

# FosterlineBC

BC Foster Parents Association



**BCFPA's  
Roadmap for  
2025**

**Advice from  
Caregivers for  
Caregivers**



**Hear from  
BCFPA's Newest  
Board President**

**March is Social  
Work 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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# President's Report



Hello everyone!

We have Spring approaching, and that looks very different to all of us around BC. Here, in Prince George, we have a lot of snow, but tomorrow is above zero for the first time in a while so we're all excited and ready to wear our shorts soon. Meanwhile, the Lower Mainland, where the Provincial Office is located, has already made the shift back to rainier days.

We're doing our best to work towards being able to provide access to counseling for foster caregivers across the province. These advocacy projects do take a lot of time but I'm confident that one day we'll be able to say that we did it. Our Executive Director, Jayne Wilson, and I will be meeting with the minister in May, so I am looking forward to seeing how that meeting turns out. Our provincial board is currently full, which is exciting.

We've been doing our regional calls every three months, having just completed our third round. We've recently made the decision to add provincial calls to the rotation and have begun making plans to host one in May (see [page 17](#) for more information). We're looking forward to connecting with all of you in one space to share regional experiences. Our team will be noting both similarities and differences among the regions that need to be addressed. I think this is one good way of bringing people from throughout the province together.

My first few months of being president, since being elected at our 2024 AGM in Penticton, have been interesting. There's most definitely been a bit of a learning curve as I navigate new responsibilities and take on new projects. It's been a fun and rewarding experience though!

We've started our AGM planning already (see [page 14](#)). This year, we're going to have our Wellness Room again, which was a big hit two years ago, and we plan on adding more opportunities to participate in our 50/50 draw. DJ Stacey will be returning this year, as well, and we're working on finalizing speakers for four workshop options this year - two morning sessions and two afternoon sessions. We have some exciting swag picked out and donations are being gathered for the raffles.

I know that a lot of foster caregivers around the province don't attend the AGM, but it is truly something I would recommend. It's such a great way to network and meet other foster parents. It's a neat way to be able to stop fostering in isolation, like so many do. We have regional bursaries available this year to help alleviate some of the associated costs, so keep an eye on your email and our social media in the coming months and be sure to apply.

All of the in-person trainings have been going well across the province. This year, we were able to host six workshops across all four regions. We're hoping to be able to offer those again in the next year or so and those will likely be announced closer to the Fall.

Have a great spring everybody!

Rocky Hindmarch  
President, Foster Caregiver

**Are you a BCFPA member yet?** It's never too late to sign up and gain access to exclusive member-only perks, discounts, bursary/grant opportunities, voting rights, and more! Visit [bcfosterparents.ca](https://bcfosterparents.ca) to sign-up for a membership or renew yours today.

## OUR MISSION

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



## OUR BELIEF

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Supported and resilient caregivers raise empowered children and youth.



## OUR VISION

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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 Indigenous Child and Family Service 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



Hello friends!

We're nipping at the heels of Spring and looking forward to another busy year. BC Foster Parents Association has been providing services to BC's foster parents for almost 60 years! As the child welfare sector continues to focus on keeping children with family and community members, our Board of Directors recognizes that it's time to expand our services to include additional caregivers who need our support. As always, our services are guided by relevant policies and will focus on providing the guidance, emotional support, and referral to community resources that kinship caregivers need. We hope to launch in the next few months.

Expanding our mandate requires some tweaks to our agency image and governing documents. We'll be embarking on a brief rebranding journey to include additional caregiver groups. Our members can expect to see some rebranding options for voting prior to our 2025 Annual General Meeting.

AGM 2024 resulted in 15 Motions from the Floor from our foster parent members. We've identified the advocacy priorities based on what we believe we can achieve. Our members asked us to address issues as important as ensuring there is a flag for medical teams and law enforcement awareness in the files of foster parents who care for medically fragile children who may experience a health crisis at any time; that there be support available for foster families following a suicide – or attempted suicide – in their home; that foster home investigations be carried out by staff from different

Service Delivery Areas; and that the Ministry uphold the drug and smoke free-space policy in foster homes. We have some heavy and important work to pursue.

Keep an eye on your email for BCFPA Regional Delegate elections for Fraser and the Interior regions in the next couple of months. Our general delegate eligibility includes a current membership in good standing, a current fostering contract, and an active and consistent network of foster parents within your region. As our agency becomes busier, it's also important that our Delegates are free of any conflicts of interest (not an employee or board member of a similar agency), have existing knowledge and familiarity with BCFPA's mandate and operations, a focus on service expansion – including embracing new directions – and that they have access and familiarity with current technology for monthly meetings.

I'm looking forward to touching base with many of you in the coming months.

Regards,

Jayne Wilson  
Executive Director

## STAY IN THE KNOW

Subscribe to the BC Foster Parents Association Newsletter at [bcfosterparents.ca](https://bcfosterparents.ca) to keep up to date on events, bursaries, sector news, surveys, and more!

