

**British Columbia Foster Care  
Education Program**

# **CARING FOR CHILDREN: OVERVIEW**

**(3 hours)**

**Ministry of Children and Family Development**

*July 2002*

## Legislation, Policies, and Principles Underlying Curriculum

Legislation, policies, and principles of the Ministry of Children and Family Development underlie the development and delivery of the curriculum for the British Columbia Foster Care Education Program.

Foster parents may find the contents of the following publications of interest:

- Child, Family and Community Service Act, particularly sections on guiding principles, service delivery, best interests of the child, and the rights of children in care
- Standards for Foster Homes
- Guardianship of Children and Youth-in-care – A Model of the British Columbia Guardianship Program
- Condensed Assessment and Comprehensive Plan of Care
- Looking After Children Assessment and Action Record and Comprehensive Plan of Care
- Practice Standards for Guardianship
- Pre-Service Foster Parent Orientation Curriculum.

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### Acknowledgements

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# INTRODUCTION

# Introduction

## A. RATIONALE

Research suggests training is a crucial element in the recruitment and retention of caregivers. The British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations and the Ministry of Children and Family Development recognize the crucial role that caregivers play in child protection and the need for highly skilled, specialized caregivers to meet the increasingly complex needs of children and youth.

The British Columbia Foster Care Education Program has been developed to provide a standardized and structured approach to caregiver training that builds on the skills and experiences caregivers bring to their role, as well as knowledge to support their ongoing training and development.

## B. CUSTOMIZING AND CORE THEMES FOR TRAINING

This training is a joint project of the British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations and the Ministry for Children and Families. A set of core themes runs throughout all training modules. They are:

- Vulnerability of all children and youth-in-care
- Teamwork
- Child and youth development
- Communications
- Guiding children's behavior
- Family support
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- The Ministry for Children and Families Guardianship Model.

It is helpful that the foster parent has an understanding of the following material:

- Child, Family and Community Service Act
- Standards for Foster Homes
- Guardianship of Children and Youth-in-Care – A Model of the British Columbia Guardianship Program
- Looking after Children Assessment and Action Record.

### C. LEARNING OUTCOMES The caregiver can:

- describe and identify the legislation under which the caregiving system operates and its relationship to children/youth experiencing care
- describe the guardianship model and explain the importance of the condensed assessment and Comprehensive Plan of Care to the life of the child/youth
- describe the role of the caregiver as a member of the caregiving team in terms of day-to-day care, contributing to and carrying out the Plan of Care, and relating to the child or youth's family and community
- reflect on an overview of the BC Foster Care Education Program and describes the content areas within.

### D. PREPARATION

The "Caring for Children: Overview" module is a single, three-hour session. Foster parents should be familiar with the material in the module. Read it thoroughly and imagine yourself going through the various exercises and activities. Think of examples you might have experienced in your own fostering career.

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- Coming out of the recognition that caregivers are being asked to care for and to guide children with increasingly complex needs, the BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations and the Ministry of Children and Family Development published the "Foster Care 2000" document stating that the intent of a training program is to support caregivers "*...in adding to their parenting, planning, and negotiating skills and developing their confidence and ability to advocate for the needs of the child in care*" (p. 3)
  - There have been a number of studies indicating that if caregivers are to be successfully recruited and retained, opportunities for increased training, as well as support and respect for the work caregivers do, will be needed. Waldock's article (see reference section) provides background material for you.

The need for highly skilled caregivers comes out of a concern for the safety and well-being of children.

- The recognition of the abilities and experiences caregivers bring to caregiving and the desire to support them in their continued professional development to provide for the safety and well-being of children and youth has resulted in the development of this training process.

## 2. LEGISLATION: CHILDREN IN CARE

(30 minutes)

### **Learning Outcome:**

The caregiver can describe and identify the legislation under which the caregiving system operates and its relationship to children/youth experiencing care.

### **Material:**

Handouts

- Handout #5 Relevant Sections of the Child, Family and Community Service Act

Overheads

Overhead #6 Legislation: Children in care

Our society recognizes the vulnerability of children and youth and that there is a moral and legal obligation to protect their safety and well being. British Columbia, as part of the Canadian commitment to the United Nations Convention on

the Rights of the Child, recognizes that children require special care and assistance. The principles of the Convention can be found interwoven into the Child, Family and Community Service Act. The Act provides the legal mandate (right and responsibility) for the Government to provide child welfare services, including foster care.

In pre-service orientation, people were introduced to the Child, Family and Community Service Act. A reminder that the Act, as well as Standards for Foster Homes, spells out the responsibilities of caregivers, provides direction, and lets foster parents know what is expected of them when caring for children.

Because the caregiver is part of a larger system she is legally mandated to assist and guide children and youth-in-care, and that the people who work in it are accountable for what happens. Some people think that caring for children and youth is something that we do naturally; however, it is something that we learn mostly from being parented ourselves. Therefore, in order to support and enhance caregivers' abilities to meet what the legislation expects of them in caring for the children and youth of other people, this training program was developed.

**Exercise:**

Using Handout #5, "Relevant Sections of the Child, Family and Community Service Act," briefly review the four sections of the Act that have implications for caregivers:

- guiding principles
- service delivery principles
- best interests of children
- rights of children in care.

Reflect upon the following:

- Guiding Principles
- Service Delivery Principles
- Best Interests of the Child
- First page of Rights of Children in care
- Second page of Rights of Children in care.

Reflect upon the following questions:

Using Overhead #6, "Legislation: Children in care"

1. What are some of the key difficulties/dilemmas/anxieties you have that come out of carrying out your responsibilities in these sections of the Act?
2. How have these sections helped you in carrying out your responsibilities?

Concerns might include children in care and inappropriate use of Rights of Children in care, difficulty in contacting other people involved in child/youth's care, or being involved with the child's family members.

Sections of the Act may have helped caregivers by providing clear expectations about their roles.

**Debrief:**

As caregivers we need to recognize how the difficulties/dilemmas/ anxieties that caregivers face affect the children or youth who are in care and about how having a clear understanding of what is expected of caregivers impacts the children or youth who are in care.

Legislation and policies clearly affect what caregivers do and that by having a clear understanding, caregivers can better carry out the important role they have taken on: caring for children, youth, and families who find themselves in exceptional circumstances that require Government participation to find ways to provide for the safety and well-being of the child or youth.

The Rights of Children in care has generated some controversy. Subsequent modules do address ways to guide the behavior of children and youth that respects their rights and at the same time recognize the responsibilities of children and youth.

### 3. GUARDIANSHIP AND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF CARE

(35 minutes)

#### **Learning Outcome:**

The caregiver can describe the Guardianship Model and explain the importance of the Comprehensive Plan of Care to the life of the child or youth.

Caregivers can familiarize themselves with the details of the Guardianship Model, the Practice Standards for Guardianship, and the Comprehensive Plan of Care available to you in the documents listed in Section B as well as in the Forward.

