

FosterlineBC

BC Foster Parents Association



**BCFPA's AGM &
Conference 2025**

**BC Budget
2025 Update**



**New Videos:
Early Years and
Recruitment**

**Joy in Fostering
Project**

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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Rocky Hindmarch (he/him)
Vice President	Jeanette Dyer (she/her)
Treasurer	Marcy Perron (she/her)
Secretary	Julie Holmlund (she/her)
Board Representative for Indigenous Interests	Tony Adolph (he/him)
Fraser Delegate	Catherine Clutchey (she/her)
Coast Delegate	Shimsher Pannun (she/her)
Interior Delegate	Raquel Lesieur (she/her)
Northern Delegate	Tanya-Lea Nault (she/her)
Island Delegate	Sarah Scorey (she/her)

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Receptionist	Favour Mulera (she/her) office@bcfosterparents.ca
Donations & Fund Development Coordinator	Anita Cymet (she/her) anita@bcfosterparents.ca

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President's Report



Hello to all of the foster caregivers throughout the province!

It's my favourite time of the year, camping season! I don't know about the rest of the province, but in the north, we embrace this part of the year. After an extra cold winter season, I'm looking forward to some warmth and lots of sunshine. I do my best to spend as much time as I can out in nature over the summer, and I encourage everyone to do the same.

Recently, at our annual face-to-face meeting in Kamloops, our board was able to participate in an amazing workshop titled "The 8 Responsibilities of a Board." This was one of the best workshops I've ever had the opportunity to take part in. Our team of BCFPA board members is in agreement that we learned a lot of valuable things. As I reflect on the experience, a key takeaway is that our BCFPA board is here for you, the hardworking and highly-valued foster caregivers of British Columbia.

Coming away from this recent meeting, we have plans to collaboratively build a strategic plan to expand on future goals and to accommodate the changing sector. An area of focus for us will be working to refresh our constitution and bylaws so that they're more in line with adding kinship (out-of-care) support services through the BC Foster Parents Association. This goes hand-in-hand with the work we're currently doing to restructure our team and expand our services to include kinship support.

I feel confident in saying that I believe the previously mentioned workshop that we were able to be a part of really helped us toward becoming a healthier and

more productive board. The presenter, Deb, was amazing and was so passionate about how boards can run, and how exciting it can be to make subtle changes to boards that allow them to be more amazing than ever before.

AGM plans are well underway. We've got four engaging half-day workshops lined up ([page 9](#)), the wellness room from 2023 is making a return, and our crowd-favourite DJ from 2023's banquet will be back to keep the energy high. We're returning to the Sheraton Guildford Vancouver Hotel, which is super nice. There's great shopping right across the street. I hope a lot of you are able to make it. AGM bursary information and applications will be posted soon, so be sure to keep an eye on our social media and online newsletter. While you're at the AGM, please feel free to come up and say hi and visit with any of our BCFPA board members. You are the reason why we are all there.

Have an amazing summer! If you enjoy camping, enjoy being out in nature. If you don't camp, still enjoy the sunshine and hopefully, you'll be able to relax a bit more without school drop-offs and pickups.

I look forward to seeing many of you in October!

Rocky Hindmarch
BCFPA Board President
Foster Caregiver, Prince George

Disclaimer — The views and opinions expressed in the text belong solely to the author, and not necessarily to the author's employer, organization, committee or other group or individual. While many of the individuals we feature are experts in their field, specific advice can only be given by professionals who are fully aware of your circumstances. Any action you take upon information on this newsletter is strictly at your own risk, and BCFPA will not be liable for any loss or damage of any kind related to the use of information on our newsletter.

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 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!

AGM preparation season is here again! Donations for the banquet fundraiser are being gathered, the wellness room is being planned, we'll have a craft room open on Friday night for some social time, and our speakers have been arranged. We're certain our attendees will be thrilled with the workshop options this year!

Year-end brought some interesting social media and online visibility statistics to our attention. It's great to know that online engagement is expanding so caregivers are informed.

- We have over 200,000 followers on our social media accounts.
- Almost 600,000 people viewed our social media posts.
- Our YouTube channel has reached over 2.8 million views!

Our Solutions Program has been restructured to allow for increased supports to out-of-care caregivers. We've always received calls from grandparents and aunties raising children, but we're now prepared to manage a steady stream of new support clients on a more permanent basis.

Our community advocacy continues through the efforts of our Director of Advocacy, Amanda Oliver. Please check out Amanda's update on ([page 19](#)).

Our President, Rocky, and I continue to meet with the Minister and MCFD Provincial Office leadership periodically to provide updates about our programs and the fostering trends and community needs across the province. There is a significant focus for government and social service agencies to ensure we're prepared to successfully navigate the potential economic crisis, so currently there isn't a great deal of measurable movement on our advocacy initiatives. We've been through these types of things before, so rest assured we'll continue to have the conversations as time and opportunity allows. We know the best approach in these situations is to practice patience.

We are excited to welcome Angie Martin and Favour Mulera to the team! Angie, who recently retired from fostering, has joined our Solutions Program to provide support to foster and out-of-care caregivers. Favour takes over our reception desk as Tarrah moves over to our direct service team. Welcome to the BC Foster Parents Association family!

Jayne Wilson
Executive Director

STAY IN THE KNOW

Subscribe to the BC Foster Parents Association Newsletter via email or SMS at bcfosterparents.ca to keep up to date on events, bursaries, sector news, surveys, and more!

Interior Delegate Report by Raquel Lesieur

Hello to all of the hardworking foster and out-of-care caregivers in BC. As the weather warms in preparation for summer, I want to wish you all a safe and joyful season.

Things continue to be much of the same here in the interior region as we march on in pursuit of the same advocacy efforts, as well as steadily working on our retention and recruitment measures. With no new updates, I would love to take this opportunity to highlight a few current and upcoming opportunities and updates.

All contracted caregivers across the province should have recently received in the mail an updated Rider Insurance Program packet for the current fiscal year. This package includes your policy information and certificate for the UDL and Rider Insurance program that is available to you (more on [pages 17 and 18](#)). If you have not received yours, or if you have any further questions, please contact our provincial office at office@bcfosterparents.ca or [1-800-663-9999](tel:1-800-663-9999).

Fraser Delegate Report by Catherine Clutchey

Hello foster parents and out-of-care caregivers. Your board has been spending the last number of weeks ensuring we have the education and tools available to meet the needs of all foster parents within the province. Exciting things are coming forward with this organization and I am so proud to be involved.

Locally within the Fraser region, we have seen a few new foster homes and a couple more Relief Caregivers. Of course, we never receive as many as we could use, but an increase is still helpful. There remains a shortage of driving support. Our Safe Baby training is not yet full and therefore we will not be offering it now until the fall. However, there is a CPR class coming up soon. There have been some challenges within our caregiver's homes and I always encourage caregivers to reach out to our Solutions Program for assistance. This now includes caregivers in out-of-care arrangements.



