

BCFFPA is a not-for-profit charity  
created by foster parents  
for foster parents  
governed by foster parents



*Join BCFFPA! Let your voice be heard!*

Give us a call  
for more information about Locals  
or to find out more  
about BCFFPA's services to  
BC's foster caregivers

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# BCFFPA

... a branch of your family tree since 1967

***“What, Why, When & How”***  
Creating a BCFFPA Foster Parent  
Local Association



## What is a BCFFPA Local Foster Parent Association?

BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations, also known as BCFFPA, was created in 1967 at the request of foster parents and social workers. Our core purpose and structure has remained the same all these years. Our purpose is to represent the best interests and best practices of all foster parents in the province by ensuring that we gather as much information as possible from foster parent communities near and far so that we are able to engage in meaningful discourse with the provincial government and other stakeholders. Your voice is important and we encourage you to speak up!

BCFFPA is a Federation that represents Local Foster Parent Associations—smaller community-level gatherings of foster parents who come together to form a group that meets monthly, if possible, in person or via Skype—sometimes even through Facebook. (We're progressive! Be creative!) As a group you decide what your activities will be. Will you offer peer support to others in your community? Will you partner with a regional foster parent support agency to host the meetings? Is your local Ministry or Delegated Aboriginal Agency office willing to work in partnership with you? Will you host seasonal events, workshops, or have coffee socials? The sky's the limit!

As a BCFFPA Local Foster Parent Association, you will operate under BCFFPA's governance and policy documents, have a small Board of Directors and be in charge of your own activities.



## Why start a Local? It sounds like a lot of work!

Community is important for foster parents. Those who are more isolated usually don't have all the information they need to do the best job they can! While BCFFPA is always looking for ways to increase the accessibility of information, nothing beats a group of like-minded people who share similar experiences.

When foster parents come together in a Local, they are able to communicate to BCFFPA's provincial office the successes and issues experienced by their fostering community. This better informs us so that we are then able to represent the interests and activities of your community in our discussions with the Ministry.

It does sound like a lot of work—but it's more fun than anything else. All you need for a successful Local is a few individuals to share the work of arranging a meeting, event or workshop. Once you've done it a few times, it's easy! To be honest, the benefits far outweigh the small amount of work that's involved in maintaining a Local.

## When should we start a Local?

You can start a Local when you have 5 BCFFPA member foster parents interested in doing so. Any time of the year, any season, any day—we'll be happy to help you along the way.

Some communities ask their regional foster parent support agency or their Ministry office to host a meeting with the community's foster parents and discuss creating a Local. Others have strong community connections already and call everyone together for a meeting. Hosting a coffee meeting is a great way to meet new people and find out who's interested in working together to strengthen BC's foster care system.



## How do we go about organizing a Local? How do we get money to host our events? I have so many questions!

1. Host a meeting for foster parents in your community.
2. Make sure everyone has a BCFFPA membership—take membership forms along.
3. Discuss the benefits of being together on a regular basis to support each other.
4. Identify who would be interested in leading the Local as a Board member? (You'll need a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer as executive Board members. One person can hold the secretary/treasurer position.)
5. Take notes of the meeting and hold a vote to decide who takes which position..
6. Let the provincial BCFFPA office know who your Board members are—along with contact information for each of you. We'll send you a start up cheque for \$200 as well as some documentation to help you along.
7. Plan monthly events and meetings that suit the desires and needs of your community and try to include as many foster parents as possible so your network grows!

The BCFFPA membership fees for each foster parent in your community help to fund the activities of your Local. The provincial BCFFPA office will send a quarterly cheque to you representing the fees that have been paid. It pays to recruit new members!

Your Local Ministry office or support agency may be willing to assist your Local by providing meeting space or financial sponsorship.

BCFFPA Locals can hold fundraisers or solicit donations from community services and vendors to support events and activities for foster parents and their families.

Local Associations can initiate partnership meetings between agencies, Ministry and foster parents to discuss successes, issues and common initiatives.