#### **Materials:**

Handouts

- Handout #6 The Guardianship Model
- Handout #7 The Comprehensive Plan of Care
- Handout #8 Standard C. 1 Comprehensive Plan of Care in Standards for Foster Homes
- Condensed Assessment and Comprehensive Plan of Care You will need to contact a Ministry of Children and Family Development representative for copies of the Condensed Assessment and Comprehensive Plan of Care document for participants' use.

Overheads

- Overhead #7 The Guardianship Model
- Overhead #8 Comprehensive Plans of Care: Discussion Questions
- Overhead #9 The Condensed Assessment Comprehensive Plan of Care

This section includes:

- a brief review of what guardianship is and who makes up the guardianship team
  - an introduction to the Guardianship Model
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- an exploration of the importance of the Comprehensive Plan of Care to the life of a child or youth.

The Government takes on a guardianship responsibility when a child's legal guardian requests the Government, in a legal agreement, to care for their child or when the court determines the safety and well-being of a child or youth is in question and appoints the Ministry of Children and Family Development, to assume the rights, duties, and responsibilities of a parent.

Since the child or youth no longer has his own family to care and nurture him, there is trust placed in every person who is involved with the young person on the ministry's behalf to act in ways that have the child's best interests at heart, for the child's benefit, and with the child's safety and well-being as the most important considerations.

The following points should be noted:

- British Columbia has developed a Guardianship Model to ensure that each person in care receives care which actively promotes the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social needs of the child or youth
- The guiding principles, service delivery principles, best interests of children, and rights of children in care are the legal principles that guide the Guardianship Model. At the heart of the model are the rights of children, and youth-in-care. Using Handout #6, "The Guardianship Model," and Overhead #7, "The Guardianship Model," briefly outline the elements of the model.

**Exercise:**

One of the most important functions contained in the Guardianship Model is planning for the child. The following activity illustrates the kind of thinking useful in generating ideas for developing the plan for care.

Please think of a young person you have cared for and about. You may want to get a picture of the child or youth in your mind: what she looked like, her mannerisms, how she talked, what she liked to do, and so on.

Was the child or youth able to move forward in life in terms of physical, social, emotional, and spiritual growth and development?

Reflect upon:

TRAINER'S INSTRUCTIONS

- what the child or youth's personal strengths were
- what the child or youth was good at
- what their hopes, expectations, anxieties, and worries were for the child or youth.

While all parents have hopes and expectations for their children, caregivers' hopes and expectations for a child in care must be realistic, based on the child's capabilities, and grounded in his Plan of Care.

You may want to record these on flip chart paper using the following format:

Personal strengths	Good at	Hopes, expectations	Anxieties, worries

It is the child who is the focus of the Comprehensive Plan of Care. Taking the time to assess the child's strengths and needs in each of the dimensions of the Plan of Care keeps the child at the center of the development of the Comprehensive Plan of Care.

**Summary Remarks:**

Use Handout #7, "The Comprehensive Plan of Care," and Overhead #9, "The Comprehensive Plan of Care" to briefly review the developmental dimensions that are at the center of the plan of care. British Columbia has two formats for developing a Comprehensive Plan of Care:

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- the internationally recognized Looking After Children Assessment and Action Record and Comprehensive Plan of Care
- a shorter version called “the Condensed Assessment and Comprehensive Plan of Care.”

Both documents use the same dimensions to assess and develop a Plan of Care for children and youth.

By including input from each child’s guardianship team, a concrete action plan for the child that focuses on identified needs and strengths is developed. Since a young person and her interactions with other people and the environments in which she grows and develops change, the child’s Comprehensive Plan of Care must reflect those changes. In other words, it is a living document.

Most plans of care are “needs based.” We know, however, that focusing on strengths and building upon what people can do is a more effective way to work with them than focusing on what is wrong with them.

You may wish to take time on your own to review Handout #8, “Standard C. 1 Comprehensive Plan of Care in Standards for Foster Homes.”

The Comprehensive Plan of Care is important to caregivers since it clarifies and specifies the responsibilities of the caregiving team in implementing the plan. Available supports should also be clarified and specified. A child’s Comprehensive Plan of Care emphasizes the importance of focusing on positive developmental outcomes for a child or youth. Given the day-to-day contact that the caregiver has with a young person, the caregiver plays a pivotal role in carrying out the implementation of the child’s Comprehensive Plan of Care.

#### **4. THE CAREGIVER AS PART OF EACH CHILD’S GUARDIANSHIP TEAM** (60 minutes)

##### **Learning Outcome:**

The caregiver can describe the role of the caregiver as a member of the caregiving team in terms of day-to-day care, contributing to and carrying out the Comprehensive Plan of

Care, and relating to the child or youth's family and community.

**Materials:**

Handouts

- Handout #9 Teamwork
- Handout #10 Role of the Caregiver

Overheads

- Overhead #10 Teamwork

The areas to be considered are as follows:

- working in a team
- the caregiver's role.

Working as a member of a guardianship team in providing day-to-day care for a child or youth, as well as contributing to carrying out a Comprehensive Plan of Care, requires a high level of cooperation.

Ponder the question, "Who do you think comprises the guardianship team?" Note your responses down and refer to the list of participants identified as "the guardianship team" in the References section.

Reflect upon what are some of the ways in which people show stress and frustration?

What causes frustration for you:

- during the day-to-day care of young people
- when contributing to and carrying out the Comprehensive Plan of Care
- when relating to the child or youth's family and community

What might you do to contribute to the success of a guardianship team?

Use Handout #9, "Teamwork," and Overhead #10, "Teamwork," to review what teamwork, within the context of a guardianship team, constitutes.

Walk through Handout #10, "Role of The Caregiver,"

**5. INTRODUCTION TO THE BRITISH COLUMBIA FOSTER CARE EDUCATION PROGRAM**  
(10 minutes)

**Learning Outcome:**

The caregiver can reflect on an overview of the British Columbia Foster Care Education Program and describe the content areas within.

**Materials:**

Handout

- Handout #11 The British Columbia Foster Care Education Program

**Instructions:**

An agreement was made between the British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations and the Ministry of Children and Family Development to provide a vehicle for caregivers to enhance their skills in carrying out their roles.

Use Handout #11, "The British Columbia Foster Parent Care Education Program," to highlight areas included in the training. Suggest participants take time at home to review the handout.

