

FosterlineBC

BC Foster Parents Association



**Save the Date
Events for 2024**

**BCFPA's
Roadmap for
the Year**



**Preparing for
Retirement**

**March is Social
Worker Month**

BC FOSTER PARENTS ASSOCIATION (BCFPA)

208 - 20641 Logan Avenue
Langley, BC V3A 7R3

We are located on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Kwantlen, Katzie, Matsqui and Semiahmoo peoples.

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Northern Delegate	Rocky Hindmarch (he/him)
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President's Report



Hello to my fellow foster parents in British Columbia,

I'm hopeful everyone had a safe and relaxing holiday season and that the new year has brought good things to you and your families.

Our new Minister of Children and Family Development, the Honourable Grace Lore, has been in touch with our team and we are excited to hear that she is supportive of foster parents and the work we do. It sounds as though the Ministry will be carrying on with many of the same initiatives that are currently underway, so things should continue as expected approaching the Fall election. Please do not hesitate to reach out to our board members especially your regional delegates.

We are very pleased to have all the positions on our Board of Directors filled. We have a fun, dynamic and diverse group of foster parents representing all regions of BC. Similarly, our services are being delivered by a strong staff team who are ready to assist foster parents where needed.

We are hoping that many of you have renewed your membership by January 31st to remain a member in good standing. We have been working diligently to recruit a suitable candidate for our Community Strategist position. Our Strategist will be well positioned to work through the long-term issues

that have been cycling around the foster care system for the past several years. We're excited to have a broader reach and ensure that foster parents' voices are heard.

If have been waiting for, but have not yet received a personal call from our board members regarding joining regional virtual meetings, we may not have your information. Please double check that your BCFPA membership is current or call the office to ensure we have the correct contact information in your membership file. We would love to have as many foster parents as possible join us at the regional virtual meetings to discuss the fostering environment in your area of the province.

We are pleased to be at the table on a few provincial committees. It's always great to know that the Ministry invites feedback from BC's foster parents when they're reviewing documents or practice or planning for change. Exciting times ahead for 2024!

Julie Holmlund
President

Take our free Early Years mobile microlearning course!

Our Early Years mobile microlearning course is available on Ed App. Simply follow the login guide and gain access to five modules with many interactive tools such as animated videos, narrated content, and game-based knowledge tests.

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STEP 3
Enter your **invite code (BCFPA)**. Select **next** once you're ready.

STEP 4
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OUR MISSION

To represent and support all foster parents who provide quality in-home family care in BC.



OUR BELIEF

Supported and resilient caregivers raise empowered children and youth.



OUR VISION

Supporting children and youth to reach their full potential through exceptional care.



BC Foster Parents Association (BCFPA) is a provincial organization for foster parents, run by foster parents. We are a registered non-profit charity which aims to bring together foster parents, social workers and other stakeholders who are working to continuously improve the standard of care for children and youth in our province.

We provide information to the general public about fostering and recruitment services to the Ministry of Children and Family Development and Delegated Aboriginal Agencies. We offer our community a support network through our local Branch affiliations and our Solutions Program, accessible fostering information and education, a hub to share news across our sector and insurance resources for foster caregivers. For over 50 years, we have consulted about the revision and development of policy and practice within BC's child welfare sector.

BCFPA's structure facilitates contact with all foster parents in the province. We provide funding to our Branches and Regional Councils, and we maintain a Board of Directors that represents the diversity of our province. BCFPA's Board of Directors provincially, regionally and at a community level are all volunteers, elected by their foster parent membership community.

Notes from the Office



We hope your new year started off well and that you had some fun times with family and friends over the holidays.

In November, we distributed a survey regarding pensions for foster parents. Results are summarized on [page 17](#). Most indicated that they were concerned that a pension program may impact the tax-free status of any payments they receive. Many were past the age where a pension would be of benefit to them. But the vast majority are interested and would like to know more. Our research and advocacy with the Ministry continues to that end, and we'll hopefully have some positive news in the future.

BCFPA has been busy doing the groundwork for new advocacy efforts that will be beneficial to foster parents. We will be discussing service delivery alignment with the new Foster Parent Review Policy developed in partnership with the Quality Assurance Branch. We will also be requesting discussions with the Ministry to see what can be done to adjust the investigation process so that foster parents don't feel as isolated, violated, and devastated once the investigation is complete.

BCFPA continues to expand. We'll be hiring soon for a new position that will tackle some of the long-standing community and sector issues that tend to move through the province. We currently have a full board and our staff team continues to grow to provide more service to our community.

We're hosting another four training workshops for foster parents this Winter and early Spring. We also have a community-building event being planned for Prince George in April. We're hopeful that the Ministry, ICFS Agencies and the main foster parent support agency in Prince George will be partnering with us and encouraging their foster parents to attend.