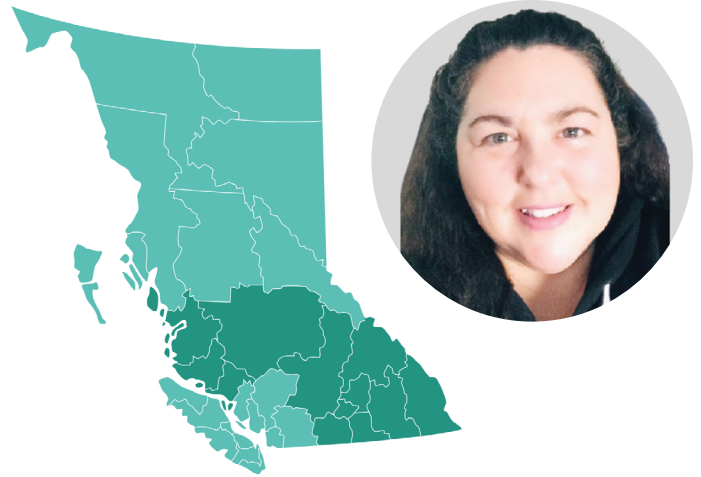
## Interior Delegate Report by Raquel Lesieur

Hello, and happy National Social Work Month!

Things have been quiet in our region, but I do have a few exciting things to share. Firstly, our regular regional calls ([page 17](#)) are happening as scheduled and we've recently made the shift from member-only calls to opening attendance to all caregivers in the province. Spread the word! Our next call, in May, will be a provincial call which I expect to be a valuable conversation.

Retention and recruitment measures are being taken, and we're hopeful that we'll see improvements in the relationships and communication between our caregivers and social workers. BCFPA knows that your first-hand experiences have a direct impact on both retention and recruitment and continues to advocate for caregivers in conversations with MCFD.

I would like to remind you all that the BC Foster Parents Association has a Fostering Solutions Program available to caregivers. Staff are well-equipped to provide support, advocacy, mediation services, and guidance to



foster families across BC. To find out more, or to get in touch with someone from the Solutions program, you can visit [bcfosterparents.ca](https://bcfosterparents.ca) or call **1-800-663-9999**.

This year, we were able to host six workshops on five topics across the province. All went wonderfully and were very informative, though attendance for some was lower than expected and we heard some feedback on scheduling. If you were able to attend, please make sure you fill out our event survey to help us improve these events in the future. You can get access to the survey by emailing [office@bcfosterparents.ca](mailto:office@bcfosterparents.ca).

## Fraser Delegate Report by Catherine Clutchey

Happy Spring!

Well, it feels like January lasted forever and then February just buzzed by and now I see a glimmer of Spring on the horizon. Real spring, maybe, with sun and warmth.

Over the past few months, I've had the opportunity to connect with many foster parents both in person and virtually. Their passion was palpable, even though occasionally that was through frustration and exhaustion. The absolute most resilient people I've ever met.

I've been working in connection with MCFD and Fraser Health Authority along with other community organizations to develop workshops including



facilitators with lived experience of substance use disorder. These workshops, which will include extensive information regarding stigma and exploring biases, encourage foster parents to look inside themselves in order to grow and benefit the community as a whole. I'm excited to see these workshops put into practice. Please stay tuned and reach out anytime at [catherine@bcfosterparents.ca](mailto:catherine@bcfosterparents.ca).

## Island Delegate Report by Sarah Scorey

Hello from Vancouver Island!

BCFPA's third round of workshops wrapped up in late February. Vancouver Island's workshop was about empowering caregivers of children with ASD and ADHD with Jessica Pfeffer. It was very informative and a great place to connect with other caregivers from across the island.

In February, BCFPA held a regional call for Islanders. Although attendance was low we were able to gather important information that will guide our advocacy at the provincial level. All caregivers are welcome on these calls so please attend and let your voice be heard! Our next call will be taking place in May.

Recently, our mileage reimbursement rate went from .51 cents/km to .63 cents/km which will help with the ever-increasing cost of living; The BC government, in partnership with the Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Council (I-SPARC) is supporting children with up to \$1000 per child/year for sports, physical activity, recreation or cultural activities; and BCFPA Camps for Kids summer cycle is open!

## Coast Delegate Report by Shimsher Pannun

With spring just around the corner, many children are looking forward to spring break, and we hope everyone has plans for some fun family activities. Whether it's outdoor adventures, creative projects at home, or community events, this is a great time to make special memories with the kids in your care.

Hollyburn Family Services has been actively engaging caregivers and providing valuable resources over the past few months. At the end of January, they hosted an in-person First Aid training session, ensuring caregivers are well-equipped with essential safety skills. In addition, Hollyburn continues to foster community and support among caregivers. On the first Monday of every month, they hold a Caregiver Circle, offering a space for connection, discussion, and shared learning.



As we move into spring there remains a big need for homes on the Island! Social workers are busy as are foster caregivers. With increased demand on homes, it is more important than ever to connect! If you are feeling isolated please reach out. There are a number of ways that you can connect with other caregivers. Check out our local support agency website for regular local events ([www.caring-families.ca](http://www.caring-families.ca)), join a Facebook group, watch for BCFPA calls or workshops and, of course, join us at the next BCFPA AGM.

I love hearing from caregivers so please feel free to reach out at [sarah@bcfosterparents.ca](mailto:sarah@bcfosterparents.ca).

Looking ahead, mark your calendars for April 9th, when the Stand Together Conference will take place at the Executive Plaza in Burnaby. This event is a great opportunity for caregivers to learn, network, and gain new insights.

For those interested in father-focused support, Brad Marsh from VACFSS' Family Preservation is hosting an ongoing group called Focus on Fatherhood, running from March 6 through April 17. If you have any questions or would like to join, you can contact Brad at **778-986-2749**.

Finally, a reminder to all caregivers, both new and experienced—be sure to ask your resource worker to put in a referral for a support person. There are many agencies that can provide this support, including Milleau, Hollyburn, Family Preservation, and Foundations. Having a support person can be an invaluable resource in your caregiving journey.