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## FOR PARTICIPANT'S USE ONLY

## GUARDIANSHIP MODEL FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Legislated Rights of Children and Youth-in-care	<i>The concept of guardianship in British Columbia child welfare legislation encompasses all the rights, duties, and responsibilities of a parent in providing</i>
The Right Place at the Right Time for Each Child	<i>for the physical, emotional, and developmental needs of a child.</i>
Regional Guardianship Partnerships	<i>At the heart of guardianship is trust that the guardian and all those involved with the child will</i>
The Guardianship Team	<i>act in the child's best interests, for the child's benefit and with the child's safety and well-being as</i>
Caring for the Child	<i>paramount considerations.</i>
The Child's Unique Needs	<i>British Columbia has designed a guardianship model</i>
Developing Independence	<i>that ensures each child in care receives focused integrated planning and care. The model consists of</i>
Standards of Care	<i>several components each integral to providing optimum care for children and youth. This booklet</i>
Quality Assurance	<i>provides a description of each component and its relevance to the guardianship model.</i>

## Model of the British Columbia Guardianship Program

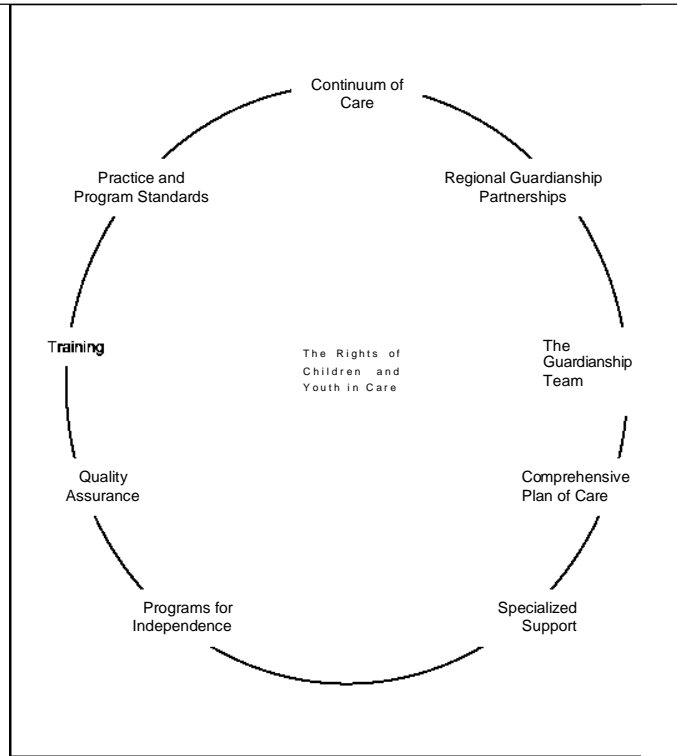
<b><i>The Guardianship Model</i></b>	
<p><b><i>Vision</i></b> For the healthy growth and development of children in care, guardianship needs to ensure that children have a sense of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• belonging</li> <li>• competence (mastery)</li> <li>• personal responsibility</li> <li>• generosity of spirit</li> </ul> <p>Every component of the guardianship model supports this vision.</p>	<p><b><i>Goals</i></b> The goals of guardianship are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to provide every child in care with a safe and secure home environment</li> <li>• to provide for the physical, emotional, and developmental needs of a child.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Principles</b> The guardianship model is based upon the following principles.</p> <p><b>Guiding Principles</b> It is important to note that the safety and well-being of children is the paramount consideration in all decisions and actions taken under the Child, Family and Community Service Act.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children are entitled to be protected from abuse, neglect, and harm or threat of harm.</li> <li>• A family is the preferred environment for the care and upbringing of children and the responsibility for the protection of children rests primarily with the parents.</li> <li>• If, with available support services, a family can provide a safe and nurturing environment for a child, support services should be provided.</li> <li>• The child's views should be taken into account when decisions relating to a child are made.</li> <li>• Kinship ties and a child's attachment to the extended family should be preserved if possible.</li> <li>• The cultural identity of Aboriginal children should be preserved.</li> <li>• Decisions relating to children should be made and implemented in a timely manner.</li> </ul> <p><b>Service Delivery Principles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families and children should be informed of the services available to them and encouraged to participate in decisions that affect them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal people should be involved in the planning and delivery of services to Aboriginal families and their children. Services should be planned and provided in ways that are sensitive to the needs and the cultural, racial, and religious heritage of those receiving the services.</li> <li>• Services should be integrated, wherever possible and appropriate, with services provided by other ministries and community agencies.</li> <li>• The community should be involved, wherever possible and appropriate, in the planning and delivery of services, including preventive and support services to families and children.</li> </ul> <p><b>Best Interest of the Child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All relevant factors must be considered in determining the child's best interests, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the child's safety</li> <li>– the child's physical and emotional needs and level of development</li> <li>– the importance of continuity in the child's care</li> <li>– the quality of the relationship the child has with a parent or other person and the effect of maintaining that relationship</li> <li>– the child's cultural, racial, linguistic, and religious heritage</li> <li>– the child's views</li> <li>– the effect on the child if there is delay in making a decision.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If the child is Aboriginal, the importance of preserving the child's cultural identity must be considered in determining the child's best interests.</li> </ul>
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## ***The Guardianship Model***

The British Columbia guardianship model includes:

- the legislated and enforceable rights of children in care
- the guardianship team
- regional guardianship partnership
- a comprehensive plan of care for each child and youth-in-care
- a range of specialized resources to meet a variety of children's needs
- specialized support programs for children and youth-in-care
- programs for independence for youth-in-care
- practice and program standards
- training for ministry staff and foster parents
- quality assurance program.



**Legislated Rights of Children and Youth-in-care**

Children and youth-in-care have specific rights that are enforceable. These rights must be honoured and actively promoted by everyone working with children and youth-in-care, including social workers and caregivers.

As defined in Section 70 of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, children in care have the following rights:

- to be fed, clothed, and nurtured according to community standards and to be given the same quality of care as other children (including the caregiver's children) in the placement
- to be informed about their plans of care
- to be consulted and to express their views, according to their abilities, about significant decisions affecting them
- to reasonable privacy and to possession of their personal belongings
- to be free from corporal punishment
- to be informed of the standard of behaviour expected by their caregivers and of the consequences of not meeting their caregiver's expectations
- to receive medical and dental care when required
- to participate in social and recreational activities available and appropriate and according to their abilities and interests
- to receive the religious instruction and to participate in the religious activities of their choice
- to receive guidance and encouragement to maintain their cultural heritage
- to be provided with an interpreter if language or disability is a barrier to consulting with them on decisions affecting their custody or care
- to privacy during discussions with members of their families, subject to any court order made after the court has had an opportunity to consider the question of access to the child
- to privacy during discussions with a lawyer, the Child, Youth and Family Advocate, the Ombudsman, Member of the Legislative Assembly or a Member of Parliament
- to be informed about and to be assisted in contacting the Child, Youth and Family Advocate\* and
- to be informed of their rights under this Act and procedures available for enforcing their rights.

\*replaced by the Office for Children and Youth in 2002

In order to ensure that children in care are aware of their rights, formal advocacy bodies, and internal complaint processes the following materials have been developed.

**Know Your Rights Booklet and Video**

*Know Your Rights: A Guide for Young People in Care* is information to advise children and youth in care of their rights. It is now available only on the ministry

web site at

[http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child\\_family\\_service\\_act/Know%20Your%20Rights.pdf](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child_family_service_act/Know%20Your%20Rights.pdf)

*Know Your Rights: A Video for Young People in Care* is also available through the ministry or through the BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations.

For younger children, the coloring book *A Foster Family for Buddy* explains their rights at a developmentally appropriate level.