Heading into AGM season, AGM bursaries are expected to be open for applications shortly. Please ensure that you're following BCFPA's social media platforms and that you're subscribed to our email/SMS newsletter so you don't miss that announcement. On the topic of bursaries, mark your calendars for the fall cycle of Camps for Kids grants. Applications are open from August 1 to October 31 at bcfosterparents.ca.

As summer approaches, concerns about wildfires and other environmental emergencies rise. Please read over the wildfire emergency preparedness information on [page 29](#).



We have seen growth with our new branch out of Abbotsford and expect a number of local park dates and group events in the summer months throughout Fraser.

We are thrilled to host the AGM in October in Surrey. We are looking forward to a large representation of local foster parents. Can't wait to see you all there!

Island Delegate Report by Sarah Scorey

Hello fellow Islanders!

In May, I was able to join the rest of the BCFPA board for a very productive 3-day meeting in Kamloops. We had meaningful discussions about how to better support caregivers and we look forward to strategic planning later this year.

The Provincial Caregiver Learning Network has been a great support to island caregivers, allowing them to complete training at their convenience. There are currently on-demand courses available spanning a variety of relevant topics. Check it out! www.psacln.ca

The island continues to be very busy! With most homes at capacity, the need for safe and supportive placements is greater than ever. Placements are needed and many homes are full.

We had a Partnership Meeting in May and discussed a number of topics including water safety. As summer



approaches, resource workers are reviewing water safety with caregivers and making plans to keep children safe! It's a good idea to talk to new placements about their comfort level around water.

To celebrate Child and Youth in Care week the South Island is putting on an Art Show at Victoria City Hall to showcase art by children and youth in care.

Please reach out to me at sarah@bcfosterparents.ca anytime I love to hear from island caregivers!

Coast Delegate Report by Shimsher Pannun

Dear caregiver community,

As we move into the vibrant warmth of spring and look ahead to the joys of summer, we want to take a moment to celebrate all the wonderful events and opportunities that have brought us together—and share what's coming up next. From meaningful gatherings rooted in culture and connection to practical trainings and fun family activities, there's so much happening to support and uplift our caregiving community.

In March, the West Coast Family Centre hosted an Indigenous Connection Family Dinner, fostering community through shared culture and stories. From May 1 to June 26, their Indigenous Children's Group offers culturally grounded activities and a men's support group focusing on self-regulation, resilience, boundaries, and healthy communication. On May 6, 7, and 8, FamilySmart will hold three free online workshops for National Child & Youth Mental Health Day, covering how to find and create connections

with kids, supporting youth substance use, and the power of support. On May 10, families gathered at Copeley Community Orchard for a birdhouse-building workshop, encouraging creativity and connection with nature. May 26 features multiple events: a workshop led by Bryant Doradea focusing on decolonizing and humanizing care for foster youth through trauma-informed neuroscience and practical tools; the Caregiver Support Circle offering 2.5 hours of community and shared support; and Karen's Community Kitchen in Richmond, where foster caregivers cook healthy meals together to take home, fostering connection and networking.

The Family Support Institute of BC is currently seeking bilingual caregivers with a connection to disability for free community interpreter training. MANDT Training offers holistic strategies to reduce workplace violence by teaching de-escalation, communication, and relationship-centered approaches. Hollyburn will host its annual summer barbecue, with the date to be announced, inviting families to celebrate the season.

We wish all families a summer full of ease, joy, and love.

Northern Delegate Report by Tanya-Lea Nault

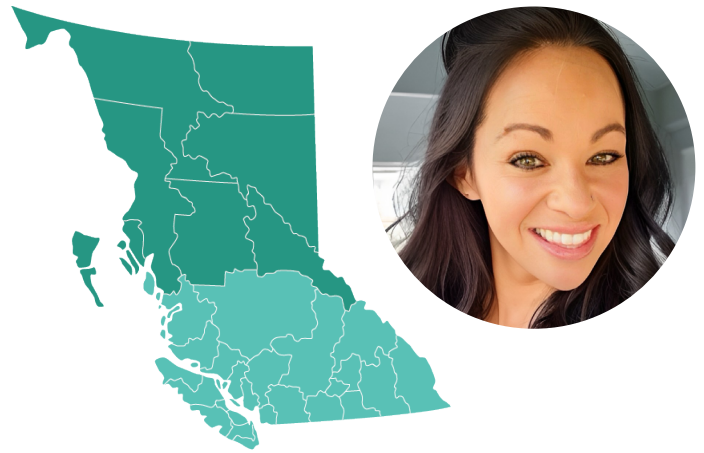
Hello everyone!

As we roll into another sunny season (or rainy if Mother Nature decides to be dramatic), the Northern Branch has been staying quietly busy behind the scenes.

We're currently working on securing donations for this year's gala – one of our biggest annual events! If you or someone you know would like to contribute or sponsor, don't be shy — we're always happy to welcome support that helps make magic happen for our community.

Plans are also underway for our Annual Local AGM. While the official date and time are still TBA, we promise to give you plenty of notice (and maybe even a cookie if you come). Stay tuned!

As the school year winds down, we're preparing to celebrate with our End of School / Start of Summer Party! Because what better way to say “you survived math class” than with sunshine and snacks?



And just as quickly as summer arrives... it ends. But don't worry — we've got you covered. Our Back-to-School Haircuts and Hamburgers event will be back again! We'll help the kids look sharp for Day One while filling their bellies and easing the “back to school” blues — for parents and kids. (Seriously, where did the summer go? Wasn't it just spring last Tuesday?)

That's it for now from your friendly Northern Branch. We may not have a long list of updates this quarter, but we're always working hard behind the scenes.

Wishing you a joyful, sun-soaked summer (with minimal mosquito bites).

BEAMING BRIGHT, YOU'RE A SHINING LIGHT

shininglight.ca

Beaming Bright, You're a Shining Light is an early social and emotional skills development program for babies and young children aged 0 to 6. Developed by an experienced parent educator, Lynne Cox, in partnership with a kindergarten school teacher, this program is created with a wealth of valuable knowledge and testimonials of real results. Lynne herself, speaks to how building the program has even positively impacted her as a mother and grandmother.

With a collection of free-to-use resources available online, this program can be implemented at home from birth by parents and caregivers, as well as in daycares and classrooms up to and beyond the age of 6. Each lesson is taught through fun age-appropriate activities that aid in the development of other early childhood skills. Resources include storybooks, audiobooks, music, lesson plans and materials, as well as an in-depth look at the program in action.



Apply for an AGM Bursary

Where to apply:

Apply online via bcfosterparents.ca/news

Next steps:

All applicants will be notified of their status prior to August 1. To claim a bursary winners must submit a pdf registration form (to be provided via an email to bursary winners) stating “Bursary Recipient” in place of payment information.