Committee work continues for board members who participate in the Comprehensive Review of Care Planning Advisory Circle. It's expected to be a lengthy consultation period. The work associated with the Foster Caregiver Review Policy working group wrapped up a few months ago. Though the policy offers little benefit for foster parents, it does provide a predictable framework for the review process. We'll be speaking with the Ministry about additional steps now that the policy is in place. The Social Sector Advisory Committee with representatives from many provincial and regional agencies continues to meet roughly quarterly to discuss and learn about systemic transformation initiatives. Please reach out to us if you have any questions about what's happening in the fostering sector in BC.

As we move toward Spring, we're hopeful that 2024 provides families with a break from the stressful weather and environmental events of recent years. We look forward to connecting with many of you throughout the year.

Jayne Wilson
Executive Director

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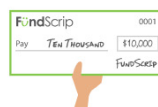
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Interior Delegate Report by Raquel Lesieur

Happy New Year! I am so excited to see what 2024 has in store for our community, and what our team at BC Foster Parents Association is able to accomplish over this year.

At our recent partnership meeting, we discussed Out-of-Care options as well as 54.01 and 54.1 studies. We also continue to discuss and make plans around Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention. It's something our Provincial Office Staff and our Board makes continued and consistent efforts towards as we take the fostering community's feedback into account.

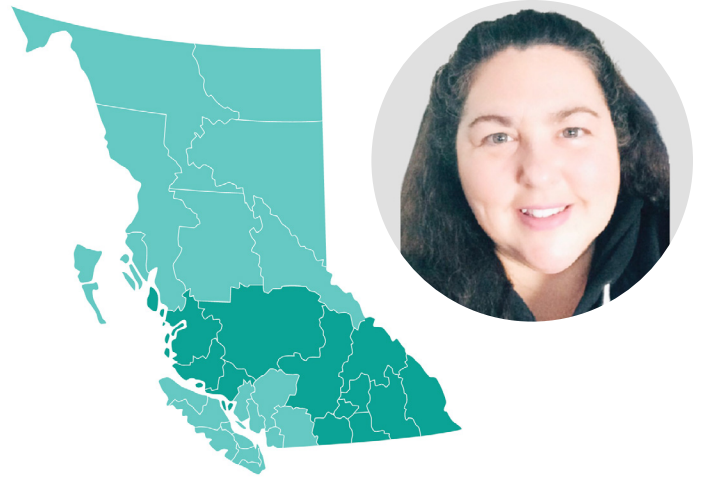
Interior Community Services has prioritized adding to their upcoming trainings and learning opportunities in the Interior. They are working on many topics to address requests such as the Business Side of Fostering - looking at contracts, language, policy, etc. - and are also discussing working on a video of Gordon Neufeld Attachment Puzzle. Safe Babies Training is also an important piece in foster parent training and continues to be a focus for ICS.

Northern Delegate Report by Rocky Hindmarch

Happy New Year! I hope you all had warm and joyful holiday, however you and your loved ones celebrate.

Over the holiday season, we had a Christmas foster family social at Prince George Rolladome, a roller skating rink. With over 100 attendees, it was a lot of fun and a great success!

The local branch has been partnering with businesses and community organizations to help with donations and to help work on future projects for the BCFPA here in Prince George. Some of these businesses include Rona, Canadian Tire, Scotiabank, Superstore, Save On Foods, Mothus Financial, the Prince George Cougars, and more! We are also working on approaching other businesses to help our branch with activities for the foster families in our area.



Speaking about training opportunities, in March we will have Sebastien Jordan presenting a free Foster Parent workshop on *Suicidality and Trauma in Children and Youth*. I plan to be in attendance and am hoping to see many of you there as well. While this topic is a heavy one, it is incredibly important knowledge to have as a parent and caregiver. If you do plan to attend, I would like to remind you to please take the time and space you need throughout the workshop.



This April we will be having a free workshop for foster parents on the topic of *Creating Safe(r) Spaces for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth*, as well as a community event that we plan to host alongside the training. Looking forward to getting together, seeing familiar faces, and learning from each other and our speaker, Nicole Sawin. Hope to see you there!

I can't wait to see what this year brings for the fostering community in Prince George and across the province, and for BC Foster Parents Association.

Fraser Delegate Report by Catherine Clutchey

I am writing this with piles of snow and many little people home for a snow day and it really shows me how much I appreciate the support of the village of foster parents that surround me. Even in the chaos of children, I have received messages that make me laugh, some bringing tears to my eyes and feel like I am not alone in the chaos. If you haven't found your foster friends yet, I encourage you to make this a goal for the next few months. We have a growing provincial community on social media and a number of smaller local groups as well. This is a great place to start.

Fostering in the Fraser region continues to come with struggles around communication, support and being able to work collaboratively. Guardianship workers and Resource workers are shuffling around which has left some foster parents struggling to know who to turn to. As the Fraser Delegate I have supported foster parents navigating these times. I have also had the joy of training new foster parents in our Safe Baby Training that we offer in Surrey. The energy was palpable and the engagement was exceptional. I am looking forward to staying connected as these fresh faces join our community.