<b><i>The Right Place at the Right Time for Each Child</i></b>	
<p><b><i>Continuum of Care</i></b>                      The ministry, in order to best meet the varied, unique, and often complex needs of children and youth-in-care, provides a continuum of care in a variety of residential care settings. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Foster Care by Extended Family</i></b>                      Wherever possible and in keeping with the child’s best interests, priority is given to placing a child with relatives.</li> <li>• <b><i>Foster Family Care</i></b>                      Foster Family Care provides substitute parenting to children and youth and supports important relationships of children and youth to their parents and extended families. In Foster Family Care homes, children and youth-in-care receive:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- physical care such as clothing, food, and shelter</li> <li>- emotional care, including love and inclusion of a family</li> <li>- nurturing of both intellectual and emotional development</li> <li>- guidance and supervision</li> <li>- positive role modeling.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Specialized Residential Services</i></b>                      Specialized Residential Services provide a range of care and supports to children whose individual needs are beyond the capacity of available foster family care and are best met in specialized residential settings.</li> </ul> <p>The goal is to assist the child to reach a point where he or she can return to living in a family.</p>

<b><i>Regional Guardianship Partnerships</i></b>	
<p>Regional guardian partnerships involve the working together of Ministry of Children and Family Development regional managers responsible for guardianship matters, representatives from the Federation of BC Youth-in-care Networks, the British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations, the Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents Associations, aboriginal communities and other community partners to:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facilitate initial implementation of guardianship initiatives designed to improve the quality of care for children and youth-in-care.</li> <li>• facilitate regional initiatives to ensure that new staff, caregivers, and other community partners are informed of the guardianship model components.</li> <li>• ensure that initiatives are being implemented in a practical manner throughout the region, and</li> <li>• develop local community initiatives that better meet the needs of children and youth-in-care.</li> </ul>

<b><i>Caring for the Child</i></b>	
<p>Children who are cared for by the ministry have a comprehensive plan of care developed. The Comprehensive Plan of Care describes how the child will be cared for. It outlines services that will be provided to the child based upon an assessment of his/her strengths and needs, in order to maximize his/her potential.</p> <p>The planning process involves the guardianship team and other key people in working together to promote the well-being of the child through a comprehensive plan of care that addresses seven major aspects of a child's life, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- placement</li> <li>- health and health care</li> <li>- education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- identity and competency</li> <li>- emotional and behavioural development</li> <li>- family and social relationships</li> <li>- self-presentation and social skills</li> <li>- self-care.</li> </ul> <p>Tools to assist assessment and planning include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Looking After Children Assessment and Comprehensive Plan of Care for all other children and youth-in-care</li> <li>~ Condensed Assessment and Comprehensive Plan of Care for all other children and youth-in-care</li> <li>~ health assessments</li> <li>~ education/vocational assessments; and</li> <li>~ psychological assessments.</li> </ul>
<b><i>The Guardianship Team</i></b>	
<p>For each child in care, there is a guardianship team. The team is based on the integrated case management approach ensuring the integrated planning and delivery of services to the child. The guardianship team includes, whenever possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the child</li> <li>• the child's family and extended family</li> <li>• the child's guardianship social worker</li> <li>• caregivers (foster families, residential facilities staff).</li> </ul> <p>It may also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ministry staff including resource social workers, youth probation officers, and contracted service providers in programs relating to alcohol and drug misuse, and mental health.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• other service providers such as community living service workers, child care providers, child and youth counsellors, teachers, and health care professionals</li> <li>• the Aboriginal community, if the child is Aboriginal; and</li> <li>• other responsible people whom the child considers important.</li> </ul> <p>All of these people participate in helping the child by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contributing to and participating in the child's needs assessment and development of the child's plan of care, and</li> <li>• knowing what roles and responsibilities they have in the child's life.</li> </ul>

### ***Roles of the Guardianship Team***

#### **The Child**

The child is the key member of the guardianship team. Wherever possible, the child's views should be sought and taken into account when decisions relating to him/her are made. All decisions about the child should be made in his/her best interests.

**The Child's Family** (including extended family members). In keeping with the guiding principles of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act, i.e.*, the child's kinship ties and attachment to his/her extended family should be preserved if possible; the child's family should be involved wherever possible in planning for the child.

#### **Guardianship Worker**

Each child in care has a guardianship worker who is responsible for the guardianship role. The guardianship social worker has direct responsibility for each child, coordinates services to the child and ensures the smooth operation of the guardianship team.

#### **Caregiver**

Foster families and staffed residential resources provide day-to-day care for children and youth-in-care. They operate under contract with the ministry. Provincial associations representing caregivers are funded by the ministry, and together the parties have developed practice standards and work on a number of service issues to ensure the best care of children.

#### **Regional Managers**

Each region has managers responsible for implementing the guardianship model in their regions and ensuring each child receives a high quality of care.

#### **Resource Worker**

Resource social workers are responsible for recruiting, supporting, and retaining a range of skilled foster families as well as residential resources, which reflect the needs of children and youth-in-care.

#### **Adoption Worker**

Adoption workers are responsible to carry out the functions mandated by the *Adoption Act*, including services for non-ministry adoptions. Services for ministry adoptions include adoption planning for children in care and for children whose birth parents are considering adoption; services to recruit, assess, and prepare parents who are considering adoption of children through the ministry; and support services to families who have adopted a child through the ministry.

#### **Regional Aboriginal Manager**

The manager works closely with Aboriginal communities in the region, including any Aboriginal child and family service agencies whose social workers may have, or are negotiating to obtain, delegated authority.

#### **Other Professionals**

Professionals such as child and youth care workers, youth probation officers, health care practitioners, and educational/vocational specialists contribute their specialized knowledge and skills in the assessment of the child's needs and related action to achieve realistic measurable outcomes.

## ***The Child's Unique Needs***

### ***Specialized Services***

The ministry has the capacity to provide case supervision and clinical consultation in the areas of health (including the use of sessional physicians), education, training, and employment.

### **Intensive Support Services**

These include treatment or crisis interventions to address mental health and/or substance use, and 24-hour supervision for children and youth who may endanger themselves or others.

### **Child and Youth Services**

These include one-on-one professional workers for children in care who require ongoing counselling, but do not require intensive support services.

### **After Hours Support for Foster Parents**

This service assists foster families manage unusually stressful situations during hours when normal ministry supports are not available, thereby stabilizing the child's placement. The service features both:

- centralized, province-wide assistance by phone, and
- direct personal assistance in each region.

### **Federation of British Columbia Youth-in-care Networks (FBCYICN)**

This provincial body is funded by the ministry to help youth-in-care communicate with one another, have a voice in the ministry's plans for policy and practice, and advocate for and assist in enhancing the quality of care received by children or youth-in-care.

### **Federation of Child and Family Services of British Columbia**

The federation is the collective voice for member child and family serving agencies throughout the province. It provides a forum for identifying, studying, and acting on issues directly related to the promotion of excellence in the field of child and family well being in British Columbia.