North

\$1,376 + \$350 Conference Registration
Six full bursaries available

\$350 Conference Registration
Six registration bursaries available

Vancouver Island

\$1,127 + \$350 Conference Registration
Six full bursaries available

\$350 Conference Registration
Six registration bursaries available

Coast / Fraser

\$887 + \$350 Conference Registration
Six full bursaries available

\$350 Conference Registration
Twenty-eight registration bursaries available

Interior

\$1,152 + \$350 Conference Registration
Six full bursaries available

\$350 Conference Registration
Six registration bursaries available



AGM & Conference 2025 Workshops

Morning Workshop Options – 9:30 am to 1:30 pm



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, registered counsellor 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 discipline 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.

About Colleen Drobot (drobotcounselling.com)

Colleen Drobot is a registered professional counsellor who provides therapy for adults and offers parent consulting using a developmental, attachment-based approach. She was teacher with over 20 years' experience working with children in the regular classroom. She also specialized in supporting children with neurodiversity. She is an adjunct faculty member of the Neufeld Institute and has worked with Dr. Gordon Neufeld for many years. Colleen is a mother of two and draws from her personal as well as clinical experience to support parents and professionals in gaining insight, opening their hearts, and leading by their intuition.



Recognizing and Working with the Impact of Complex Trauma: Practical Strategies for Supporting Your Kids with a senior CTR Clinician from Complex Trauma Resources

When love is not enough. Foster parents and other caregivers give from the bottom of their hearts. Often this isn't enough. Complex trauma changes the child's brain and nervous system (and thus all development). These kids don't respond well to typical parenting. How do we create an environment of nurturing experiences for these children to heal? Can we move beyond "managing" the challenging emotions and behaviours to "see" and respond to the underlying needs?

About Complex Trauma Resources (complextrauma.ca)

Complex Trauma Resources supports individuals committed to fostering children who have undergone traumatic experiences, understanding the difficulties associated connection, emotions, and behaviors that can often follow suit.

Their purpose is to instill hope, assuring you that we've witnessed remarkable transformations firsthand through our programs repeatedly. As the sole organization offering complex care interventions, they work closely with a child's entire support team, leading to significant improvements in the child's life.

Afternoon Workshop Options – 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm



Collaborative Decision-Making in Child Welfare – What Foster Parents Need to Know! with Lori Frank

Foster parents are deeply connected with children and youth involved with the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Collaborative Decision-Making (CDM) Processes are important options for children and youth to know about as they navigate conflict and communication with parents, social workers, and other support people. Foster parents can also participate in Collaborative Decision-Making Processes, either through supporting children and youth in their care or working through their own conflict and communication barriers. Collaborative Decision-Making Processes can also focus on helping youth transition out of care, a critical time in many youths' lives.

In this workshop, foster parents will learn more about CDM Processes and the role they could play within these processes. Foster parents will then be able to take this valuable information and use it to support children and youth in their care.

About Lori Frank (mediatebc.com)

Lori Frank is an experienced facilitator and mediator with a deep understanding of child welfare and collaborative decision-making. She brings empathy, practical tools, and a trauma-informed approach to her work, empowering families and professionals involved in child welfare to communicate effectively, address conflict and make thoughtful decisions together in a way that preserves dignity and self-determination. Lori is the Director of Child Welfare Initiatives with Mediate BC. She is a Registered Roster Mediator (RRM) and has mediated in a variety of areas including family, child protection, workplace and non-profits. Lori enjoys seeing live music performances, traveling and spending time with family and friends.



The Mental Health and Developmental Impact of Tech and Social Media with a senior CTR Clinician from Complex Trauma Resources

Structured to connect into their morning workshop topic, yet still be accessible and relevant to those who did not attend, this short afternoon session is a customized delivery of Complex Trauma Resources *Why Children are Addicted to Gaming and Social Media* mini course. The course, available online, features a discussion of why all children can become hooked, but especially why children with trauma are more vulnerable. This discussion is paired with practical strategies and supports to help guide caregivers through navigating this tricky and increasingly relevant experience.

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Their purpose is to instill hope, assuring you that we've witnessed remarkable transformations firsthand through our programs repeatedly. As the sole organization offering complex care interventions, they work closely with a child's entire support team, leading to significant improvements in the child's life.

More information on this year's AGM & Conference will be available on our website at bcfosterparents.ca/news, including bursary applications and registration.

Call for Nominations

BCFPA will be hosting our Annual General Meeting October 3-4, 2025 at the the Sheraton Vancouver Guildford Hotel. This year, there are two (2) positions for election on the BC Foster Parents Association Board of Directors Executive Committee.

- Vice President
- Treasurer

Each position has a two-year term. Nominations for each position must be received by the BCFPA provincial office by **July 4, 2025** for distribution to the membership for online voting process. Please note that we have transitioned to 100% online voting through a third-party neutral platform, Simply Voting. It provides BCFPA and our members with a secure, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly voting process.

Eligibility to be nominated as a member of BCFPA's Board of Directors includes:

- a) A nominee must be a voting member in good standing (membership paid in full as of January 31, 2024); be qualified in accordance with Bylaw 7.2; and remain in good standing throughout the election process.
- b) Voting members may not nominate themselves and may not nominate more than one nominee for any given position.
- c) All nominations must be supported by a second voting member in good standing.
- d) All nominations must be made in writing, in a form established by the Society and must be signed by the member who is the nominee, by the member who makes the nomination, and by the supporting member.
- e) Nominations must be submitted in advance of the election, in accordance with such deadlines as may be established by the Board. Nominations will not be permitted from the floor at the Annual General Meeting; and
- f) All nominations must be vetted by the nominations committee to confirm eligibility and adherence to required process.

Additional policy-related nomination criteria include:

- Nominee must be present at the AGM unless excused by the President for extraordinary reasons.
- Eligible candidates and nominations for officer positions shall be vetted by the Nominating Committee and are confirmed for their knowledge and expertise in relation to the position.
- Candidates must not hold any position on another provincial or regional agency Board of Directors at the time of nomination.
- Candidates running for these positions must have served for at least one year in the previous three years on a BCFPA branch, or on the BCFPA Provincial Board of Directors.
- If only one nominee's name is submitted for a posted position and they meet all eligibility criteria as stated in the Bylaws, the individual is considered to be elected by acclamation.
- Associate Members who have been elected to hold positions on the Association Board of Directors shall have full voting privileges during their term of office.