Island Delegate Report by Sarah Scorey

Hello and Happy New Year from your Vancouver Island Delegate! It has been great getting to know more foster caregivers on Vancouver Island over the past few months. We have welcomed a few new caregivers and I have enjoyed supporting them as they begin their fostering journey. In a post-pandemic world, it seems as though there are less in-person events for foster caregivers. For new caregivers, this poses a challenge as it makes it difficult to form a network of support that is so important.

The need has never been greater for caregivers on Vancouver Island, and, consequently, many homes are at capacity, and we have lost homes due to caregiver burn out. I encourage caregivers to reach out for support either to their resource worker, the BCFPA Solutions Program at 1-800-663-9999, or you can email me at sarah@bcfosterparents.ca to chat and brainstorm.



The training offered by BCFPA has been exceptional and not only offers a great educational opportunity but also helps to renew passion when we are feeling weary. I encourage everyone to keep an eye out for an educational opportunity in your area and make it a priority to attend. To stay updated, subscribe to BCFPA's email list and follow us on social media.

Stay warm, spring is coming!

I am pleased that BCFPA is offering an in person training in Parksville in February. Not only does it give caregivers a chance to meet others and form relationships, it is a chance for self care, as well as an opportunity to learn new strategies. The topic, *Co-Regulation* with Mary Klovance will provide caregivers with more tools for the job. April Reeve and I are looking forward to hosting this conference and meeting more Vancouver Island caregivers.

In January, I attended the South Island partnership meeting where attendees were provided with an update on the SAJE program. It was very informative and great to learn about all of the additional supports available to youth in care, as well as what role caregivers can play in the transition to adulthood.



BCFPA members have access to discounts through our partnership with Canada's leading perk program!



Step 1: Go to Perkopolis.com and click 'Register' in the top right corner.

Step 2: To access all perks, you must register by using a valid email address. Then, you will receive an email to activate your registration. – click the link within this email that says "Complete my profile".

Step 3: Enter your member ID code which is BCFPA + your 5-digit membership number (e.g. BCFPA12345). Once you are logged in, click on your name in the top right corner of the screen, then choose 'Profile'. Your BCFPA Membership Number will appear as the first item under 'Your Information'. You can now navigate back to perkopolis.com.

Step 4: Enter the required information. Click the 'accept terms and conditions' box. Click 'Confirm'.