### **BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations (BCFFPA)**

This federation helps foster families communicate with one another, have a voice in the ministry's plans for policy and practices, and advocate for change to strengthen the quality of care received by children or youth-in-care.

### **Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parent Associations**

The Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parent Associations works with the ministry to provide consultation and support to Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal child and family agencies. In addition, the Federation works in a supportive capacity with Aboriginal foster parents in order to enhance the quality of care provided to Aboriginal children and youth-in-care. The Federation is involved in recruiting Aboriginal foster homes and developing culturally sensitive training for non-Aboriginal foster parents caring for Aboriginal children.

REFERENCES

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## ***Developing Independence***

### **Services for Independence**

The ministry provides youth-in-care with the support, skills, and guidance they need to become successfully independent upon reaching the age of 19 and leaving care.

The age at which a youth's social worker begins to prepare him or her for independence varies according to the youth's level of behavioural and emotional development and living circumstances. Generally, a social worker begins to prepare a youth for independence by the time the youth reaches 15 years of age.

### ***Useful Tips for Youth Leaving Care***

This handbook has been developed to help young people prepare for independence. It contains helpful information relating to practical issues such as living skills, budgeting, school, health, finding housing, jobs, and developing and maintaining support networks.

### ***Useful Tips for Youth Leaving Care Facilitator's Guide***

The ministry has developed a companion document to the *Useful Tips* handbook, to help facilitators take youth through a defined preparatory independence life skills program for youth leaving care. The content is matched with the topics in the *Useful Tips* handbook, giving youth opportunities to put the various living skills they are learning into practice. The *Facilitator's Guide* contains eight learning units that can be adapted for use in a group or individual format. Foster parents can use the *Useful Tips* materials, guiding youth through the learning units on a daily basis to assist youth to learn basic skills.

### **Youth Education Assistance Fund**

Youth who are between their 19<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> birthdays who were in permanent government care, and who are eligible for the B.C. student assistance program through the Ministry of Advanced Education, can apply for bursaries of up to \$2,500 per year to a maximum of \$10,000 over five years.

Eligible young people can apply for the bursaries through the Ministry of Advanced Education's student services branch. For more information see their web site at

[www.aved.gov.bc.ca/ studentervices /](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentervices/), or call them at 387-6100 in Victoria, 604 660-2610 in the Lower Mainland, and 1 800 561-1818 (toll free) in Canada and the U.S.A.

An information guide for youth in care and staff/foster parents is available on the web site

[http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/foster/scholarships /yea\\_fund.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/foster/scholarships/yea_fund.htm)

<p><b>Standards of Care</b></p> <p>The following practice and program standards are intended to ensure consistent, high quality services for children and youth-in-care, and to ensure the safety and well being of children and youth-in-care in British Columbia.</p> <p><b>Practice Standards for Guardianship</b></p> <p>These standards describe the required level of performance by those persons who are delegated to carry out the director’s guardianship responsibilities and authority in relation to a child or youth-in-care. The standards reflect the obligation of the director to ensure that the child’s individual needs are met and that actions and decisions taken are in the child’s best interests, based on the child’s individual need, and for the child’s benefit.</p>	<p><b>Standards for Foster Homes</b></p> <p>These standards describe expected outcomes for children and youth-in-care who reside in foster homes, including the practical steps caregivers must take to achieve the expected outcomes.</p> <p><b>Standards for Staffed Children’s Residential Services</b></p> <p>These standards describe the required level of performance for individuals and organizations contracted by the ministry to provide staffed residential services to children and youth-in-care under the <i>Child, Family and Community Service Act</i>.</p>
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## Quality Assurance

The Ministry of Children and Family Development is committed to providing a consistent and high level of guardianship care to children and youth to ensure the child's best interests. In order to monitor and improve the quality of care, the ministry has developed a quality assurance program that includes the following:

### Foster Parent Screening

Current caregiver screening practices are being strengthened with the development of a new caregiver screening tool that provides concrete assistance in the initial assessment and subsequent reviews of caregivers.

### Training

The ministry offers mandatory pre-service training as well as mandatory basic training for all foster families. This training is also available to staffed residential service providers and their child and youth care staff.

### Guardianship Training

Training pertaining to guardianship responsibilities is being provided as part of the on-going training for newly hired ministry workers. In addition, there is specific training designed for guardianship workers to promote competent professional practice.

### Reportable Circumstances

The ministry has clear policies and procedures with respect to the reporting of critical injuries or other serious incidents involving a child in care. Ministry workers communicate all serious and/or critical incidents involving children in care to the deputy director's case review team in order to ensure all appropriate actions are taken to promote safety and well-being of the child or youth.

### Regional Audits

Regional managers responsible for guardianship conduct audits of guardianship and residential practice in their regions. The practice audit assesses compliance with relevant practice standards. On completion of the audit, a regional plan is developed to address any practice concerns identified.

### Provincial Audits

The provincial audit unit of the Quality Improvement branch undertakes scheduled audits of ministry offices providing guardianship services, once every four years. Twenty percent of an office's child service files are reviewed for compliance to current practice standards. On completion of the audit, a formal audit report is prepared and a plan is developed to address any practice concerns identified. The results of all audits are included in a provincial data base to provide a standardized and comprehensive assessment of both provincial and regional guardianship and residential practice.

### Protocols

Protocols have been drafted jointly by the ministry and the B.C. Federation of Foster Parent Associations to address situations where the ministry receives a report that a child in care has been abused or neglected in a foster home; where a quality of care concern is identified, and where the foster parent(s) and ministry staff cannot agree on an issue. A new framework is being developed for regional authorities.

### Authorities External to the Ministry

These authorities are available to children and youth-in-care when it is believed that appropriate services are not being provided or a child or youth-in-care's rights are not being respected

- Office for Children and Youth
- Office of the Ombudsman.

***Under Development***

**Practice Standards for Residential Resource Work**

These standards direct the practice of those who are delegated to carry out the director's responsibilities and authority when working with residential resources for children and youth-in-care, including family care homes and staffed residential programs. The standards describe the level of performance required to recruit, screen, select and support a range of residential resources to meet the individual needs of children and youth-in-care.

**Exit Interviews**

A format is being developed to interview children and youth who are leaving care. Children leaving care are routinely asked to provide their views on the successes and challenges they faced at specific places of care and their overall experience while in care.

## **APPENDIX I: HANDOUTS**

**HANDOUT # 1**

**British Columbia Foster Care  
Education Program**

**CARING FOR CHILDREN:  
OVERVIEW**

**(3 hours)**

**Ministry of Children and Family Development**

*July 2002*

**HANDOUT #2**

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The caregiver can:

- describe and identify the legislation under which the caregiving system operates and its relationship to children or youth experiencing care.
- describe the guardianship model and explain the importance of the Plan of Care to the life of the child or youth.
- describe the role of the caregiver as a member of the caregiving team in terms of day-to-day care, contributing to and carrying out the plan of care and relating to the child or youth's family and community.
- reflect on an overview of the BC Foster Care Education Program and describe the content areas within.