PLEASE FORWARD NOMINATIONS TO THE BCFPA PROVINCIAL OFFICE:

**BC FOSTER PARENTS ASSOCIATION
208 - 20641 Logan Avenue
Langley, BC V3A 7R3**

Email: jayne@bcfosterparents.ca

Fax: 604-544-2223

****Nominees may be asked to participate in an interview with Nominations Committee member(s) to discuss their nomination or application for the position prior to an election process or appointment.***

BCFPA Provincial Board of Directors Nomination Form 2025

Name of Candidate _____ Membership Number _____

Address _____ City _____ Postal Code _____

Phone Number _____ Email _____

Current Foster Contract Expiry Date _____ Contracted With _____

Eligibility Criteria (in addition to general Director criteria required by BCFPA bylaws):

- *Must have established connections with other foster parents in their community and region*
- *Must not be a Board member or employee of another agency in the adoption/fostering sector at time of nomination*
- *Previous experience and knowledge of BCFPA's mandate and operations will be considered by the Nominations Committee prior to distribution of nominations for election process.*

[Online form available at bit.ly/4kEqWC4](https://bit.ly/4kEqWC4)

Candidate Information (please use additional pages if necessary)

Fostering Experience Description

BCFPA Experience (length of membership, past positions held, Branch affiliation, volunteerism)

Related Volunteer, Board, Management or Employment Experience

Personal Views and Objectives to Offer this Position

Other Comments

Nominated by _____ Membership Number _____

Nominated by _____ Membership Number _____

Signature of Candidate _____ Date _____

Please attach any supplemental information to your nomination and send forms to jayne@bcfosterparents.ca

Special Resolutions 2025

Whereas: (state circumstance)

Therefore: (state proposed special resolution)

Moved By: _____ Membership Number: _____
(name)

Moved By: _____ Membership Number: _____
(name)

Please submit your proposed Special Resolution by July 4, 2025.
Packages will be distributed by email for online voting by July 18, 2025.
Proposed Special Resolutions will be accepted from members in good standing (current members as of January 31, 2025).
Please submit one form for each Special Resolution proposed.

What are Special Resolutions?

Prior to the BCFPA Annual General Meeting, we receive proposals from members in good standing for special resolutions. A special resolution is a proposed change to our Bylaws. The proposed changes are presented to our membership as a whole and voted on. We require a majority vote for the special resolution to be passed. When a special resolution is adopted into BCFPA's Bylaws through a membership vote, the wording of the resolution is then submitted to the governmental authorities to become part of the Association's permanent documentation.

BCFPA
Constitution and
Bylaws are the
formal documents
that contain BCFPA's
fundamental
objectives and
principles.

DATES TO REMEMBER

July 4, 2025

Nominations and Special Resolutions submissions due

July 18, 2025

AGM Voting and Registration Packages emailed to members

July 25, 2025

Online voting opens

September 1, 2025

Hotel reservation deadline to receive BCFPA's discount rate

September 3, 2025

Official Notice of AGM will be emailed to members and posted to BCFPA website

September 5, 2025

Online voting closes



BOOK AT DISCOUNTED ROOM RATE BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1

Book your stay at the Sheraton Vancouver Guildford Hotel for BCFPA's 2025 AGM & Conference before **September 1, 2025** to receive BC Foster Parents Association's discounted room rate of **\$215 per night** for a Traditional Room.

Book now at the Sheraton Vancouver Guildford Hotel

Guests are also able to book their stay by contacting the hotel directly by phone (**1-800-587-3038**) or by email (**reservation@sheratonguildford.com**) and identify themselves as members of the BCFPA to receive the special guest room rate.

Link to book is also available on our social media platforms.



BC Budget 2025 Recap

BCFPA attended the provincial budget lock-up on March 4 in Victoria. This secure, invitation-only briefing—typically held on Budget Day—gives journalists and key stakeholders early access to the provincial budget documents before they are tabled in the Legislature. More than just a fiscal overview, the lock-up offers an important opportunity for stakeholders to engage critically with the government’s policy priorities and funding decisions.

The provincial government released Budget 2025: Standing Strong for BC which is a measured plan to protect jobs and public services people rely on, while preparing BC to withstand economic uncertainty. BCFPA believes that it’s crucial to continue investing in families. Programs that support health care, childcare, education, and affordable housing help people stay afloat during tough times and create long-term benefits for the economy. Cutting back on these investments now could make things harder for families and slow down economic recovery.

Overall, foster families will benefit from increased funding for child welfare services, higher wages for

frontline workers to improve support, and expanded financial assistance for kinship and alternative care arrangements. Additional investments in respite care, disability supports, and mental health services will help foster parents provide stable, nurturing environments for children/youth in care. Cost-of-living relief, including rental supplements and ICBC rebates, will also help ease financial pressures on foster families.

Child Welfare and Protection Investment

MCFD’s budget increased by \$321. 6 million (\$2,442.8 billion total). The government is clear about its goal to protect core services, support recruitment and retention, and provide supports to families who need it.

- Increase of \$268.4 million to child safety, family supports, and children in care services. This funding supports more than 12,000 children and youth who are in the care of a family or community member, in permanent care arrangements or in ministry care, and provides for sector wage increases that will support recruitment and retention.

Funding for MCFD's child welfare programs will support:

- Increased oversight of the child protection system
- \$245 million for the ongoing child protection support, providing a home and care for children unable to live with the parents through: extended family or community members care arrangements, foster care, or Post Adoption Assistance (PAA)
- \$10.4 million for wage increases to support frontline recruitment and retention
- \$12.3 million to address the step increases of frontline staff not funded through historical wage mandates

Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN)

- \$53.2 million annually to support more children and youth with an autism diagnosis, as well as families accessing medical benefits for children and youth with severe disability or complex health care needs
- \$49.2 million to support 5,500 families, including new funding for over 2,700 more children or youth with an autism diagnosis through individualized funding.
- \$3.6 million funding for social sector wage increases
- MCFD continues to roll out Budget 2023's CYSN new investments with the two-year goal of:
- Providing an additional 90 foundational program therapists for programs such as infant development, early intervention, and school-aged therapies through investment in Childhood Development Centres or similar organizations in every community in BC.
- Doubling the FASD Key Worker program
- Expanding agency-coordinated respite to all regions in BC

Children and Youth in Care and Alternative Care

- \$821 million over three years to support children in government care or who are placed in alternative care (or out-of-care) arrangements with a family member or someone with an

established relationship or cultural connection. These programs include foster care and specialized homes, independent living programs, and similar care programs supported by Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies.

- The government prioritizes alternatives to care, including keeping children with kin, where appropriate, as they have demonstrated better outcomes for children and youth, when compared to in care arrangements.

MCFD is committing to:

- Improving how child protection work is delivered through process and practice improvements but also frontline and oversight staffing levels
- The continued creation and implementation of an Associate Provincial Director of Child Welfare to provide systemic practice oversight and guidance to Designated Directors (statutory decision makers) in the service delivery areas on child safety matters
- A new Child Safety Oversight and Practice Development team to support the work of the Associate Provincial Director of Child Welfare and provide increased practice support and systemic oversight of services focusing on child safety and wellbeing for children, youth and families
- Resource stability through the government's rollout of the Shared Recovery Mandate which provided over 17% wage lifts over 3 years. These wages enable government to attract and retain resources which ensures supports and safety needed for children, youth, and families through times of family difficulty.