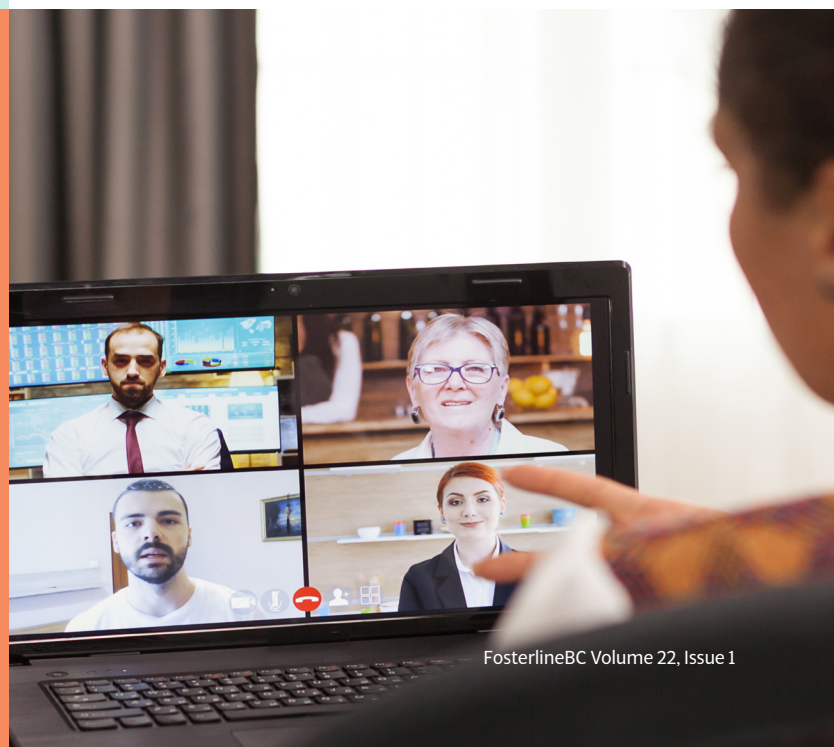
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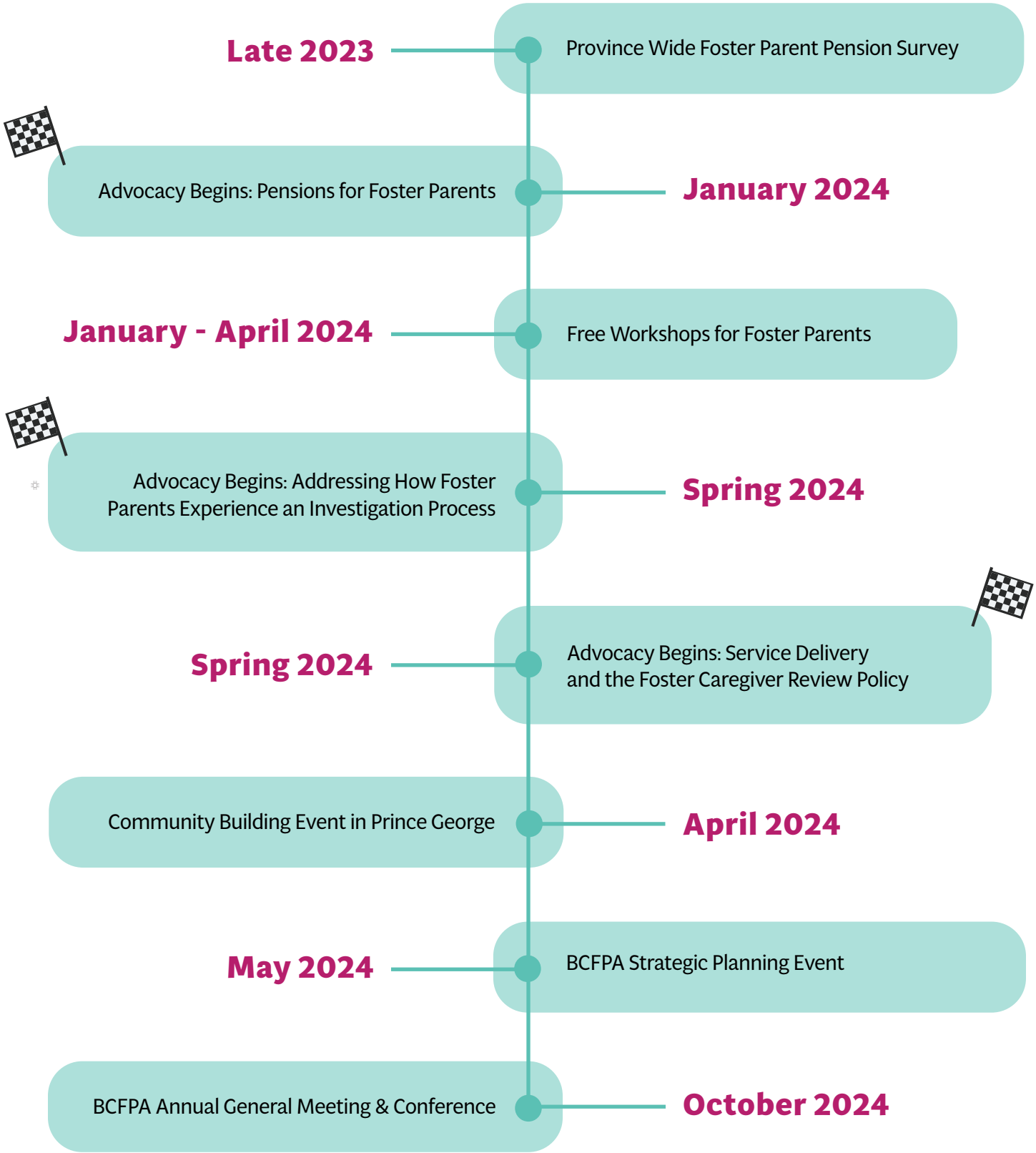
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| Universal Studios | Vitamix |
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**Don't foster in isolation!
Our Solutions Program Team is here for you. We can all do so much more together than we ever can alone.**

Call 1-800-663-9999 for support and advocacy.



Our Roadmap for 2024



SECTOR NEWS & UPDATES



Simpcw First Nation expands prevention services to away-from-home families through new agreement.

In October of 2023, Simpcw First Nation signed and celebrated an agreement to partner with the Province of British Columbia on a two-year project. The project is focused on keeping families together by preserving and strengthening their connections to language, culture, family, and traditional decision-making for those who live away from their home and community.

The project — which builds on the Tcwesétmentem: Walking Together Agreement, co-created and signed by Simpcw in April of 2022 — will enable Simpcw members to extend supports from their own community to away-from-home families across Prince George and the Lower Mainland. This support will be provided by Simpcw early intervention outreach workers co-located with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and based out of offices in Prince George and New Westminster. The aim is that Simpcw children, youth, and families will receive these supports in place of services provided by MCFD. The services are to focus on cultural connections, wellness activities, and family support with the ultimate goal of helping to prevent children from coming into care and reuniting families where possible.

Alongside supports for away-from-home families in alignment with Simpcw culture, this agreement with the Province is expected to offer new information to the MCFD as it works to co-develop a funding model aimed to support First Nation's jurisdiction over child and family services in their communities across BC.

Source: [MCFD Press Release](#)

Province seeks public input on services for children and youth with support needs.

The Provincial government is asking individuals to provide their input, through a new online engagement platform, on ways to improve services provided for children and youth with support needs.

Direct feedback from families, caregivers, advocates, experts, and others is crucial in informing the government of service needs from the perspective of those with lived experience. All are invited and encouraged to contribute to future planning.

