accept their past and help to make sense of what is happening to them. Life Books may also provide an opportunity for the child to discuss his or her feelings about the recorded information.

A Life Book must be started for every child who remains in out-of-home care for more than six months. (Children's Services Manual 2.5) The Life Book's intent is to provide a permanent history for a child by recording as many significant events in the child's life as possible. It can enhance the child's identity by providing an informal record about the child's birth, development, placement, and a history of other significant events. This visual history is a

wonderful way for the child to remember their time with you. (Film developing, binder and associated costs may be billed back to Ministry as determined by joint case planning between the caseworker and the foster parents).

The Life Book is the property of the child and should accompany the child whenever he/she moves.



Understanding where your family is
Understanding why you are in care

Having all of your personal things kept safe —
like photographs, school reports and special belongings —
knowing about your cultural and spiritual
identity and your community

The Life Book may be used to:

- Help a child resolve questions about his past and separation issues.
- Provide an opportunity for the child to discuss his feelings about the recorded information.
- Provide the child with something that is his own.
- Prepare the child for a move to a foster or adoption home.
- Where an infant is in a foster home prior to adoption placement, the foster parent records information such as: birth and medical information, pictures, milestones, and daily routine in a "baby book". Written history information provided to the adoptive parents will be used to interpret the past to their child; therefore, identifying information should not be included.

The child should decide whether he/she will share his/her book, with whom he/she will share his/her book, and when he/she will share his/her book.

For some examples to use in the Life Book, please refer to the CSM 2.5.2, or check out this website for some creative ideas:

<http://www.fosterclub.org/funstuff/lifebooks.cfm>

Cotton Ball Bunny Craft

Sit the kids down at the table to make these soft and cuddly little bunnies just in time for Easter. A fun project that's easy enough for the little ones to join in the fun.

Supplies:

Cardboard	String
Felt	Cotton balls
Buttons	Scissors
Black yarn	Glue



Instructions:

- Draw and cut out a rabbit shape from cardboard. Cover the ears with pieces of pink felt.

- Outline them with glue and cotton balls.
- Spread glue over the rest of the rabbit, and completely cover it with cotton balls.
- From felt, cut out and glue on eyes, a nose and a bow tie. Glue buttons onto the body. Glue on black yarn for the mouth.
- Attach a piece of short string to the top of the rabbit for a hanger.

This craft was designed by Ann DeLong and is reprinted courtesy of Family Corner.com.

We invite all foster parents to send us their stories for submission in the Advisor...

Please be advised that the opinions expressed within are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Saskatchewan Foster Families Association.

They are strictly provided to promote education, debate and discussion.



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JULY 15 - 19

JULY 22 - 26
JULY 29 - AUG 2
AUG 12 - 16
AUG 19 - 23

Details

Time: 9:00 am to 4:30pm
Cost: Winter/Spring \$175.00 / Child
Summer: \$215.00 / Child
10% discount for Girl Guide members.
Before /After camp care upon request:
Available 7:30 am to 9:00 am / 4:30 pm to 5:30pm
*Additional charge for before and after camp care:
\$35 / week for each child*
Healthy lunches and snacks are included!!

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- Archaeology digs
- Bannock baking
- Tipi raising
- Learning activities centred around Northern Plains Indigenous cultures & history.
- Exploring Opimihaw Creek
- First Nations' crafts
- Watching traditional dances
- Exploring the art galleries
- And much, much more!



Wanuskewin
Heritage Park

For more information or to register your child, please speak to our Visitor Services Manager at : (306) 931-6767 Ext 244 cameron.mcrae@wanuskewin.com



233 4th Ave South
 Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
 S7K 1N1

Phone: (306) 975-1580
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Watch for our next issue of the *Advisor*.



Advisor

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