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## AGENDA

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**HANDOUT #5**

### RELEVANT SECTIONS OF THE CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ACT

The *Child, Family and Community Service Act* (1996) is the provincial legislation that provides the legal authority for child welfare services in British Columbia, including foster care. Everything we do for children and youth-in-care (and therefore everything done in the Family Care Home program) is authorized by and consistent with this Act. This includes the *Standards for Foster Homes*, which must be administered and interpreted within the context of this Act.

The following seven sections of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* are of particular importance to foster parents.

- **Guiding Principles (Section 2)**
- **Service Delivery Principles (Section 3)**
- **Best Interests of the Child (Section 4)**
- **Rights of Children in care (Section 70)**
- **Out of Home Living Arrangement (Section 71)**
- **Other Powers and Duties of Direction (Section 93), clauses (1)(d); (g)(i)**
- **Agreements with caregivers (Section 94).**

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The Guiding Principles form the basis for practice and decision-making under the Act. They reflect society's values regarding children and families. It is important to note that this section of the Act **directs that the safety and well-being of children are the paramount considerations in all decisions and actions taken under the Act.**

<b>Guiding Principles(Section 2)</b>
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- a) Children are entitled to be protected from abuse, neglect, and harm or threat of harm
- b) A family is the preferred environment for the care and upbringing of children and the responsibility for the protection of children rests primarily with the parents
- c) If, with available support services, a family can provide a safe and nurturing environment for a child, support services should be provided
- d) The child's views should be taken into account when decisions relating to a child are made
- e) Kinship ties and a child's attachment to the extended family should be preserved if possible

f) The cultural identity of Aboriginal children should be preserved

Decisions relating to children should be made and implemented in a timely manner.

g) \_\_\_\_\_  
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## SERVICE DELIVERY PRINCIPLES

The service delivery principles define the manner in which all services offered through the Act are to be delivered. These principles govern the work of ministry staff, including social workers, **but also apply to foster parents**. Basically, these principles stress that:

- the child, the natural family, and, in the case of Aboriginal children, the community all have continuing roles in decisions about the child
- any service provided must respect the cultural, racial, and religious background of the child
- communities should when appropriate, be involved in caring for children.

### Service Delivery Principles (Section 3)

The following principles apply to the provision of services under this Act:

- a) families and children should be informed of the services available to them and encouraged to participate in decisions that affect them
- b) Aboriginal people should be involved in the planning and delivery of services to Aboriginal families and their children
- c) services should be planned and provided in ways that are sensitive to the needs and the cultural, racial, and religious heritage of those receiving the services
- d) services should be integrated, wherever possible and appropriate, with services provided by the other ministries and community agencies
- e) the community should be involved, wherever possible and appropriate, in the planning and delivery of services, including preventive and support services to families and children.

**THE CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ACT****BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD**

Since a child's best interest can mean different things to different people, this section explains this in detail. It lists seven factors that must be considered when a child's best interests are being determined.

In the case of aboriginal children, the Act underlines the relationship of their Aboriginal heritage to their interests. In practical terms, this means finding ways to maintain the child's connection to his Aboriginal community when he comes into care, including a preference for placements with extended family if this reinforces the other factors that make up his best interests.

<b>Best Interest of the Child (Section 4)</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Where there is reference in the Act to the best interests of a child, all relevant factors must be considered in<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) the child's safety</li><li>b) the child's physical and emotional needs and level of development</li><li>c) the importance of continuity in the child's care</li><li>d) the quality of the relationship the child has with a parent or other person and effect of maintaining that relationship</li><li>e) the child's cultural, racial, linguistic, and religious heritage</li><li>f) the child's views</li><li>g) the effect on the child if there is delay in making a decision.</li></ol></li><li>2. If the child is an Aboriginal child, the importance of preserving the child's cultural identity must be considered when determining the child's best interests.</li></ol>

<b><u>What the Act says</u></b>	<b><u>What this means for foster parents</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be fed, clothed, and nurtured according to community standards and to be given the same quality of care as other children in the placement.</li> </ul>	<p>Children in care are entitled to the same care (food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care, nurturing, and so forth) that members of the community would find acceptable for their own children. All children in care living in the same home must receive similar treatment, so long as it fits with their Comprehensive Plan of Care. It is important to remember that quality of care must not depend on behaviour or be subject to favoritism.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be informed about their Plans of Care.</li> <li>To be consulted and to express their views, according to their abilities, about significant decisions affecting them.</li> </ul>	<p>Foster parents help the child to understand what is in her Comprehensive Plan of Care, encourage her to express her views about these plans, and to ask her opinion whenever important decisions are made.</p> <p>Foster parents and the child's social worker must tell him what will happen to him while he is in care, and must listen to his views on the matter.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be given reasonable privacy and to have possession of their personal belongings.</li> <li>To be given reasonable privacy, during discussions with members of their families, subject to subsection (2).</li> </ul>	<p>Children in care are entitled to privacy and to keep their personal belongings. The Act uses the word "reasonable," recognizing that there might be occasions when limiting these rights is appropriate. For instance, the child's right to speak privately with members of his family may be limited by a court order. These rights may not apply in circumstances where there is a threat to the safety or well-being of the child or other person. For example, a child may hoard food in her room to the point that it becomes a health hazard. Any such limitation, however, must be made in a way that still respects the child. This means that such decisions should usually be made openly, with the child given the opportunity to express an opinion on the matter.</p>

**RIGHTS OF CHILDREN IN CARE (Section 70)**

What the Act says	What this means for foster parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be free from corporal punishment.</li> </ul>	<p>Foster parents must not subject children in their care to physical force, such as spanking, hitting, or slapping that may inflict pain. This is an absolute right, with no exceptions.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be informed of the standard of behaviour expected by their caregivers and of the consequences of not meeting their caregivers' <u>expectations</u>.</li> <li>To receive medical and dental care when required.</li> <li>To participate in social and recreational activities, if available, and according to their abilities and interest.</li> <li>To receive religious instruction and to participate in religious activities of their choice.</li> <li>To receive guidance and encouragement to maintain their cultural heritage.</li> </ul>	<p>Children must know what behaviour is expected of them, what the rules of the house are, and what will happen if they break the rules.</p> <p>The foster parent's role in carrying out the rights listed on the left is described in each child's Comprehensive Plan of Care (which is created with input from the foster parent).</p> <p>Be alert for emotional as well as physical signs that a child may need help. It could be that he is excessively sad or depressed, or having an unusually hard time adapting to being in care.</p> <p>It is important for children to have friends and to be involved in activities. Speak to the child's social worker if you need help finding out what is offered in your community.</p> <p>Remember that the child may not be comfortable with any religion. That is their choice.</p> <p>If you don't have the background or knowledge to help the child preserve his cultural ties, ask his social worker to help you locate others who can.</p>