Under-Deductible Losses (UDL) Program

Foster caregivers will have access to a low barrier process to manage damages and losses valued below \$10,000 (under the Rider Insurance Program deductible), caused by the child/youth in their care. Administered through Coast Claims Insurance Services, this program is an alternative to submitting eligible repairs and losses to MCFD or Delegated Aboriginal Agencies for compensation.

- Damage or loss under this program should have been done suddenly and either accidentally or intentionally by a child or youth placed in the home.
- Claimant must be a foster caregiver with a current Family Care Home Agreement with MCFD or a DAA.
- Claim must be under the Rider Insurance Program deductible of \$10,000.
- The UDL program is not a replacement for property insurance. As part of the Family Care Home Agreement, it is expected that foster caregivers have insurance for their homes.
- This program does not cover damage due to wear and tear.

Steps to Make a Claim Under the UDL Program

1. Call Coast Claims Insurance Services toll-free at 1-866-694-3111 and ask for Shannon Mycroft to initiate a claim. Damages and losses should be reported as soon as possible after the incident has occurred. This coverage is provided per-occurrence, and each incident will need to be reported individually.
2. Submit the following documents to the adjuster at **bcfpa@coastclaims.com**. Copy all documents to your resource worker for their records. Ensure that Coast Claims has all your current contact information including your name, full address, phone number, and email address.
 - Copy of the signature page of your **current Family Care Home Agreement or contract**.
 - **Statement of Circumstances**. Provide a written statement of damage or loss, providing dates and details of the circumstances. To protect their privacy, please note to be non-identifying when referring to a child or youth in care. Use initials and age rather than their full name.
 - **Pictures of the damage/s, if applicable**.
 - Provide **three cost estimates** for comparable replacement or repair for damaged or lost item/s.



Need to initiate a claim?

Call Coast Claims Insurance Services toll-free at 1-866-694-3111 and ask for Shannon Mycroft.



Rider Insurance Program

The Ministry of Children and Family Development has arranged for Extended Property Damage (Rider) Insurance to supplement a foster caregiver's homeowner or tenant insurance policy. The Rider Insurance Program is a group plan and BCFPA administers this policy on behalf of all foster caregivers insured under the policy. It is administered through Coast Claims Insurance Services.

The rider follows the underlying homeowner or tenant property policy to provide up to the same limits and coverages. For example, if the policy covers \$10,000 for jewelry, then the rider will cover \$10,000 for jewelry that is damaged by the child or youth in care. The **minimum deductible is \$10,000 per claim** or the deductible stated on the caregiver's policy, whichever is greatest. Please contact your resource worker for payment or reimbursement of the deductible. For damages below the deductible, please see the **Under-Deductible Losses (UDL) Program**.

Who's covered?

The premiums are paid for by MCFD and coverage is provided automatically to all caregivers who:

- deliver foster care services or youth justice care under an agreement directly with the Ministry or a Delegated Aboriginal Agency, and
- have homeowner or tenant insurance and a current Family Care Home Agreement.

What's covered?

Damages and losses are covered when done by the child/youth placed in the home, only if any one incident is more than \$10,000 or the deductible on the foster caregiver's policy, whichever is greatest.

What do foster caregivers need to remember when filing a claim?

Report claims as soon as possible. Do NOT let your claims accumulate as they are processed on a per-occurrence basis. Multiple incidents cannot be combined into one claim. Foster caregivers have **two years to finalize a claim** and a deductible is applied to each incident.

What's the maximum coverage?

The maximum coverage is \$500,000 per claim or the maximum limit on the foster caregiver's homeowner or tenant policy, whichever is less, subject to all other insuring agreements, limits, definitions, declarations, conditions and exclusions of their personal insurance policy.

Steps to Making a Rider Insurance Claim

1

Report your claim as soon as possible following a loss or damage caused by a child or youth in your care. Call Coast Claims Insurance Services toll-free at 1-866-694-3111 and ask for Shannon Mycroft to initiate a claim. You can also send an email to bcfpa@coastclaims.com.

2

Submit the following documents to the adjuster at **bcfpa@coastclaims.com**. Copy all documents to your resource worker for their records.

Declaration page or face page from your insurance company corresponding with the date of the incident.

Copy of your **Insurance Policy Wording**. It is important to note that you do not need to open a claim through your own insurer. The purpose of this policy is to protect you from having to place claims for damages done by the child/youth placed in your care.

Statement of Circumstances. Provide a detailed statement of incident including specific dates, times and who was involved. Please keep in mind that, in order to protect the privacy of the child/youth, their full name should not be used in this statement. Use initials and age rather than their full name.

Copy of the **signature page of your Family Care Home Agreement or contract** corresponding with the date of the incident. For theft claims, please include a copy of your police file number.

Estimates or receipts of repair/replacement for all damaged items.

Pictures of the damage/s.

3

A local insurance adjuster will be in contact with you to ask specific questions toward the settlement of your claim. The adjuster will work as quickly as possible to resolve your claim but there are occasions when the claims process is slowed down by unavoidable circumstances. Every claim is different, and although the claims process can vary slightly according to the situation, your adjuster will devote the time and attention it takes to resolve your particular case. Please contact your resource worker for payment or reimbursement of your deductible.

Provincial Strategy Initiatives:

Message from Amanda Oliver, Director of Advocacy

Foster caregivers across the province brought several motions forward at the AGM in October, speaking about their ideas for improvements and their advocacy goals for our sector. The board adopted a majority of motions from the event for further action and I began collaborating with staff and stakeholders to address these motions both with regional representatives and ministry leaders.

I have learned to be successful as an advocate is to practice the art of patience. That waiting to present information to the right person at the right time tends to generate the conditions needed to create the positive changes we all want to see.

Patience and timing then can be a key to success. It may not come as a surprise then that I have not been able to accomplish as much as I had hoped following that auspicious AGM meeting. Thinking back to last October just six months ago, the election in America had not yet occurred, the new administration had not taken our international partnership in a profoundly different direction and our country was not facing the continued spoken threat of annexing Canada as the 51st state. We did not know then a tariff war could potentially cause a recession in BC and around the world. So when I tell you it has been increasingly more difficult to meet with some leaders in ministry you may not be surprised to hear how the provincial government has been deeply concerned and engaged in actions to address several fiscal and ministerial priorities beyond having conversations with me. That is not to say my work has come to a halt; it just means I have had to adjust my focus and prioritize some motions over others.

One of the key issues we heard about is the need to reach out to caregivers located in more remote and rural areas of the province. These caregivers typically face additional barriers to community resources, opportunities to network and to create robust support systems. Sometimes they also face difficulties accessing training and may feel they are fostering in isolation.