# Northern Delegate Report

## by Tanya-Lea Nault

Spring is just around the corner, and with it comes longer days, warmer weather (hopefully!), and plenty of exciting things happening in the North! The Northern Branch has been buzzing with activity, and we can't wait to share what's coming up.

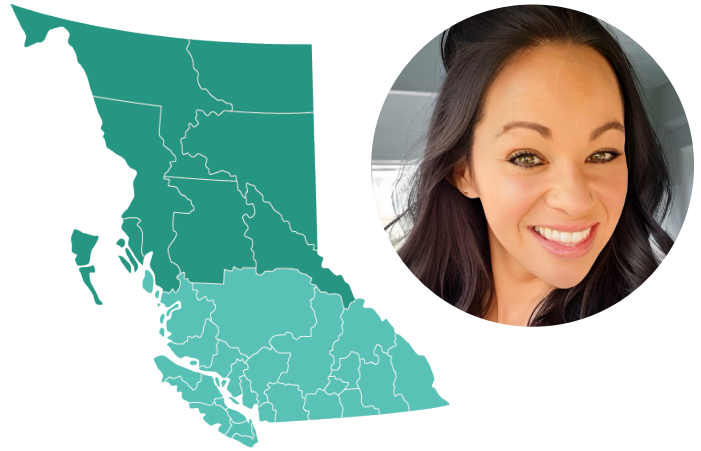
First up—get your skates ready! We're hosting a Roll-A-Dome Party in March, and it's going to be a blast! It's a great chance to connect, have fun, and maybe even show off some skating skills (or at least try to stay on your feet!).

We're also wrapping up another amazing season of volunteering for the Prince George Cougars' regular hockey season. A huge thank you to everyone who pitched in! The proceeds will be going to our local branch and a charity, so your hard work is truly making a difference.

March is shaping up to be a busy month as we also host our local Annual AGM. This is a great opportunity to come together, share ideas, and look ahead at what's next for foster caregivers in the North.

Looking forward, we're exploring an exciting partnership with McDonald's for Kids in Care Week, which will help bring awareness and support to children and youth in care. Stay tuned for more details!

And speaking of big events—over the next few months, we'll be working hard to secure sponsors and donations for this year's gala. If you have connections or ideas, we'd love to hear from you!



On the relationship-building front, our partnership meetings with agencies have been positive and welcoming. We're excited about strengthening these relationships and encourage all caregivers to attend the monthly partnership meetings. These meetings are a great space to voice concerns, ask questions, and feel heard and validated.

For those looking to stay in the loop, be sure to join our Northern Foster Parent Facebook Group. It's a great way to stay updated on upcoming events, share experiences, and connect with other foster parents in the region.

And last but not least—we're always looking for volunteers! Whether it's lending a hand at events or sharing ideas for what you'd like to see in the North, your voice matters, and we'd love for you to get involved.

Here's to an exciting and vibrant spring ahead! We can't wait to see you all at upcoming events.

Stay connected, stay involved, and most importantly—have fun!

1

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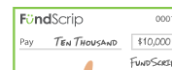
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4

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Each purchase automatically includes a donation for your group that can quickly add up over time



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# Start a BCFPA Branch in your area!



SCAN HERE TO BECOME  
A BCFPA MEMBER

BC Foster Parents Association was created in 1967 at the request of foster parents and social workers. Our core purpose has remained the same all these years. Our purpose is to represent the best interests and best practices of all foster parents in British Columbia. We do this by ensuring that we engage in meaningful discourse with foster parent communities, stakeholders, and the provincial government. Together, foster parents, BCFPA and the Ministry of Children and Family Development have brought about an abundance of positive change in fostering practice over the past 50 years.

**BCFPA is  
another  
branch  
of the  
family  
tree.**

## WHAT MEMBERSHIP IN BCFPA GIVES YOU

- Voting privileges that allow you to steer BCFPA activities. You can hold positions on our Board of Directors providing you with the opportunity to represent your region as a delegate or speak on behalf of foster parents across British Columbia.
- You have access to financial assistance exclusive to members which include the Camps for Kids Grant, the Medical Travel Grant and education bursaries for children and youth.
- You can access mentorship and volunteer opportunities to support community members.
- You can receive exclusive membership perks and discounts.
- Your membership fees provide funding for branches in your community to host meetings and family activities.

**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'.

**You're all set to start saving!**

**Use your BCFPA membership to enjoy savings on North America's top travel, entertainment, health and wellness, and lifestyle brands!**