**RIGHTS OF CHILDREN IN CARE (section 70)**

What the Act says	What this means for foster parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be provided with an interpreter if language or disability is a barrier to consulting with them on decisions affecting their custody care.</li> </ul>	<p>The degree of consultation in all cases will depend on the child's development and ability to understand. If a child has problems understanding the language used in the home, or has disabilities that are barrier to speaking or understanding, she has a right to assistance through interpreters or augmentative communication aids to help her communicate about important matters. The child's social worker can help you obtain interpretive services.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To privacy during discussions with a lawyer, the Child, Youth and Family Advocate (replaced by the Office for Children and Youth in 2002), the Ombudsman, a Member of the Legislative Assembly or a member of Parliament.</li> <li>To be informed about and to be assisted in contacting the Child, Youth and Family Advocate (replaced by the Office for Children and Youth in 2002).</li> <li>To be informed of their rights under this Act and the procedures available for enforcing their rights.</li> </ul>	<p>Foster parents and the child's worker must tell each child what his rights are. This includes being informed about what the Child, Youth and Family Advocate* can do for them and how to contact the Advocate if he wishes to do so. The foster parent or child's worker can also contact the Advocate on behalf of the child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(replaced by the Office for Children and Youth in 2002).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A child who is removed under Part 3 is entitled to exercise the right in Subsection (1)(1), subject to any court order made after the court has had an opportunity to consider the question of access to the child.</li> </ul>	<p>When a child who has been removed from her home because of a protection concern, the foster parent will ensure that the child has privacy when meeting with members of her family unless the court orders otherwise. Consult with the child's social worker for clarification.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 70 does not apply to a child who is in a place of confinement.</li> </ul>	<p>The rights of a child in care are not enforceable when the child is detained in a mental health or correctional facility.</p>

**RIGHTS OF CHILDREN IN CARE (section 70)**

<b>OUT OF-HOME LIVING ARRANGEMENTS (Section 71)</b>	
(1)	When deciding where to place the child, a director must consider the child's best interests.
(2)	<p>The director must give priority to placing the child with a relative or, if that is not consistent with the child's best interests, placing the child as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) in a location where the child can maintain contact with relatives and friends</li> <li>(b) in the same family unit as the child's brothers and sisters</li> <li>(c) in a location that will allow the child to continue in the same school.</li> </ul>
(3)	<p>If the child is an Aboriginal child, the director must give priority to placing the child as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) with the child's extended family or within the child's aboriginal cultural community'</li> <li>(b) with another aboriginal family, if the child cannot be safely placed under paragraph (a)</li> <li>(c) in accordance with Subsection (2), if the child cannot be safely placed under Paragraph (a) or (b) of this subsection.</li> </ul>

<b>OTHER POWERS AND DUTIES OF DIRECTORS (Section 93)</b>	
(1)	<p>The director may do one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) provide preventive and support services for families to promote the purposes of this Act</li> <li>(b) make payments to a parent, or other person who has care of a child with special needs, to assist the parent or other person to purchase support services, other than health and medical benefits, so that the child can reside at home</li> <li>(c) establish support services for youths, including but not limited to safe house, outreach services, and supported living arrangements</li> <li>(d) establish residential services for children and youths</li> <li>(e) establish services to assist in the resolution of family disputes</li> <li>(f) establish services to assist communities to strengthen their ability to care for and protect their children</li> <li>(g) make agreements, including but not limited to agreements               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) with any person for the provision of residential or other services</li> <li>(ii) with a person who by an order under Part 3 has temporary custody of a child, for contributions to the child's support</li> <li>(iii) with an Indian band or a legal entity representing an Aboriginal community for the provision of services</li> <li>(iv) with the Government of Canada, the Government of a province of Canada or the Government of a jurisdiction outside Canada, or an official or agency of any of those governments to promote the purposes of this Act, and</li> <li>(v) with any ministry of the Government or any community agency if an agreement is necessary to integrate the planning and delivery of preventive and support services to families and children</li> </ul> </li> <li>(h) promote and encourage the participation of the community in the planning, development, and delivery of services.</li> </ul>
(2)	The director is authorized to receive any authority that

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) is delegated to the director by a government or child welfare authority, and</li> <li>(b) relates to a child in the custody or under the guardianship of that government or child welfare authority.</li> </ul>
(3)	<p>The director must, in accordance with the regulations,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) establish a procedure for reviewing the exercise of the director's powers, duties, and functions under this Act, and</li> <li>(b) ensure that information about the review procedure is available to any person on request.</li> </ul>

#### **AGREEMENTS WITH CAREGIVERS (Section 94)**

The director may, by agreement, authorize a caregiver to carry out any of the director's rights and responsibilities with respect to the care, custody or guardianship of a child.

**HANDOUT #6 THE GUARDIANSHIP MODEL**



**HANDOUT #7****THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF CARE**

The child's guardianship resource worker is responsible for ensuring:

- that a written, individualized, comprehensive plan of care is in place within thirty days of the decision to bring the child into care, and
- that the plan is reviewed and updated every six months thereafter while the child is in care (or more frequently if specified in the comprehensive plan of care or if circumstances arise that make a review necessary).

The comprehensive plan of care is developed in partnership by the child's resource worker with the caregiver, the child, and, where possible, with the child's parent and other appropriate persons.

The comprehensive plan of care includes information about

- the identity of the child (name, date of birth)
- the overall goal for the child
- the expected date of return to parents
- placement with extended family
- placement within Aboriginal community
- whether it is foster care or residential care
- independent living
- adoption
- assessment of the current status of the child's
  - health
  - education
  - identity
  - family and social relationship
  - social presentation
  - emotional and behavioural development
  - self-care skills

For each of the dimensions above the following is noted.

- current functioning
  - work required
  - desired outcomes
  - person(s) responsible
  - target date
  - date completed
  - comments
- the views and signature of the child, the caregiver, the child's resource worker, the child's parent (if appropriate), and any other appropriate planning participants

- a schedule for the review of the plan.

**HANDOUT #8****STANDARD C.1 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF CARE IN STANDARDS FOR FOSTER HOMES****STANDARD C. 1 Comprehensive Plan of Care**

Each child or youth is entitled to have a written, individual, comprehensive plan of care which has been developed in consultation with the caregiver, the child, and where possible, their parents.

**Commentary**

The caregiver is expected to be informed about the child's circumstances and to participate in the development and reviews of the child's comprehensive plan of care. The caregiver will have certain responsibilities under the comprehensive plan of care, including keeping the child's social worker informed about developments concerning the child. Caregivers are expected to accept responsibility for only those aspects of the comprehensive plan of care that they are capable of carrying out.

**Results for Children**

- C. 1.1 Children confirm that, at or near the time of placement, the caregiver has provided an explanation for the placement based on the child's comprehensive plan of care and children confirm that they understand the explanation.
- C. 1.2 Children confirm that the caregiver has encouraged and assisted them to participate within their ability in the development and reviews of their comprehensive plan of care.
- C. 1.3 Children confirm that the caregiver has attempted to help them understand the role of professionals who work directly with them, either at home or elsewhere.