There are a number of engagement opportunities for a wide selection of groups. Including:

- All families and those with lived experience
- First Nations rights and titleholders
- Urban Indigenous, Métis, Inuit and historically underrepresented groups
- Service providers and sector partners

“Communities, families and individuals hold the key to a more inclusive and supportive future. FSI's Family Voices Project empowers them to actively participate in the decision-making process, influencing how they engage with and receive services and supports. The funding for this project will help us in respectful and meaningful engagement, and in delivering recommendations that will hopefully create a tangible impact on the lives of individuals who access services for children and youth with support needs.”

— Angela Clancy, executive director,
Family Support Institute (FSI) of British Columbia

To learn more and provide your input please visit [https://t.ly/pP -v](https://t.ly/pP-v). Ideas will be shared on govTogetherBC so that all those interested will have access to the voices, opinions, and experiences of those who contribute. **Source: MCFD Press Release**

Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations sign agreement on jurisdiction pathway

In November of 2023, members of the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations celebrated the milestone signing of a child and family services agreement with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). The signing of this agreement was a major step in the Nations' journey to reclaim jurisdiction over their children, youth, and families. The agreement is set to become fully operational across British Columbia in February of 2024.

The aim of this agreement is to guide interactions, planning efforts, and decision-making in supporting the cultural safety of Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw children and youth. It is built on the Nations' cultural laws of treating children as d̓lugwe (precious gifts from heaven) and kwa'layu (the reason for living for the parents and grandparents) and incorporates the concept of Axu'stila du ginganaman (taking care of all the children). By ensuring its alignment with the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw laws, practices, language, and traditions the agreement promotes meaningful involvement of culture and community.

Community members, appointed by Chief and Council, will provide around the clock support for matters regarding the welfare of children, youth, and families and will continually ensure Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw are involved in any decisions that the MCFD may make in circumstances involving their members. **Source: MCFD Press Release**

Foster Caregiver Review Policy

Did you know that foster parents can request a review of a serious sanction such as a loss of level or home closure, resulting from an Investigation or Quality of Care Review? If a foster parent questions the administrative fairness of the decision, Quality Assurance staff will undertake a Foster Caregiver Review following applicable policies and Principles of Administrative Fairness. Though the Review cannot overturn a practice decision, if it's found that the process was not administratively fair, BCFPA will be requesting that the Ministry implement additional steps to review the sanction through the service delivery team in the foster parent's area.

The process of a Foster Caregiver Review follows these steps:

- Foster parent requests a review by sending an email to dqafpreviews.gov.bc.ca
- The Quality Assurance team screens the request
- Information gathering and analysis
- Report development
- Report components
- Action planning
- Report finalized and disseminated

The timeframe for a Review to be completed is 45 business days from the date the request for review was accepted to the final letter of review findings being sent to the foster parent. The foster parent will be contacted by the reviewer every two weeks or more frequently, if requested, to provide information on the status of the review.

You can learn more about the Foster Caregiver Review Policy [here](#).

Save the Dates!



notice. listen. respect

BC Child & Youth in Care Week

Join us in celebrating the strength, creativity, resilience, and tenacity of children and youth in and from care!

When: June 3, 2024 - June 9, 2024

Community Celebration Grants

Applications open January 29, 2024 - April 15, 2024
Get up to \$250 to help fund a BC Child & Youth in Care Week event and celebrate the children and youth in care in your community.

Youth Recognition Awards

Nominations open January 29, 2024 - April 29, 2024
Recognize the amazing achievements of children and youth in and from care across BC ages 6-24!

Visit bcchildandyoungincareweek.com for more information and to submit applications and nominations.

BCFPA AGM & Conference 2024

BC Foster Parents Association will be holding its 57th annual AGM & Conference this fall!

When: October 4, 2024 - October 5, 2024
The Annual General Meeting will take place at 9:00am on October 5th. No cost for attending the AGM *only*.

Where: Penticton Lakeside Resort
21 Lakeshore Dr W, Penticton, BC

Visit bcfosterparents.ca and subscribe to our email newsletter at the bottom of the webpage to stay informed regarding AGM bursary applications, event registration, and more.

Community Feedback on BCFPA's 2023 AGM & Conference

This past September, BC Foster Parents Association held our annual AGM & Conference at the Sheraton Vancouver Guildford Hotel in Surrey from the 22nd through the 23rd. Our team had a wonderful time with all of those that attended and, as always, we are so grateful for your feedback each year.

"Natasha [Lawrence] and Michelle [Shilvock] were absolutely terrific speakers. Learnt new things and left inspired. Enjoyed spending time with other foster parents. The food choices were appreciated and the food was delicious. The venue was clean and comfortable. Loved the gifts. The gala was so fun! Nice surprise and much needed massage appointments."

"So great connecting with others, learning new things, and hearing others input during the AGM."

"Thank you for this weekend! Networking is so important for mental health. People understanding what I am going through. Being surrounded by people living my life."

"The workshops were really relevant and I learned a lot, my first time attending was a nice pleaser and a honour to meet BCFPA Board of Directors, meet other foster parents and share our experience, excellent food and services, really welcoming and excellent venue, I really like the dinner and the music, really thankful for the gifts, overall I am so honour and grateful to be able to attend the conference"

"The AGM is such an important opportunity for foster parents skills and needs to be highlighted and for them to be centre stage. As a resource worker I learned a lot and was grateful for the chance to hear directly from them in a less formal environment."

