

B.C. CHILD AND YOUTH CAREGIVER TRAINING APPROACH

Background

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) contracted with the British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations (BCFFPA) to develop a new foster care training program as outlined in the Ministry's Strategic Plan (2015 – 2018). The BCFFPA, through its longstanding collaborative partnership with the Ministry, was provided with the following requirements for the training:

- Linked to positive outcomes, with a demonstrated track record
- Capable of being delivered both online and in-person
- Can be purchased and/or customized within the existing contract budget
- Can be launched using a phased approach beginning fall 2016
- Aligned with all applicable privacy legislation
- Cost-effective licensing and registration that includes flexibility for content updates

The BCFFPA has been working with the MCFD Strategic Priorities Branch, Delegated Aboriginal Agencies (DAAs), fostering agencies and other stakeholders to identify and develop a new training curriculum for foster caregivers and kinship families that will strengthen B.C.'s System of Care and address the challenges outlined in the Residential Review and other public reports. Furthermore, this group is seeking opportunities to leverage contemporary online training delivery models for the new curriculum, where appropriate. Alignment with the Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) tool used by B.C. is also a key consideration. The project team has promoted active partnership throughout all stages of the training development process with a number of Aboriginal stakeholders by way of the consultation committee (e.g.: two DAAs, the Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents, and Indigenous Perspectives Society) and three DAAs by way of the Residential Design Steering Committee. These stakeholders have provided valuable knowledge and insight from the Aboriginal perspective to inform decision making processes. It is acknowledged that this representation does not include all DAA and Aboriginal community perspectives; however, the project team is committed to expanding their connections with Aboriginal stakeholders, including the project Aboriginal Content Advisory Group (see FAQ #13 below for details) and the Strategic Priorities Aboriginal Advisory Committee (comprised of Aboriginal community members with both professional experience and cultural knowledge).

Following extensive consultation (which is mapped in the attached appendix) and review of a number of foster and kinship care training programs, the BCFFPA and project team are pleased to share the conditional decision to bring the P.R.I.D.E. model of training and practice to British Columbia. The final decision is dependent upon a full review of all privacy considerations and confirmation of the ongoing costs.

What is P.R.I.D.E.?

- **Parent Resources for Information Development and Education (PRIDE)** is a licensed model of practice focussed on the development and support of foster families. The practice model and training content is designed to strengthen the quality of family foster care by providing a standardized, structured framework for pre-service training and mutual assessment, as well as in-service training for ongoing professional development.
- **PRIDE is based on five competencies with four levels of development including Awareness, Knowledge/Understanding, Skill Application, and Skill Acquisition.**
 - Protecting and nurturing children
 - Meeting children's developmental needs and addressing developmental delays
 - Supporting relationships between children and their families
 - Connecting children to safe, nurturing relationships intended to last a lifetime

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- Working as a member of a professional team
- Like other Canadian provinces and territories, B.C. will build in Aboriginal cultural content by involving the Aboriginal Content Advisory Group throughout the development of the materials.
- **PRIDE offers a fully developed, attachment and trauma-informed foster care training curriculum that can be customized with B.C. content, including Aboriginal content, policies and legislation.** PRIDE training has been developed in an academic environment at Governors State University (GSU) to support a blended approach with options for online-facilitated and self-directed learning, in-person sessions, or a combination to suit learners' needs and geographic considerations. GSU provides both pre-service and in-service training modules that are specific to the fostering role and the expectations of caregivers. After customization, the PRIDE training will replace the current B.C. pre-service and 53 hour training programs.

Why choose PRIDE?

- The Residential Review Project Final Report (2012) and the Community Feedback Report (completed by the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, the Metis Commission and Caring for First Nations Children Society) identified the need to address challenges and concerns raised by caregivers, staff and partners.
- The Provincial and Territorial Directors of Child Welfare have long expressed a preference for Canadian jurisdictions to use a common approach for training foster caregivers that supports inter-jurisdictional relocation, consistency in practice, future data collection and research.
- The seven Canadian provinces and territories using PRIDE have revealed the positive impact it has in changing the practice culture and enhancing relationships.
- PRIDE is intended to be delivered using a co-trainer, team style approach involving experienced foster caregivers and staff/agency facilitators. Other jurisdictions have found that this shared competency understanding and common language is vital to the success of the practice model.
- GSU has developed support training sessions for kinship families looking after children who are in or out of care.
- GSU has experience developing customized modules with other provinces and territories. Most recently, GSU developed a number of new Aboriginal modules in partnership with Saskatchewan.
- PRIDE training aligns well with the SAFE process. Ontario has successfully integrated PRIDE, SAFE and Looking After Children (LAC) as their practice model and notes that the pre-service training and mutual family assessment activities in PRIDE complement and strengthen the SAFE process.
- The PRIDE competencies and guiding principles align closely with the Ministry's System of Care Philosophical Foundation and Guiding Principles and the recently endorsed Caregiver Training Outline and learning outcomes.
- PRIDE is a cost-effective training model that includes comprehensive participant evaluation and tracking features, which are used to assess and approve new caregivers as well as monitor the ongoing progress of in-service trainees, linked to their learning plans.
- BCFFPA and the Ministry understand that the introduction of revised caregiver training is one of many positive changes that are needed to improve the overall System of Care. Other provinces and territories have fully embraced the PRIDE model of practice approach and have embedded the competencies, training and development expectations into the following:
 - Relevant policies and standards for foster caregivers and staff
 - Caregiver contracts; specifically role, learning and development expectations