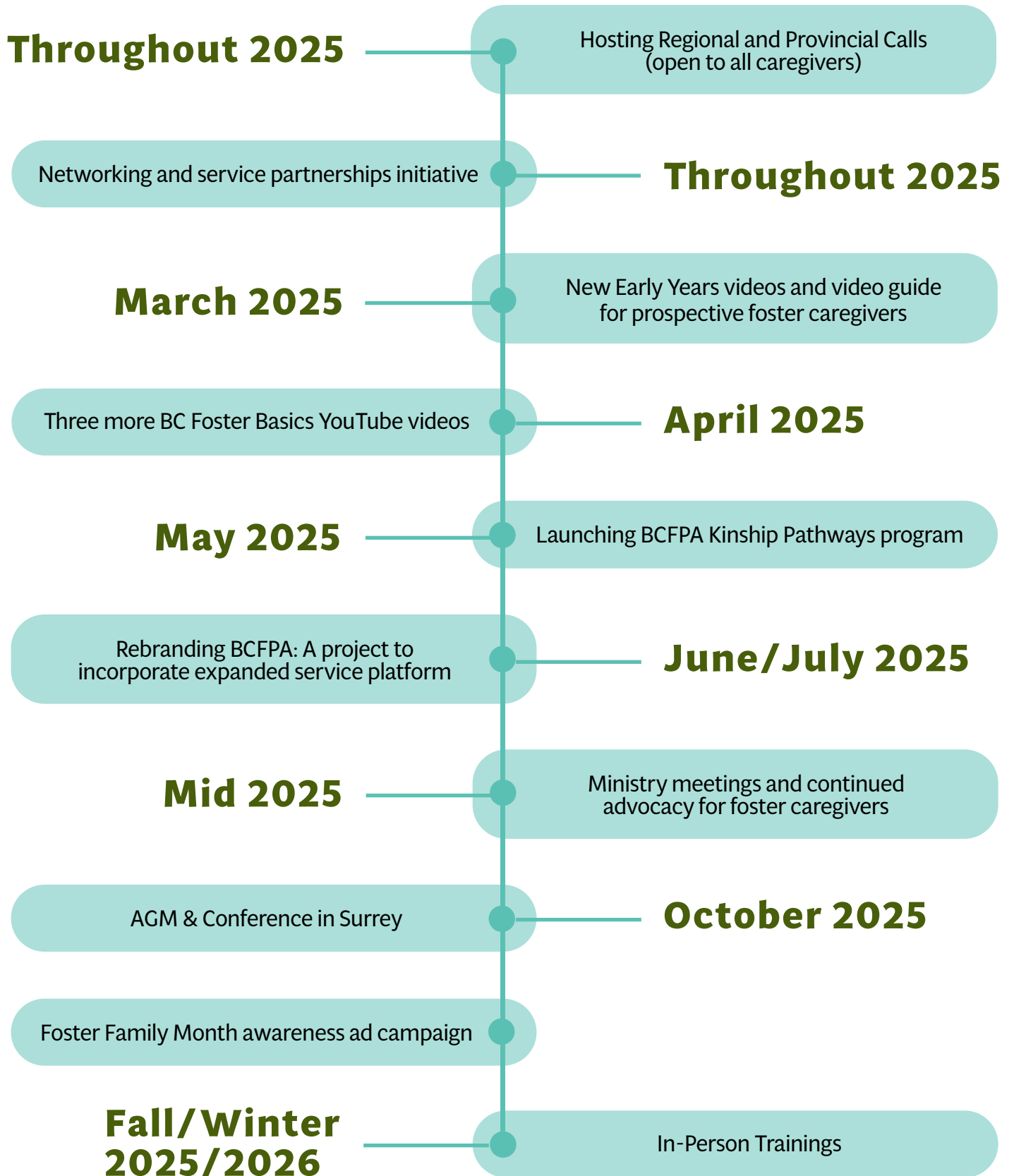
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| Champs             | Cineplex         |
| Cirque du Soleil   | Club Monaco      |
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| Dyson              | Ever New         |
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**Don't foster in 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.**



# BC Foster Parents Association's 2025 Roadmap



# Provincial Strategy Initiatives: Message from Amanda Oliver, Director of Advocacy

I want to share my reflections on all that I have heard and witnessed in my meetings with foster caregivers, staff, and stakeholders since assuming this role last year, as well as provide updates on the Provincial Strategic Initiatives in response to what I have learned.

I will start by saying that relationship-building is a vital part of advocacy work, so I have prioritized hosting regional calls every three months with caregivers across the province. These calls are invaluable to hear first-hand the ongoing challenges foster caregivers are facing, and to share opportunities for caregivers to network and connect. It has been equally important to hear from and reach out to MCFD staff and regional partners to hear their perspectives on these issues too.

As you know, MCFD has been implementing a huge multi-year transformation process which has focused on 4 key priorities:

1. Indigenous Reconciliation – including Jurisdiction and legislative reforms.
2. Prevention and Family Supports – including transforming services to children with support needs and Children & Youth with Mental Health needs through the PATHWAY of HOPE for mental health and addiction services.
3. Youth Transitions – including youth justice and youth transitioning from care.
4. Network of care – including Specialized Homes and Support Services

Three of these priorities are directly impacting the current nature of and the future of fostering in BC. My understanding of how these changes are impacting foster caregivers in our province has been a focus of my role in this first year.

I am connecting every four months with regional leaders to develop greater understanding and to enhance two-way communication between staff and

caregivers both locally and provincially. We continue to gather statistical information about trends and the global concerns that caregivers are facing across the province, and my role is to ensure that leadership in MCFD is made aware and can respond appropriately. During times of rapid change, it is increasingly important for Ministry staff to share information and to improve lines of communication for all caregivers.

Many caregivers have spoken about the need for more transparency, information sharing, communication, and respectful interactions with MCFD staff as key issues to improve their working relationships with the ministry and to boost retention rates. There have been efforts in the past to draw attention to the lack of consistency in terms of interpreting and applying policy guidelines across BC. Each region, team, and often individual staff members seem to share different opinions about how resource worker policies should be applied. This variation in practice causes frustration and mistrust to grow as caregivers share information with one another. While we can appreciate that unique circumstances may require a personal or case-specific approach, the responses from staff should not vary so significantly. I hear from caregivers that depending upon where you live, and which office you are attached to can make a huge difference in the support caregivers receive.