I have been connecting with caregivers and staff from the northern region and created a questionnaire to help us plan a BCFPA networking and information gathering tour to the far northwest and the far northeast areas of the province. We want to focus on what you need and what would be helpful. If you have received a questionnaire, please take time to complete the quick survey and let me know what matters to you as we plan our trip. I hope to be able to visit these areas at the end of August or sometime in September before the inclement weather begins.

We heard that caregivers in the East Kootenays can feel overlooked and underserved by BCFPA events and services, so I am currently collaborating with foster parents and a board representative to plan to visit the region and offer an in-person training and networking event. More details to follow soon.

We have also heard from kinship caregivers across the province who have been reaching out for advice and support. In response to those needs we have expanded our services to providing information and support to kinship caregivers through our Solutions Program.

Caregivers put forward a motion to develop standard practice guidelines for foster parents and staff following episodes of suicidal ideation and attempts by youth in care. I have been reviewing details with regional directors of operations and associate executive directors to understand current practices in each SDA.

Similarly, regarding issues relating to youth who are vaping or using drugs in foster homes, I have been consulting with directors of operations about steps MCFD are taking to develop best practice approaches under the guidance of Ministry of Health around implementing a harm reduction model and collaborating with foster caregivers to develop care plans directly addressing this issue.

I am also working on advocacy letters to the Minister about implementing universal coverage under special circumstances for foster parents to have six days of relief provided to them, when they face a death of a close family member or to attend a special event like the wedding of their child.

I have been gathering concrete examples in support of advocating for the need to develop a formal complaints process focusing on staff members who have acted unethically or who have exercised their authority in an inappropriate way towards caregivers. Currently the fostering handbook encourages caregivers to approach staff and team leaders to resolve issues when conflict arise. I have heard however, that foster caregivers feel vulnerable and intimidated about complaining to the staff and team they work with directly for fear of retaliation. I hope to provide examples and details of the proposal to the minister soon.

Finally, my colleague and I have been working together developing a proposal to update the Foster Care Home Investigation processes. We understand how

devastating these investigations are for caregivers and that the impacts live on long after the conclusion of the investigation even when there has been no finding of harm or wrongdoing. We are developing a proposal to review and update these processes to promote fairness and transparency throughout the stages of the investigation. A protocol investigation including a psycho-educational approach can provide valuable information about how to safeguard both foster caregiver and children from facing harm. We need to ensure consistent practices are applied across the province in response to all serious allegations of concern.

I hope to provide written updates again in the Fall.

Please reach out to me to share your insights and concerns.

Sincerely,
Amanda Oliver, Director of Advocacy &
Provincial Community Strategist

PROVINCIAL SUPPORT AGENCY CAREGIVER LEARNING NETWORK

psacln.ca

The Caregiver Learning Network (or “CLN”) is an online platform which hosts a wide variety of virtual training opportunities for caregivers. The goal of the CLN is to enhance caregiver knowledge, skills and abilities, and to foster a healthy caregiver network that supports the retention of all caregivers. Together we thrive, and we believe in empowering caregivers through collaborative learning. The CLN works with representatives from all caregiver support agencies across the province developing accessible virtual learning opportunities for foster caregivers, out of care / kinship caregivers, contracted agency caregivers, social workers, and community professionals.

The CLN is a collaboration of provincial support agencies who have a passion for supporting caregivers through the challenges and celebrations of raising babies, children, youth and young adults. We have brought these agencies together with Ministry of Children and Family Development & Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies to strengthen retention of caregivers by offering relevant and timely training.



NEW VIDEO ALERT!

Say Yes to Fostering: A Step-by-Step Guide to Becoming a Foster Caregiver in BC



We are pleased to launch a **new informational video** designed to help prospective foster caregivers understand the journey ahead. Becoming a foster caregiver is a meaningful way to support children, youth, and families in our community. This video is a helpful first step for anyone considering this important role.

The video walks viewers through the step-by-step process of becoming a foster caregiver in British Columbia. It breaks down everything prospective foster caregivers need to know about the process—from who can apply, to what foster caregivers do, what training is required, and what to expect throughout the approval process. It also outlines the supports available to caregivers and the qualities that help create safe, nurturing homes for children and youth in care.

As an accessible and easily digestible resource, the informational video offers a clear and accessible roadmap for anyone considering fostering. It empowers viewers with the knowledge they need to take the first step—and reminds us all of the vital role that foster caregivers play in strengthening families and building a more supportive, inclusive community.

If you know a community member who is curious about fostering or ready to take the next step, this video offers a clear, step-by-step roadmap to help them get started.

Please share this video with your networks to help spread the word. You never know who might be ready to open their heart and home.

New Early Years Resources Videos Now Available

We're pleased to share a new series of videos designed to support families and caregivers during the early years of a child's life. These short, accessible videos complement the Early Years Resources webpage which was launched in 2022 to support the BC Government's 'A Pathway to Hope' mental health strategy. The webpage was created to strengthen the capacity of foster caregivers by providing tools and information to help them better support the mental, emotional, and social development of children under the age of six.

Early childhood is a critical stage in a child's development, and foster caregivers play a pivotal role in shaping lifelong outcomes. These resources are intended to ensure that caregivers understand the importance of early development and feel confident in supporting young children and their families through this formative time.

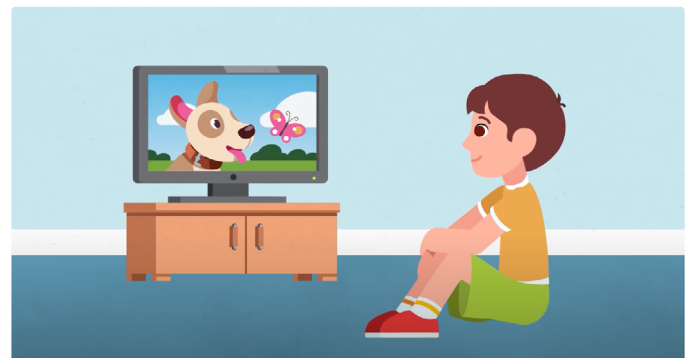


Video 1: Helping Children Under the Age of 6 Build Confidence and Positive Self-esteem

Learn how self-esteem begins in the early years and how caregivers can support young children's emotional well-being through everyday moments of connection, encouragement, and love.

Video 2: Navigating Screen Time for Kids Under the Age of 6

How much screen time is too much for kids under 6? This video breaks down why screen time matters in the early years and offers practical tips to help families build healthy habits with screens.



Video 3: The Four Rs of Trauma-Informed Care

Learn how to support children affected by trauma using the Four Rs: Realization, Recognition, Response, and Resist Retraumatization. This video offers practical strategies to help caregivers create safe, healing environments where children can thrive.



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!

