



June 7, 2022

VIA E-MAIL  
Ref: 269909

Julie Holmlund, President  
Jayne Wilson, Executive Director  
BC Foster Parents Association  
E-mail: [jayne@bcfosterparents.ca](mailto:jayne@bcfosterparents.ca)

Dear Julie Holmlund and Jayne Wilson:

Thank you for your letter regarding your concerns surrounding caregiver maintenance and service payment rates.

I want to first share my sincere appreciation for the work you do to represent and support foster caregivers in British Columbia. Our province is a better place because of your dedication to, and support for, some of the most vulnerable children and youth in the province. Thank you for reaching out with your concerns and analysis of foster caregiver service payments. I am pleased to say that my office is currently working to arrange regular meetings with your organization so that you and I can continue to stay connected on this important work.

As referenced in your letter, service payments are intended to recognize the special parenting skills and extra time required to meet the needs of a child or youth. These service payments are not employment income or a wage. There have been recent changes to payments intended to meet the needs of children and youth in foster care, including:

- In 2019, monthly maintenance rates for caregivers were increased and, for the first time, care providers under the Extended Family Program were provided the same base rate as foster caregivers, and
- Maintenance rate increases are now tied to the federal Canada Child Benefit – which is automatically indexed to inflation.

As you also reference, the ministry has been working in collaboration with partners like yourself in the sector to strengthen the network of care in British Columbia. The network of care comprises a suite of services for children, youth, and their families, which includes in-home supports (e.g., foster care, out-of-care), contracted staffed resources (e.g., Specialized Homes and Support Services (SHSS)), and alternatives to staffed resources. The network of care is also closely connected to other supports, such as Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN), Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH), and Youth Justice services, and is intended to help ensure our various systems work together to provide wraparound service to British Columbians.

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As part of this work, the ministry is expanding access to specialized supports, including Respite Care and Low-Barrier Short-Term Stabilization Care, through the [SHSS transformation](#). The intent of providing these specialized resources is to provide earlier and improved access to preventative services to better support the child or youth and their caregiver, whether they are a foster or out-of-care caregiver, a staffed resource, or a parent. As this transformation is unfolding, we are implementing retention and recruitment strategies, as well as moving to design and introduce a new type of home-based care to better support children and youth whose needs cannot be met in the highest tier of foster care. We welcome continued collaboration with you and your partners as this work unfolds.

I appreciate your concerns for retaining and recruiting foster caregivers, as they are an important and valued part of the network of care. I want to reassure you that we are moving forward and expect implementation to get underway later this year.

I hope that you will find this information helpful and that you keep sharing your thoughts and concerns. As we continue to engage with our sector partners on the implementation of the SHSS transformation and the network of care, we invite you to participate and continue to make your voices heard. Ultimately, we are all working towards a shared objective: the provision of loving and nurturing homes for children and youth who can not safely reside with their family. The path forward requires continued partnership and collaboration.

Thank you again for writing and I am looking forward to continuing to stay in close contact the BC Foster Parents Association as we continue to work together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Dean". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mitzi Dean  
Minister of Children and Family Development