Caregivers tell me they have struggled to gain access to resources and assistance, including relief caregivers, assistance in transporting children, negotiating contract increases, or a level assessment to reflect their skills and experience. I will continue consulting with leaders and support agency staff to address the discrepancies and advocate directly for more consistency. Another key element to addressing misunderstandings or misinterpretation of our standards of care is to ensure that new staff have received training to work collaboratively and supportively with caregivers. Some regions have already initiated training that emphasizes working with caregivers as being equally important as the guardianship or child protection roles they play.

There has been fear and anxiety expressed about the need for ever-increasing monitoring in foster care homes and the increases in Quality-of-Care Reviews and Investigations in Care Homes since COVID and some serious high-profile incidents affecting children in care. Again, foster caregivers tell me they prioritize the need to keep children safe and the responsibility they share in safeguarding children and youth. However, the nature of the Investigations in Care Homes is viewed by caregivers as being unnecessarily adversarial in most cases. There is a lack of fairness if caregivers disagree with the nature of the concern or recommendations at the end of the investigation and that even if there has been no confirmation of concerns, the investigation itself causes lasting and dire consequences for caregivers.

Caregivers view these investigation processes as being one-sided and harmful to both the children in care and their families. Initiatives to address these issues include ensuring that all caregivers receive written notification of the investigation prior to the start of the process, and a package of information about local caregiver support agencies and the Solutions Program team who can offer support throughout the process.

One of the motions we received and expect to enact at the recent AGM in October was for BCFPA to advocate with MCFD for a joint working committee, including ministry staff, board representatives, and other stakeholders to consider updates to the policies related to fairness and practices during an investigation. Just as in any progressive disciplinary process when conducting a Quality-of-Care review, caregivers' views should be recorded and given equal consideration. Any recommendations should be received in writing and any reparations should be outlined, defining clearly what needs to happen, who is responsible for doing what, and when it will be reviewed in terms of timelines. Any issue that can be resolved through our existing processes should be, such as the process for resolving conflict, talking directly with the caregiver, and making face-to-face contact during any difficult conversations. Caregivers have a right to know how staff perceives them, workers can express directly to caregivers if there are areas for growth or development. If caregivers are not following practice guidelines or there are issues related to contract terms or personal conduct these can be resolved directly. Any perceived or potential disciplinary actions should

allow for caregivers to have a support person present and for notes of the meeting to be shared if follow-up is required.

An issue that has caused considerable concern across ministry staff and caregivers alike is the attrition rates of foster caregivers leaving the sector and what can be done to retain caregivers. Retention requires a focused and specific strategy to support foster caregivers to continue to grow and to stay longer in our system of care. The transformation process underway currently has resulted in fewer children coming into our in-care system, and more children being placed within kinship care arrangements. As a result, fewer foster care home options may be required. But we must recognize that for those children who cannot remain in the care of family, foster care is a safe and supportive alternative, hopefully, while work is completed to repatriate or transition children to a more permanent home environment.

Those of us who have worked in the sector for some time understand that group homes do not provide a substitute for a caring home environment. An initiative we have started is to collect statistical information about the number of caregivers leaving our sector across the years, from region to region. As well as the number of potential caregivers who apply to foster and where they are a year later. Our stats gathered over a four-year period indicate that a significant number of new applicants do not proceed to become fully qualified to foster and many more leave the sector in the first two years of fostering.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation in 2013 developed a highly successful manual for retaining foster caregivers in Washington state. It included a phrase that has stayed with me; "Treat them like gold". Their specific retention strategy was based on some basic principles:

1. **Foster caregivers do important work**, but the work is hard work at times and requires compassionate and supportive people to do it well. Staff should treat caregivers with the same compassion and support that they wish them to provide for our children. **Treat them with respect and kindness** even if you need to provide critical feedback or offer corrective suggestions.
2. **Timely responses**, foster caregivers usually have several children in their care, with numerous staff

and other professionals attached to each child. If caregivers have questions or require information, staff should be expected to respond in a timely way. Some staff have worked out an arrangement based on how urgent the request is, but the caregiver has the right to flag an urgent request even if the worker doesn't see it that way. Workers can inform foster caregivers of the preferred way to contact them, via email, voice mail, or text for example. If they cannot reply immediately, they should respond with options such as "Call the duty worker I am out of the office, or I can respond within 24 hours to this request."

3. **Consistent practice and rules** should be explained and applied fairly to all caregivers. All foster caregivers should have the right to consult and talk to their peers. When foster caregivers gather, they frequently highlight enormous variations in practices, particularly relating to relief hours, payments, and contracts in general. Other issues are being highlighted across the province related to how and when supplemental payments are being used. Each team seems to be interpreting the policies rather than there being some standard responses or at least a range in which everyone can receive similar responses.
4. **Foster caregivers need to feel that they are valued.** They should be seen to be people with

skills and abilities, having knowledge to share particularly about the child or youth in their care. They should be invited to participate in important planning meetings, even if they share what they know about the child and any recommendations they may have and then leave the meeting to safeguard or protect the confidential information about the family being discussed.

5. **Foster caregivers need to be given opportunities to seek out and obtain support** from various sources, peer and professional support are emphasized as well as capacity building or professional development training to enhance their knowledge and skills.

For our MCFD and agency partners, we need to first understand why people are leaving the care system and then develop our own specific retention plan and associated activities. Recognition, support, feedback, and appreciation are all key aspects of showing we value and intend to retain good foster caregivers.