"I appreciated how professional but warm and inviting [it was]. Sometimes, this kind of events can either be too professional (all about the job not the people) or too cozy (no structure or order) and this event was very well balanced. Thank you for that."

"I want to say a huge thank you for all the incredible work that goes into standing up such an important conference. Myself and so many others look forward to this opportunity for all partners to gather and learn alongside each other. Well done!"

"Great, informative relevant workshops. Friendly informative folks directing, organizing and getting things done in an efficient way. Relaxed atmosphere, nice hotel and good food. Concerns and problems attended to immediately."

"As a caregiver we sometimes neglect our own self-care. I appreciated the time away with my partner, I was pampered (massage was great!), slept well and had great food. Also, I was able to meet the staff at BCFPA (which was very nice!) and received a beautiful gift from Jayne and Krissy! Also, in this ever changing system that we all work in it is good to be able to network with others and talk about the latest changes."

"I want to say a huge thank you for all the incredible work that goes into standing up such an important conference. Myself and so many others look forward to this opportunity for all partners to gather and learn alongside each other. Well done!"

Recent and Upcoming Training Opportunities

Following the success of BC Foster Parents Associations' free workshops in early 2023, our team is excited to offer a new selection of learning events throughout the early months of 2024. Our locations this year are Burnaby, Parksville, Kelowna, and Prince George.

Each, foster parent exclusive, workshop will take place on the specified date from 8am to 3pm. Breakfast, lunch, and refreshments will be served during the event at no charge, and reimbursements will be available to attendees for mileage, childcare, and parking in an effort to make attendance of these events more accessible ([please see online for details](#)).



Location: Burnaby

Date: January 25, 2024

Cultivating Resilience and Helping Children and Teens Thrive Through Secure Attachments with Colleen Drobot

Caring for children can be a daunting endeavor at the best of time. Yet even more challenging can be caring for children who have had a background of separation from primary caregivers, may have experienced wounding or trauma, may have special support needs, neurodiversity, or other challenges experienced in their lifetime. Although extremely rewarding, foster caregivers may face a host of emotional and behavioral challenges from the children and teens in their care. Through a developmental lens, Colleen Drobot will uncover the roots of anxiety, and aggression as well as oppositionality and defiance in children. She will help make sense of how attachment is meant to unfold, how foster caregivers can provide a secure attachment, cultivate resilience, and confidently handle the challenges their foster children and families may face. She will also recommend some safe practices that can create more security and build relationships for children and teens. Through stories, examples, and theory, Colleen will suggest ways in which foster caregivers can help support children to find psychological and emotional rest in their world.



Location: Parksville

Date: February 22, 2024

Co-Regulation: Supporting Children and Teens in the Moment while Caring for Ourselves with Mary Klovance

Co-Regulation: Supporting Children and Teens in the Moment while Caring for Ourselves is tailored exclusively for BC Foster Parents by Mary Klovance, RCC, MA, BEd. Our comprehensive session aims to deepen your understanding of co-regulation and arm you with practical strategies for fostering supportive environments. We'll delve into the fundamentals of co-regulation, exploring its significance in the unique context of fostering. We'll navigate the challenges of the foster care environment, emphasizing trauma-informed care and the vital role of co-regulation. Through dynamic discussions and hands-on activities, you'll learn the basics of co-regulation, enhance relationship-building skills, and practice practical techniques. With a dedicated focus on self-care, we'll debunk myths surrounding it, guide you in identifying personal triggers, and assist in crafting personalized self-care plans. The workshop culminates in real-life application, encouraging participants to integrate co-regulation into their parenting practices.



Location: Kelowna

Date: March 7, 2024

Suicidality and Trauma with Sebastien Jordan

The focus of this workshop is to provide an understanding of the complexity of Suicidality and Trauma and address how cultural awareness can have a large impact on youth wellness. The hope is that foster parents can garner a deeper understanding of how to address both suicidality and trauma, de-mystify the concepts, and provide confidence on how to address these within their own homes and families.

Trigger and Content Warning: We acknowledge that each of our attendees comes to the workshop with their own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive various types of information. This workshop will cover a variety of topics which you may find triggering, or mentally or emotionally challenging. We encourage you to take the necessary steps for your emotional safety. This may include leaving the room while a certain topic is being discussed or seeking support.



Location: Prince George

Date: April 16, 2024

Creating Safe(r) Spaces for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth with Nicole Sawin

This workshop is intended to help give foster caregivers the knowledge and tools to create safer spaces for 2SLGBTQIA+ children and youth in their homes and communities. Foster caregivers will learn about the fundamentals of gender identity, reflect on their own biases and how those biases can impact the young people in their care, and explore different strategies to help children and youth feel more welcomed and accepted.

More information on the events and our speakers is available on our website at bcfosterparents.ca. Registration is also available via an online form on this page for upcoming trainings. Please be aware that these events are first come first served with a maximum attendance of 40 individuals, therefore the event may be full.