Adidas	The Brick
Apple	Carter's
Champs	Cineplex
Cirque du Soleil	Club Monaco
Columbia	Cruises.ca
CityPASS	Disney on Ice
Disneyland	Dell
Dyson	Ever New
Fairmont Hotels	Foot Locker
Frank and Oak	Great Wolf Lodge
HP	Hunter
Indigo	Kiehl's
KitchenAid	Landmark Cinemas
La-Z-Boy Furniture	LEGOLAND
Lenovo	Matt & Nat
Panasonic	Reitmans
RW & CO	Samsung
Sennheiser	Sorel
Sonos	Telus
TurboTax	UGG
Universal Studios	Vitamix
WeightWatchers	WestJet

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.



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.



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

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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SECTOR NEWS & UPDATES



Youth emergency shelter opens in Cowichan Valley

In June of 2024, MCFD and the Cowichan Valley Branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA-CVB) announced plans to open a Youth Emergency Shelter in Cowichan Valley, as part of the YES pilot project. Now, less than one year from the plan's announcement, CMHA-CVB is proud to share that the Cowichan YES is officially open and fully prepared to provide essential supports to youth in Duncan.

The Youth Emergency Shelter - located on Quw'utsun lands - is a community-based crisis service equipped to provide a safe placement (from one to fourteen days, in one of three available private rooms) for youth who are in need of shelter. The 24/7 service also provides harm reduction and crisis prevention services within a three-tiered service structure; including overnight shelter, day drop-in programs, and outreach services. Any youth aged fifteen to eighteen who are currently unhoused, in crisis, at risk of harm, or experiencing unstable living conditions have free and complete round-the-clock access to these critical supports.

Youth are consistently and actively involved in both the design and application of the YES program to ensure that the assistance and resources provided fit their needs. All services provided through the program are delivered by community partners working together for quality assurance and coverage.

To make the opening of the Cowichan Valley YES possible, \$204,000 was raised from 2022 to 2024 through campaigns hosted by CMHA-CVB. These funds were used as a down payment on a suitable

home. In addition to the funds raised through these campaigns, \$4 million in funding was provided from the Province, and \$450,000 was donated through the Mischa Weisz Foundation. These additional funds have made it possible for CMHA-CVB to pay off the mortgage on the home, and to purchase a van that will allow them to freely provide critical supports through their outreach services.

In recognition of the Mischa Weisz Foundation's generous donation, this YES location has been officially named Cowichan YES - Mischa Lelum. "Lelum" is a Hulqiminum word meaning home and has been incorporated into the title to reflect the shelter's purpose and to honour the land that it is located on.

Many youth who have already been able to access supports at the YES in Duncan have spoken to the successful application of the program's core purpose.

"Wow, this is a house, and it feels like home."

— Youth, aged 16

Note: The Mischa Weisz Foundation has been supporting youth who are unhoused by providing a grant that makes critical support services possible over the past three years. The foundation was created and named with respect to the memory of Mischa, an entrepreneur, who believed youth are the future and should be invested in and well protected.

Source: MCFD Press Release

Historic agreement signed between T̓silhqot̓in Nation, BC, and Canada

While the T̓silhqot̓in Nation has continually exercised their inherent right to self-governance - including maintaining jurisdiction over the care of their children, youth, and families - a Coordination Agreement was just recently signed in affirmation of this right.

In early April of this year, the Nitsil̓in-Qi (Council of Chiefs) for the T̓silhqot̓in Nation, the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services, and the Honourable Jodie Wickens, Minister of Children and Family Development signed the historic agreement.

The agreement - using a framework borrowed from an act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, families, and youth - establishes the responsibilities and processes of coordinating the provision of services to T̓silhqot̓in children, youth, and families. These outlined responsibilities and processes are centered around honouring past, present, and future generations of the T̓silhqot̓in Nation by aligning with the core belief that raising healthy and thriving children is a fundamental right and a crucial piece of their identity, responsibilities, and law as T̓silhqot̓in people.

Following the signing of this agreement, Canada plans to provide \$35.2 million towards the delivery of prevention, governance, dispute resolution,

community navigation and post-majority support services in the initial phase of T̓silhqot̓in jurisdiction, amongst other areas of focus.

“We are making progress, as a Nation of six distinct communities working together in unity, to reclaim jurisdiction for our children and families. Organizational and legislative change doesn’t happen overnight – but change must happen. T̓silhqot̓in problems require T̓silhqot̓in solutions and with intensive input from, and collaboration with our people, we have stood up our own T̓silhqot̓in law that puts our way of life, our values, and our children first. We are hopeful that the next chapter in the lives of the T̓silhqot̓in people is one of safety, health and happiness with deep connections to our culture and teachings.”

— Nitsil̓in Otis Guichon
Tribal Chief, T̓silhqot̓in National Government

As the involved parties move through this transition period, there will be strong support from and collaboration with Denisiqi Services Society. Their involvement will support the T̓silhqot̓in Nation to continue to build their capacity to exercise full jurisdiction under the T̓silhqot̓in law

Source: MCFD Press Release

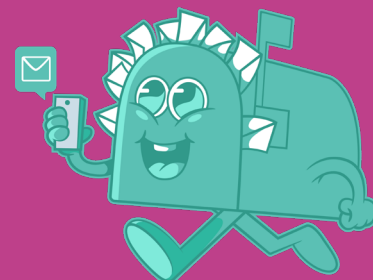
AGM Voting Notice for BCFPA Members

Is your email up-to-date in your BCFPA membership profile?

BC Foster Parents Association members eligible to vote in this year’s Board of Directors election (see **page 12** for more information) should be on the lookout for emails from **Simply Voting**. These emails will contain information regarding the election, as well as the information needed to access the online voting portal.

Please ensure that the email on file for your BCFPA Membership is correct.

Those with a **Couples Membership** will need two separate email addresses in order for both individuals to be eligible to vote. If you would like to confirm that your email is on file and correct, or for assistance in updating it please contact our provincial office staff at office@bcfosterparents.ca or 1-800-663-9999.





A Story of Fostering

By Stephanie Carr

Over the past few months, members of BCFPA's provincial office staff have been making efforts to regularly meet and collaborate with our agency partners across the province. Born from these meetings is an ongoing project to collect and share first-hand stories of fostering and highlight the positive and life-changing impacts that fostering can have on individuals. Moving forward we hope to share many beautiful stories from caregivers, social workers, former youth in care, friends and family of caregivers or youth in care, and more.

To open this positivity project, Stephanie Carr shares the impacts of growing up in a fostering home and how that has driven her to be who and where she is today.



In both my personal and professional life, I often talk with people who are considering becoming a foster parent. Not surprisingly, they have many questions and concerns. They are shocked and relieved when they hear my story.

I had just moved out at the tender, naive and, let's be honest, slightly selfish age of 18 when my parents became foster parents. In my family's case, the process was swift and two young boys were placed before I could wrap my head around the idea. I am not proud of my initial reaction. I was worried about the extra workload, the mental load, and understandably so about my place in the family unit. Would I be forgotten? Would I be at the bottom of the list of

priorities? I swore I would not help, I vowed that I would never change a diaper or wipe a snotty nose, and my mom would have to think twice if she was going to try and lean on me for support. When I did come home for a visit, and I met those young children, and I saw firsthand the need in their eyes I couldn't turn away or say no. All I felt was love, empathy, and purpose.