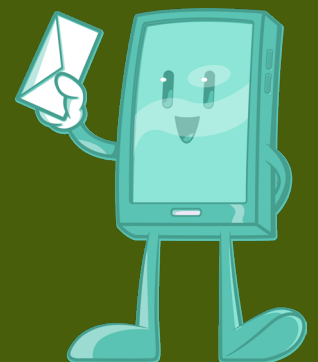
This is not an exhaustive list of the initiatives that have begun. I hope to continue to meet with you all regularly and to advance your goals. Please feel free to reach out to me with your ideas or questions any time at [amanda@bcfosterparents.com](mailto:amanda@bcfosterparents.com).

## Stay Connected! Sign Up Now to Receive Updates and Reminders via Text

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When you sign up you'll get: Key updates, Important announcements, Event reminders  
We promise to keep texts relevant and minimal. Standard messaging rates may apply based on your carrier.

Got questions? We've got answers! Whether you need a quick resource or have a simple question, just text us. However, for support or urgent matters, please call the BCFPA main line at 1-800-663-9999. Need to speak with someone? You can also request a call through text, and we'll get back to you.



# Save The Dates!

## 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 2, 2025 - June 8, 2025

### Community Celebration Grants

Applications open until April 14, 2025

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 until April 25, 2025

Recognize the amazing achievements of children and youth in and from care across BC ages 6-24!

Visit [bcchildandyouthincareweek.com](https://bcchildandyouthincareweek.com) for more information and to submit applications and nominations.



## BCFPA AGM & Conference 2025

BC Foster Parents Association will be holding its 58th annual AGM & Conference this fall!

**When:** October 3, 2025 - October 4, 2025

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

**Where:** Sheraton Vancouver Guildford Hotel  
15269 104 Ave, Surrey, BC

Visit [bcfosterparents.ca](https://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.

Plan on attending? Book your room now, before September 1, 2025, to receive the discounted room rate of \$215/night for a Traditional Room. To book, visit [bit.ly/4i4M1Va](https://bit.ly/4i4M1Va), call **1-800-587-3038**, or email [reservation@sheratonguildford.com](mailto:reservation@sheratonguildford.com).



# SECTOR NEWS & UPDATES



## First Nations Leadership Council signs new agreement with Province of BC.

In September of 2024, the First Nations Leadership Council and the Province of British Columbia signed an agreement, recommitting both parties to working together to better support First Nations children, youth, and families. The signing of this agreement is recognized as a step on the journey to reconciliation.

“The well-being of First Nations children in B.C. continues to be an absolute crisis, with disproportionate numbers of our kids in care and experiencing far too much violence. We prepared the Rising to the Challenge Accord to further prior agreements, such as the 2002 Tsawwassen Accord and the Reconciliation Charter in 2017. This accord represents a serious commitment by Minister Grace Lore and this provincial government to move forward together, recognizing the ongoing, heartbreaking impacts of colonialism on our children and families. At the end of the day, I am a grandfather to 15 grandchildren and two beautiful new great-grandchildren, and **I know in my heart that we have to do everything in our power to make positive, transformative change for our kids. This accord represents that commitment.**”

— Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, president  
Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs

This agreement, titled the Rising to the Challenge Accord, was co-developed by the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) and the Province. It is

built on the Reconciliation Charter of 2017 - signed by Canada, BC, and the FNLC - which formally committed the signing parties to their work in reducing the number of First Nations children and youth in care, keeping families together, and supporting youth in transitioning out of care. The renewed agreement outlines both party’s ongoing shared commitment to building a new approach to child, youth, and family well-being, one that recognizes and upholds the inherent right of First Nations peoples to have jurisdiction over the welfare of their children and families.

**“There is nothing more important than the health and well-being of our children, our future generations!** It is imperative that we continue to work collectively to overhaul outdated and colonial laws and policies relating to First Nations child welfare, which for too long have devastated our cultures and our family life. **We need to see real and tangible systemic change** that breaks down siloed methods, includes collaborative and culturally appropriate approaches to child welfare and implements a new fiscal model to support government-to-government relationships. This protocol adds to our evolving foundation and ongoing joint commitment for how we will work together with a goal to achieving real and positive change in the coming years. **Our children, our families and our communities are relying on us to collectively be successful and this accord helps to set that path.**”

— Cheryl Casimer, political executive  
First Nations Summit

Source: MCFD Press Release



## **New Tsq̓sceñ child well-being law, T'kwenm7íple7tens re Kíkwe, implemented.**

In December of 2024 - after decades of countless efforts from Tsq̓sceñ leadership, staff, and community members, alongside the continuous guidance from Tsq̓sceñ Elders and knowledge keepers - new Tsq̓sceñ First Nation child well-being law, T'kwenm7íple7tens re Kíkwe, came into action. This law showcases Tsq̓sceñ jurisdiction and legislative authority over child, youth, and family services in their community.

T'kwenm7íple7tens re Kíkwe, meaning “Law of the Valerian Plant”, is rooted in Tsq̓sceñ's stories, beliefs, teachings, practices, and language. It is centered around the cultural importance of nurturing connections to family and community. The law will be administered by Tsq̓sceñ First Nation child and family well-being agency, Élksts re Kíkwe, in Canim Lake.

With this law being implemented, Tsq̓sceñ is able to continue the practice of the principle that Tsq̓sceñemc holds the responsibility of guarding and caring for all the children, youth, and families in their community, regardless of their location. This principle is consistent with the traditional practice of going to, providing aid to, and retrieving children, youth, and families in their times of need.

**Source: MCFD Press Release**

## **Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations sign historic agreement with Canada and BC.**

In September of 2024, Chief Leslie Walkus, Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nations; Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw council members; the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services, and the Honourable Grace Lore, Minister of Children and Family Development signed a historic agreement to protect the inherent rights of Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations, near Port Hardy, to look after their families in alignment with their cultural beliefs and practices.