If you are unable to attend one of the workshops this year, or are unable to attend the topic you are most interested in, don't worry. BC Foster Parents Association aims to host these workshops annually - rotating topics, and sourcing new speakers. Stay updated via our website, email list, and future issues of the Fosterline BC newsletter for more information regarding our trainings for 2025.

Take Advantage of Perks & Discounts

BCFPA members have the opportunity to take advantage of perks and discounts offered locally, and province wide, across BC. Visit our webpage at bcfosterparents.ca to learn more about what offers have been generously provided to our members and sign up for a membership today to get started.

Our team at BC Foster Parents Association makes continued efforts to contact vendors and request discounts for BCFPA members. You can help! BCFPA branch members are encouraged to get involved in contacting local vendors to source discounts for caregivers in their area. Please provide us with any new information to post on our website.



Apply for 2024 Grants and Bursaries

Don't miss out! Be sure to visit bcfosterparents.ca to submit your applications for the following grants and bursaries before May 31st.

Ames Family Foundation Bursary

Applications accepted throughout the month of May.

JCW Excellence in Writing & Leadership Grant

Applications accepted throughout the month of May.

General Scholarship Fund

Applications accepted throughout the month of May.

Merv Davis Bursary

Applications accepted throughout the month of May.

William Curtis Memorial Fund

Applications accepted throughout the month of May.

Camps for Kids Grant - Summer Cycle

Applications accepted from February 1 to May 31

For more information and to apply please visit our webpage at bcfosterparents.ca. For further questions, or for assistance, please email us at office@bcfosterparents.ca or give us a call at 1-800-663-9999.





Preparing for Retirement as Foster Parents

Saving for retirement can be a complicated and stressful topic. As a full-time caregiver, it can be especially so. Our team at BC Foster Parents Association hears you and understands that worrying about retirement shouldn't take up your valuable time and energy. One of our focuses throughout 2024 will be to advocate for a pension plan for caregivers. In the meantime we hope the following information provides you with a solid foundation to begin your retirement savings journey.

Old Age Pension and Guaranteed Income Supplement for Foster Parents

Foster parents who are 65 and older may be eligible for Old Age Security (OAS) payments. Your employment history is not a factor in determining eligibility (<https://t.ly/V9EwE>). You can receive OAS payments if you have never worked or if you are still working. You may also be eligible for the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) (<https://t.ly/WQVeh>). The GIS is based on income and is available to OAS pensioners with low income. It is not taxable.

Search online for "Public Pensions Canada" to see an array of services and information about pensions and benefits available for seniors in Canada, or visit <https://t.ly/Eck2Y>.

Ways to Save for your Senior Years

Foster parents who are not employed elsewhere have some limits to how they can save for retirement. Saving through a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) requires employment income. Savings through a Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA) does not require employment income, does provide you with similar options for diversifying investments, however there are annual contribution limits.

To open a TFSA, you must have a valid Social Insurance Number (SIN) and be the age of majority in your province of residence. There are three types of TFSAs

and each can be opened and registered at a financial institution. The types of investments permitted through a TFSA are the same as those permitted through an RRSP. Cash, mutual funds, GICs, stocks, bonds, and shares are all acceptable.

An annual maximum contribution limit is set for both RRSPs and TFSAs, however the RRSP limit is income dependent. The limit for TFSA contributions is determined annually by the Canada Revenue Agency. The contribution limit is indexed to inflation and rounded to the nearest \$500. The limit for 2024's contribution is \$7,000. Since TFSAs were only created in 2009, but current maximum cumulative limit for TFSAs through to the end of 2023 is \$88,000.

There is an abundance of information regarding Tax-Free Saving Accounts online to help you better understand the benefits of this sort of savings plan. Visit <https://t.ly/-mYIO> to learn more.

Province-Wide Pension Plan Survey Results

BC Foster Parents Association has identified a potential pension program for foster parents. Our first steps were to ascertain whether enough foster parents would join the program for it to be feasible to administer, as well as to request support from the Ministry of Children and Family Development. As always, the more demand we have for any program or service, the easier it is to advocate for our foster parents.

In the tail end of 2023, we sent out a survey to foster parents province-wide. The results are summarized below. Thank you to all of you who submitted a response.

Total responses collected: 762

Are you or a partner currently contributing to a pension program on a regular basis?

Yes: 34%
No: 66%

Are you currently or do you anticipate fostering long past the average retirement age because you currently don't have a pension or retirement plan?

Yes: 70%
No: 30%

Do you or a partner currently have an alternative retirement plan, investment or savings that will allow you to retire when you are ready?

Yes: 31%
No: 69%

Would you be interested in participating in a program specifically for foster parents that helps you save toward retirement?

Yes: 70%
No: 5%
Maybe: 25%

Would you be interested in participating in a pension program where you are the only contributor and

no other party contributes toward your savings (ie. Ministry, Agency)?

Yes: 37%
No: 63%

Would you be interested in participating in a pension program that does have contributions towards savings from another source (ie. Ministry, Agency) to enhance your own contributions?