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- Foster care structural design, with assessments for specialised caregivers that are based on more objective measures related to training completion and competency level
- Foster Caregiver Annual Reviews, Quality of Care and Investigations

FAQ'S

Please note that BCFFPA and the Ministry are still in the early stages of recommending and developing an implementation plan for PRIDE training. Questions and comments will continue to be tracked and addressed throughout the development and implementation process. If you have any questions or comments, please write to the project team: mcf.strategicpriorities@gov.bc.ca

1. Which provinces, territories and other jurisdictions are using PRIDE?

Since its development in the mid-1990s, Saskatchewan, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Yukon, the Northwest Territories and many child welfare jurisdictions throughout the United States and internationally have progressively been adopting the PRIDE program.

2. What have other jurisdictions reported about PRIDE?

Several jurisdictions have been using PRIDE for 10-15 years and plan to continue or expand its use. Prior to using PRIDE these provinces and territories were experiencing similar issues that B.C. identified in the Residential Review Report. Implementing PRIDE has helped to address these issues through practice and culture changes, strengthening caregiver skills and competencies, and improving the overall quality of care and permanency outcomes for children. Furthermore, the fostering federations or associations in PRIDE jurisdictions have remarked on the improvement in relationships and partnerships.

3. What does the research say about PRIDE?

The literature review embedded within the Residential Review Report noted research limitations regarding the effectiveness of caregiver training. The report quoted research from 2009 that found little evidence regarding the effectiveness of reviewed training programs, including PRIDE. Since the 2009 research, work on PRIDE and experience with the program by caregivers and staff in jurisdictions using PRIDE have resulted in positive outcomes. For example, since the publication of the aforementioned research, Saskatchewan has accumulated nine years of practice and outcome-related data, which demonstrates the effectiveness of the PRIDE program.

4. How is PRIDE training facilitated?

PRIDE is typically co-facilitated by a ministry, DAA or agency staff member and an experienced caregiver. Best practice suggests that the PRIDE pre-service modules should involve staff who have a role in recruiting, assessing and approving family care homes.

5. How will the facilitators be prepared to deliver the training?

PRIDE offers a train-the-trainer program that will be coordinated in the months leading up to implementation.

6. PRIDE was originally developed for fostering and adoptive families. Will it be used for both in B.C.?

The Adoption Education Program (AEP) will continue to be the required training for prospective adoptive families. PRIDE in B.C. will be focussed on fostering and kinship families only.

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7. When will the PRIDE training be implemented?

The project team's goal is to utilize a phased implementation approach beginning in the fall of 2016. Similar to other provinces, B.C. will strive to progressively train prospective, new and experienced foster caregivers over a number of years.

8. Will PRIDE training be required? Will all current caregivers need to take the PRIDE training?

Current policy, standards and contracts state that initial caregiver training is a requirement and there are no plans in place to revisit these documents. However, the project team intends to facilitate discussions involving key stakeholders in the near future to better define compliance provisions with respect to initial caregiver training. The outcomes of these discussions will be widely communicated amongst all internal and external stakeholders.

9. Will all staff need to take the PRIDE training?

This is being considered. Many jurisdictions have elected to provide pre-service training to all members of a child's care team, as this is seen as being essential to support the practice culture change. At a minimum, priority will be given to resources staff who interact closely with foster and kinship families.

10. Will PRIDE in-service require completion within the first 2 years of being approved to foster, as the current 53 hours training is?

Ongoing discussions are taking place to consider the time requirements for the program. PRIDE in-service includes several mandatory modules, followed by a range of elective modules that can be taken as relevant for the children being cared for.

11. How will the training be kept up to date?

GSU continually updates the curriculum content, reflecting new research in child development and/or policy updates. Each jurisdiction also has input into the discussion on ongoing updates. Canadian hubs are being established in Saskatchewan and Ontario, to help facilitate this process.

12. How will the move to a blended training model affect agencies currently providing caregiver training?

Considering that a proportion of the PRIDE curriculum will be provided using an online platform, the Ministry will continue discussions with caregiver training agencies and other stakeholders to determine the best approach for implementing this new training methodology. Key considerations include the total training length, the proportion of training that will be provided online versus in a classroom, the number of caregivers that have been trained in previous years using the current approach, and the estimated number of caregivers that will need to be trained in the coming years using the future approach.

13. How will B.C. Aboriginal content be developed and added?

An Aboriginal Content Advisory Group has been formed and is developing B.C.-specific Aboriginal cultural content that will be interwoven throughout the curriculum in addition to creating specific Aboriginal modules. This group includes participation from DAAs, Aboriginal agencies, MCFD and caregivers.

14. How is PRIDE being modified for B.C. specific content?

A project governance model has been put in place to ensure that relevant B.C. content is incorporated throughout the curriculum. This governance structure includes participation from BCFFPA, MCFD, DAAs, caregiver agencies and other stakeholders.