The collaboration is rooted in the understanding that Indigenous children and families should maintain connections to their communities and flourish in the embrace of their cultures and loved ones. The agreement implements the Aux'stila du ginganam Child and Family Protection and Support Law; focusing on reconnecting children/youth to their families, culture, and communities while honouring the rooted belief that children are dlugwe (treasures from heaven), and kwa'layu (grandparents reason for living).

The signed agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities of all involved parties, outlines the shared understanding of all parties, and cements a commitment to facilitate seamless coordination of services for children, youth, and families.

**Source: MCFD Press Release**

# **Happy 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!





## BCFPA Regional & Provincial Calls

BC Foster Parents Association hosts a set of regional discussion groups via Zoom at regular intervals throughout the year. The intention behind these calls is for caregivers to have opportunities to increase their network, ask questions, gain resources, discuss what's happening in their region, and build a collaborative relationship with BCFPA as well as other caregivers. These calls are loosely structured open discussions where all attendees are welcome to speak and share freely.

Each call is attended by members of BCFPA's board of directors and provincial office staff, including our Director of Advocacy/Provincial Community Strategist and Head of the Provincial Strategy Initiative, Amanda Oliver.

To hear about upcoming calls be sure to follow us on Instagram (@bcfosterparents) and Facebook (BC Foster Parents Association), and sign up for our email newsletter.

If you have any questions regarding these calls please feel free to reach out to our Community Network Coordinator, at [taiah@bcfosterparents.ca](mailto:taiah@bcfosterparents.ca).

## Not covered by a group health plan? Concerned about health & dental expenses?

Find the coverage that's right for you and your family with a **Health Assist plan** from **Green Shield Canada (GSC for short)**.

 **healthassist**®

You can choose a plan that offers prescription drug coverage, dental or a combination of both. Plus, all plans provide coverage towards vision care, extended health care (like registered massage therapists and chiropractors), and emergency medical travel protection. Your acceptance is guaranteed for many plans – no medical questions asked\*. Best of all, Health Assist plans are easy to understand and easy to get.

**It's all about you and what you need.  
Want more info?**

**Contact**

**Candace Dodson-Willis**

**in strategic alliance with Group One**

**[Candace\\_Dodson@icloud.com](mailto:Candace_Dodson@icloud.com)**

Plans provided by **Green Shield Canada (GSC)**

\*Acceptance is guaranteed for select plans as long as GSC receives the initial payment; other plans require completion of a health questionnaire and medical underwriting.

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# Apply for BCFPA Grants & Bursaries for 2025

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Don't miss out! Be sure to visit [bcfosterparents.ca](http://bcfosterparents.ca) to submit your applications for the following grants and bursaries before May 31, 2025.

## **Ames Family Foundation Bursary**

Two bursaries of \$5,000 available for youth formerly in care enrolled or planning to enroll in an eligible secondary or post-secondary program. See website for full details and application.

## **General Scholarship Fund**

One bursary of \$1,000 available for youth formerly in care enrolled or planning to enroll in an eligible secondary or post-secondary program. See website for full details and application.

## **Merv Davis Bursary**

One bursary of \$1,000 available for youth formerly in care, living in an eligible city and enrolled or planning to enroll in an eligible secondary or post-secondary program. See website for full details and application.

## **Natural Child Bursary**

One bursary of \$1,000 available for a biological or adopted child of a BCFPA member and foster parent enrolled or planning to enroll in an eligible secondary or post-secondary program. See website for full details and application.

## **William Curtis Memorial Fund**

One bursary of \$1,000 available for youth formerly in care enrolled or planning to enroll in an eligible secondary or post-secondary program. See website for full details and application.

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The **Fine Arts for Kids Fund** and **Medical Travel Grant** are both open year-round. See website for full details and application.

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## **Camps for Kids Grant - Summer Cycle**

Applications are open February 1 - May 31.

One annual grant of up to \$300 available for BCFPA members enrolling fostered, adopted, or biological children/youth in an eligible camp program. See website for full details and application.





# From Caregiver to Caregiver: Advice on Looking After Yourself & Keeping Your Cup Full

In November of 2024, BC Foster Parents Association held an in-person collaborative workshop titled *An Appreciative Inquiry Learning Event: Discussing Advocacy, Retention, and Building Effective Support Systems*. At this event, we asked caregivers “When circumstances are tough and you feel the weight of it all on your shoulders, how do you refill your cup and continue to move forward?”. This article is a collection of the answers we received; a practical guide to looking after your own wellbeing and mental health, or a self-care menu of sorts.

## **Preserve Your Individuality**

It’s well-known throughout the fostering community that being a caregiver is both a calling and an all-consuming lifestyle. There never seems to be less that needs to be done and it is all too easy to lose yourself in the daily to-dos. This is exactly why it is so important to make an effort to prioritize activities that appeal to your interests. Because before you are a caregiver you are you.

- Practice new, current, or lost hobbies regularly
- Join a book club
- Listen to music/podcasts
- (Re)Watch favourite shows or movies
- Go out and do things you enjoy
  - Try new restaurants
  - Take a pottery or cooking class
  - Go to a concert
- Read books/listen to audiobooks (the Libby app is an incredible free resource!)

## **Healthy Bodies & Healthy Minds**

We’ve all heard this advice before, and with good reason. There is endless research available that explores the relationship between physical and mental health, the impacts of grounding ourselves in

nature, and the importance of seeking professional intervention - both physically and mentally - when needed.