Yes: 94%
No: 6%

A pension program offered to foster parents would be most beneficial to younger community members, but others may still be interested in contributing. Please reflect your general age group below.

19-30 2%
31-45 24%
46-60 45%
61-75 28%
75+ 1%

General themes for commentary:

- Depends on what contribution is required
- As long as it doesn't impact the status of non-taxable income
- Would be interested if there are contributions from another party
- Contributions won't make any difference now, after a long career fostering
- Would like to know more
- Would like to be grandfathered in to acknowledge the past many years of fostering

March is National Social Work Month

Join BC Foster Parents Association in recognizing British Columbia's social workers and the incredible work that they do. Social workers are an essential part of our communities. They work tirelessly to create change, support, guide, advocate, connect communities, build relationships, and so much more. To the social workers in our communities, and across British Columbia and Canada, thank you!



FOSTER COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Provincial Resources

BC Foster Parents Association bcfosterparents.ca	1-800-663-9999
After Hours Foster Parent Support Line	1-888-495-4440
Indigenous Perspectives Society fostercaregiversbc.ca	1-844-391-0007
Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks fbcyicn.ca	1-800-565-8055
Adoptive Families Association of BC bcadoption.com	1-877-236-7807
BC Council for Families	604-678-8884
Pacific Post Partum Support Society postpartum.org	604-255-7999
Parent Help Line	1-888-603-9100
Parents Together	604-325-0511
Parent Support Services of BC parentsupportbc.ca	1-800-345-9777
Representative for Children & Youth rcybc.ca	1-800-476-3933
FAE/S Support Network	604-507-6675
Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre	1-800-665-1822

Interior

For contact information for local foster parent groups or support in your area, please call 1-800-663-9999.

Okanagan Foster Parent Association okfosterparents.ca	
Central Okanagan	250-870-8991
North Okanagan	250-558-0939
South Okanagan	250-462-6907
Shuswap	250-515-1522
Okanagan Metis Children & Family Services	250-868-0351
Interior Community Services interiorcommunityservices.bc.ca icsfp.info	1-877-376-3660
East Kootenay	250-426-6013
West Kootenay	778-460-5174
Cariboo	250-609-201
Kamloops and area	236-421-0031

Island

For contact information for local foster parent groups or support in your area, please call 1-800-663-9999.	
Foster Parent Support Services Society (FPSSS) fpsss.com	1-888-922-8437
FPSSS (South Vancouver Island)	778-430-5460
FPSSS (Central Island)	250-618-8327
FPSSS (Comox/Courtney)	250-898-4488
FPSSS (Cowichan Valley)	250-818-3293
FPSSS (Upper Island)	250-204-1566
FPSSS (Port Alberni)	250-735-1124
FPSSS (North Island)	250-949-7419

North

For contact information for local foster parent groups or support in your area, please call 1-800-663-9999.	
AXIS Family Resources axis.bc.ca	1-877-392-1003
Community Bridge (Fort St. John) communitybridge.ca	250-793-2261
Coast Fraser	
For contact information for local foster parent groups or support in your area, please call 1-800-663-9999.	
Hollyburn Family Services hollyburn.ca	604-987-8211
Vancouver Aboriginal Child & Family Services Society vacfss.com	778-331-4500
Foster Hub fosterhub.ca	1-877-926-1185
Archway Community Services archway.ca	778-880-8555
Fraser Valley Foster Parent Association fraservalleyfosterparents.org	1-877-797-7701
South Vancouver Youth Centre milieu.ca	604-325-2004
Pacific Community Resources Society pcrs.ca	604-587-8100
The Children's Foundation childrens-foundation.org	604-434-9101

IT PAYS TO BE A MEMBER!

Please complete and return to BCFPA: 208-20641 Logan Avenue, Langley, BC V3A 7R3 or join or renew via our website at bcfosterparents.ca

Name(s): _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____ Region: _____

Local Association (BCFPA Branch): _____

Level of Foster Home: (select one)

Restricted ___ Regular ___ Level I ___ Level II ___ Level III ___ Contractor ___ Other ___

This is a: New Membership ___ (OR) a Renewal ___

1 year: individual \$30.00 ___ OR couple \$35.00 ___

2 year: individual \$50.00 ___ OR couple \$60.00 ___

*\$10.00 of this membership fee will be used by the provincial office for administration of the program and development of services to foster parents. The balance of the fee will be returned to your regional board or BCFPA branch.

I/we contract with ___ MCFD ___ Delegated Aboriginal Agency Other: _____

OR my affiliation with the BCFPA is (i.e. staff, MCFD, non-foster parent): _____

As members of the BC Foster Parent Associations, I/we agree to abide by the Bylaws, Policy and Procedures, and Code of Ethics of the Association. _____
[signature(s)]

Please bill my VISA or MC # _____ Expires ____ / ____

[signature for approval]

Get social with us!



@bcfosterparentsassociation



@bcfosterparents



Youtube.com/@BCFPA



@bcfosterparents