It's true what they say. It's only when we look back that we see things in 20/20 vision. I wanted to leave my small town and experience the big city and all I thought it had to offer me. I am thankful that I had those experiences, but what I have ultimately found is that I belonged back home and that the kids that I would be caring for would be my biggest teachers. When I think about my life's biggest turning points, it was my parents' decision to foster that has had a lasting impact on me. When my father passed away, my mom took a step back from fostering. Through

unimaginable grief, we came together as a family, and we did our level best to heal. He was undeniably proud of being a dad of all kinds, a bio dad, a stepdad, a foster dad, and an adoptive dad and we all hold his memory and his legacy dear. After some time had passed, my mom made the bravest decision I think a person can make and decided to open her home once more. I am not a foster parent, and yet this work has become the purpose of my adult life. It is not only a part of my family, but I am a relief care provider, and I support other foster families in the community through the agency work I do.

‘When I think about my life’s biggest turning points, it was my parents’ decision to foster that has had a lasting impact on me.’

When I look back over all the experiences of caring for children who have been a part of my family life – I see how much we have all grown together and I can’t say I regret a second of it. I am a mother myself now and while I sometimes worry about the potential for loss my children might experience, or perhaps even just their own sense of jealousy, anger, or confusion, I am bolstered by how much they are learning about love and safety and compassion too. I recently took a gaggle of children to the movie theatre to see Lilo and Stitch. A blend of my younger adopted siblings, my own children, and my foster sibling sat together and shared a nice afternoon together. I can tell I am getting older, and sappier at that because I was moved to tears by the message of the movie and by the echoes of that message I feel all around me, all the time. “Ohana means family, and family means nobody gets left behind.”

Of course, there have been times of heartbreak and loss. There have even been times of overwhelming rage. At the same time, my heart has almost burst with pride and joy at some of the things we have come through together. Sure, there have been huge behaviors and embarrassing times when the everyday Joe in public shoots a glaring side eye “why can’t you control this kid” look my way. There has also been immense growth in emotional regulation and a sense of self-worth.

I am thinking about my sister, who went she arrived in our family’s home had selective mutism and was unable to speak. In times of stress, or perceived stress (meeting her teacher, being asked what she would like for dinner, etc.) for this five-year-old girl she was literally unable to speak. Once she experienced consistency, being reunited with her sibling group, contact with her biological family, and that felt safety at home, this mutism started to fade away. Imagine her singing loudly and proudly at her Christmas concert in school and all of us in the front row beaming with pride! Not necessarily newsworthy, but where would she be now without that breakthrough? Would she be going to college, advocating for herself (with continued support)? I am not so sure.

I am thinking of the little boy who came and couldn’t control his hurt and anger, school staff literally had to clear the room when he exploded. Until, he had the opportunity to learn to pause and say, “I am frustrated”. Sure, a small skill to learn but one that I know he carried with him, and I believe had the power to change his life experience.

I remember a baby who was born prenatally exposed to drugs and alcohol going through withdrawal in the NICU before finding safety in my mother’s safe and loving arms. I know this helped calm their central nervous system creating a secure attachment. I know this helped immensely when she transitioned to her auntie’s loving arms. I wonder what her transition would have looked like without that support. I think of myself at the same time, taking care of my own two infants. My mom and me raising our babies at the same time, pretty remarkable if you ask me. I wonder what it would have looked like had we not been there to support each other.

‘There is great potential to change the trajectory of someone’s story. Maybe even their whole family’s story.’

It’s interesting to me, that there continues to be such a negative stigma out there in our society about fostering. Big scary, and sometimes downright traumatic unspeakable stories that hit our media. There is a need for accountability, and of course, we

need to know about these injustices to stop them from happening again but it's frustrating that the success stories don't seem to make the front page. I don't know exactly why that is, but I think it might be because the positives are often quite small and maybe don't seem like they are newsworthy at first glance.

The hard truth is that the wins are small, and at the same time they are so meaningful. I believe those small wins add up and they have the potential to change the trajectory of someone's life. We must take a step back and look at the big picture. I consider all those kids to be a part of my family and a part of me, the ones who stayed and the ones who were reunited with their families. I think of the difference in their lives and it's seemingly small – and still, I'd argue it's not.

In our family's fostering journey, there are many many more stories like these. I think about all those small wins that I know are happening right now in foster care all around us, and the potential future impact they have. There is great potential to change the trajectory

of someone's story. Maybe even their whole family's story. To those who think there is nothing that can be done, I would challenge that because when we share our stories, we connect human to human. We see in others and ourselves stories of hope, resilience, and patience. These stories bring us together and I believe in their power. This collective sharing is good medicine in difficult times.

So here is a small part of my story. I invite you to share your fostering stories with us as a community. To reflect on your own journeys and to lift each other up and inspire others to keep doing this meaningful work. Many years ago, I was so frightened about what would happen when my parents made the decision to foster. Now, looking back, I am scared to think what would have happened had they not made that decision. I am not the same person I was back then, and my family is definitely not the same as it was. We have been through so much together. The impact of this decision changed the trajectory of many children's and families' lives. That includes mine, and I am forever grateful for that.

Do you have a fostering story to share? We welcome and encourage you to send an email to our Community Network Coordinator at taiah@bcfosterparents.ca to submit your story. Story submissions will be shared in future newsletters as well as on web and social media platforms. Submissions can be anonymous or fully credited, according to the author's preference.

Emergency Information for Foster Caregivers Impacted by Wildfires

With the approaching flood and wildfire season, there is a potential that your community may be impacted and you may be required to evacuate to a safe location. To support foster caregivers during emergency events, MCFD has designated a contact number that is available and staffed around the clock, seven days a week. Please call Provincial Centralized Screening at **1-800-663-9122** as soon as it is safe to do so, if you have been evacuated as a result of a flood or a wildfire or if you have been evacuated or are in the process of evacuating and require support to seek alternative accommodation.

Additionally, to prepare in advance of the upcoming flood and wildfire season, we ask that all care providers ensure MCFD has their latest contact information, including mobile phone numbers. If you need to update your information, please call Provincial Centralized Screening. MCFD social workers will ensure updates are reflected in their records so that contact with the care providers for children in care can continue despite care provider location.

All MCFD offices in the new area are available to provide support to caregivers. For additional information about flooding or wildfires please refer to emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca or call **1-888-663-5555**.

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
Belonging Network 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 North Okanagan South Okanagan Shuswap	250-870-8991 250-558-0939 250-462-6907 250-515-1522
Okanagan Metis Children & Family Services	250-868-0351
Interior Community Services 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.

Caring Families Society 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.

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 ____ 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



@bcfpa