- Yoga
- Therapy/Counselling
- Meditation
- Take regular breaks and micro-breaks
- Go for walks

## **Get Social**

It is so important to remember that you are not alone in the work that you do or the roadblocks you may face. Building your network and identifying a support system is crucial for anyone, but especially so as a caregiver. It is also incredibly impactful to your personal well-being to have others to talk to who understand you, hear you, and uplift you.

- Build and/or maintain a social life that is entirely removed from fostering.
- Seek a strong support system for fostering.
  - Build relationships with other caregivers, support workers, social workers, etc.
  - Take advantage of BCFPA’s services, such as the regional and provincial calls and the Fostering Solutions Program

- Attend caregiver events and training opportunities
- Intentionally schedule time for friends/family regularly and outside of the home.

### **Prioritize Joy & Fun**

Much like the advice about healthy bodies impacting healthy minds, there's a reason we hear that laughter is the best medicine so often. We need fun and laughter. We need healthy dopamine, serotonin, and endorphin production. In most cases, all this takes to achieve is a little intention and a little bit of letting go.

- Take advantage of funny compilations on YouTube (aim to stay away from social media platforms that tend to include a healthy mix of negativity in our algorithms), sitcoms, and shows like America's Funniest Home Videos to laugh daily.
- Plan fun things to look forward to.
- Schedule regular takeout (or fun dinner) and movie (or game) nights.
- Take time to reflect on the positives and the overall impact of the work you do
- Express your gratitude informally throughout the day.

### **Build Your Self-Advocacy Skillset**

Self-advocacy, alongside an established support system, is one of the most powerful tools in your toolbox as a caregiver. Speaking up doesn't come naturally to all, but thankfully it's a skill that can be practiced and learned.

- Seek and utilize relief and respite care
- Know and enforce your boundaries
- Be present and active in planning meetings and discussions
  - Visit [bit.ly/40XRJRK](https://bit.ly/40XRJRK) for free access to a recorded webinar on Collaborative Decision-Making in Child Welfare
- Ask, ask, ask: Inquire with your social workers, with support agency staff, and with BCFPA about policy, practices, rights, etc.

### **Harness the Power of Your Smartphone**

With smartphones being the standard for communication these days, we all have consistent

Some of this advice may be repetitive and/or completely overwhelming. If you're currently feeling that familiar dread of not having enough hours in a day to implement any of these practices, know that you are not alone in that and it is not necessarily true. Start with the easy advice and start with 5 minutes a day. Make those 5 minutes intentional and non-negotiable. Grow from there.

access to a powerful device. We tend to pay good money for these devices, so why not use them to their full potential? Using organizational and wellness apps to externalize your mental calendar/to-do list and help you stay on top of your own well-being can make all the difference when it becomes part of your routine.

- Calendar App
- Notes App
- Reminders App
- Finch: perfect for anyone who might be nostalgic over Tamagotchis but make it a to-do list and self-care app.
- Calm: a great app to look after your mental wellbeing.
- Apple Health (or other health apps)

### **Take It One Day at a Time**

Regardless of how many of these ideas you implement into your daily life, there will always be some rougher days. It's the nature of being a human being if nothing else. The best thing you can do for yourself on the days that nothing seems to work for you is choose yourself, focus on the present, take a moment to find the good (any good, no matter how small), and move slowly one day at a time.

### **Be the Person You Need**

This is the combination of a few pieces of advice; "The energy you give comes back to you", "The most powerful tool you have is self-advocacy", and "Contribute to a supportive community". If there is no one in your corner who can do for you what you need them to do for you you are capable of filling that gap or finding a resource that can. You can absolutely find a solution, whether it be learning or building a skill, crying on your own shoulder (journaling is an amazing option), or something else entirely. You can do hard things. In fact, you've already done hard things. Not only does this help you but it will put you in a position to help others who find themselves needing that same support in the future.



# Build a Bright Future with the BC Provincial Tuition Waiver Program at Royal Roads University

Higher education can open doors to new opportunities, careers, and a brighter future. The BC Provincial Tuition Waiver Program ([bit.ly/4hVGv7c](https://bit.ly/4hVGv7c)) ensures that children and youth from care can pursue their academic and career goals without the burden of tuition and fees. If you or someone you support is eligible, now is the time to explore the opportunities available at Royal Roads University.

## Why Royal Roads?

- **On-campus learning** options available at our Colwood campus—and starting in September 2025—at our brand-new Langford campus.
- **Our blended learning** model combines online learning and short on-campus residencies, making it easier to balance work and other commitments.
- **Our flexible admissions** policy values all forms of learning, including work and life experience, providing access to students without a formal academic background.
- **Small class sizes and a supportive environment** ensure students receive personalized attention and instruction.
- **Dedicated supports for youth from care** provide guidance and resources to help students thrive throughout their academic journey.

Encourage youth to explore their options by starting with a course or professional certificate through Professional and Continuing Studies (<https://pcs.royalroads.ca/>)—see if Royal Roads is the right fit.

Learn more today at [bit.ly/42XQuEP](https://bit.ly/42XQuEP)!



Royal Roads  
UNIVERSITY

# FOSTER COMMUNITY RESOURCES

## Provincial Resources

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

## Interior

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

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

## Island

For contact information for local foster parent groups or support in your area, please call 1-800-663-9999.	
<b>Caring Families Society</b> caring-families.ca	1-888-922-8437
Victoria Nanaimo/Cowichan Valley Comox Valley Campbell River Port Alberni	778-430-5459 250-618-8327 250-896-7929 250-204-1566 250-735-1124

## North

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