**Caregiver Practices**

- C. 1.4 The caregiver advocates for, and participates in, the development and reviews of the child's comprehensive plan of care.
- C. 1.5 The caregiver encourages and assists the child to participate within their ability in the development and reviews of their comprehensive plan of care.
- C. 1.6 Before or at the time of placement, the caregiver will have in their records the following information (if available from the child's social worker) to ensure the safety and well being of the child accepted into the home.

- a) the child's full name, gender, birth date, and legal status

- b) the circumstances leading to the placement including:
    - 1) family information relevant to caring for the child
    - 2) cautions or restrictions on the child's activities or contacts, and
    - 3) the names and telephone numbers of family members or significant persons noted in the comprehensive plan of care who are available as supports to the child
  - c) the child's known interests, abilities, strengths, and presenting issues
  - d) the child's physical and emotional health and any health concerns, including required medications, allergies, dietary restrictions, and physical limitations
  - e) the name of the child's social worker, the district office and telephone number, and the name and telephone number of the social worker or office to call in the case of an emergency
  - f) the child's physician's name and telephone number and child's personal health number
  - g) the name of the school or day program where the child is enrolled or has been attending, and
  - h) specific routine monitoring of the child as identified in the comprehensive plan of care.
- C. 1.7 The caregiver keeps all information about the child and family confidential. The caregiver shares information only with other persons or agencies needed to carry out the child's comprehensive plan of care or as permitted by law.
- C. 1.8 In case of emergency placements or in other instances when the information outlined above is not known to the child's social worker at the time of placement, the caregiver cooperates with the child's social worker to obtain the information as soon as possible.
- C. 1.9 Before or at the time of placement, the caregiver discusses with the child's social worker the sleeping arrangements for the child to ensure that these arrangements meet the child's needs for adult supervision, safety, privacy, and adequate sleep.
- C. 1. 10 Before or at the time of placement, the caregiver discusses with the social worker (and the child's family as authorized by the child's social worker) the following:
- a) the care needs of child
  - b) the steps to be taken by the caregiver and by the child's social worker to meet these needs. Immediate care needs include emotional and physical safety, clothing, medication, continuity of school or vocational or day programs, and arrangements for impending appointments such as doctor's visits and court appearances
  - c) the involvement of the child's family in matters such as visits and telephone calls, including any conditions and restrictions
  - d) the involvement of any necessary support.

C. 1.1 1 At the time of placement the caregiver, in a manner that is sensitive to the emotional state and developmental level of the child

- a) introduces the child to the other members of the household
- b) shows the child the layout of the home and the child's sleeping area
- c) tells the child what the household routines, expectations, and rules are
- d) gives the child the opportunity to ask questions and discuss concerns
- e) attempts to help the child understand why he has been placed in the home, and
- f) attempts to help the child understand the roles of professionals who work directly with him, either at home or elsewhere.

C. 1. 12 Following placement, and on an ongoing basis, the caregiver provides the child's social worker with information about their experience with the child, including

- a) progress in the desired outcomes outlined in the comprehensive plan of care
- b) the child's current functioning in health, education, identity, family and social relationships, social presentation, and emotional and behavioural development;
- c) the caregiver's capacity to meet responsibilities under the comprehensive plan of care.

**HANDOUT #9**

**TEAMWORK**

Characteristics of teamwork include the following.

- The focus is on the child's best interests.
- The child is recognized as part of the team.
- Each team member understands the roles and responsibilities of other team members and cooperates with them.
- There is a high level of coordination of services.
- Channels of communication are established to share essential information.
- Each team member assumes responsibility for maintaining the right of a child in care to privacy and holds shared information in confidence.
- There is shared planning for specific goals.
- There is continuous assessment of progress towards goals.
- Each team member supports the other; each team member feels important.
- Respect for individual points of view, values, culture, and concerns is demonstrated.
- People ask for help when needed.

**HANDOUT #10****ROLE OF THE CAREGIVER**

(adapted from the British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations)

The caregiver:

- cares for, nurtures, and loves the child.
- provides for the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the child.
- provides appropriate supervision and discipline.
- assists the child's worker in developing and reviewing each child's comprehensive plan of care.
- carries out the caregivers' responsibilities identified in the comprehensive plan of care.
- helps the child develop good habits and set realistic goals.
- respects, promotes, and supports the child's uniqueness, the child's family, and cultural heritage.
- in consultation with the child's worker, assists in planning for the child as well as connecting with community resources to help the child.
- communicates and works with the child's worker.
- cooperates with a plan to assist and/or involve the child's family.
- understands the importance of the child's connection to family.
- assists the child to understand their rights under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* and actively upholds these rights.

**HANDOUT #11****THE BRITISH COLUMBIA FOSTER CARE EDUCATION PROGRAM**

The BC Foster Care Education Program consists of a total of 53 hours of training on a range of foster care subjects. It is presented in 14 modules.

Series 1 consists of modules 1 - 8 for a total of 33 hours of curriculum. The first module, Caring for Children: Overview is recommended to precede all other modules. Participants can register for all the modules in Series I or for specific modules. Taking the modules in sequence maximizes the participant's learning experience.

Series 2, which contains the final six modules of the program, is spread over 20 hours.

**Series 1 (36 hours/9 modules)**

Series 1 consists of eight modules. Each module threads together core themes of teamwork, child and youth development, communications, guiding children's behaviour, family support, diversity and inclusion, and the Ministry of Children and Family Development's Guardianship Model. In many cases, modules will refer to or draw upon content from previous modules so it is recommended that Series 1 modules be taken in sequence below.

**Caring for Children: Overview  
(S1-1) (3 hours)**

The first module provides an overview of the training program with an emphasis on the Ministry of Children and Family Development's Guardianship Model, the concept of teamwork, and the roles and responsibilities of those providing care to children. Common themes for successive modules are introduced. Themes include child and youth development, developing relationships and communication skills, guiding children's behaviour, supporting families, and respecting the diversity of children and families.

**Communication Skills and Self-awareness  
(S1-2) 3 hours)**

This module addresses why effective communication skills are foundational to caregiving relationship with children, youth, families, and members of the child care team. The importance of how self-awareness impacts our communication and relationships with others is emphasized.

**Effects of Caregiving  
(S1-3) (3 hours)**

Learners explore the possible impacts of caregiving on the foster family and on self. Relationships within neighbourhood and community are also discussed. The signs and sources of stress will be addressed, as well as methods for managing them.

**The Child's Family  
(S2-5) (3 hours)**

This module emphasizes the importance of family to the child and promotes an understanding of the child's family. The caregivers role in working with and involving the child's family is explored.

**Observing, Recording, and Reporting  
(S1-5) (3 hours)**

This module addresses the importance of communicating succinct, accurate, and relevant information to the child's worker and other professionals involved with the child. Participants will learn about the benefits and purposes of observing and recording, describe the differences between behavioural description and behavioural interpretation, identify what is relevant to record in a daily log, and discuss when to report relevant information to the appropriate member of the care team.

**Child and Youth Development  
(S1 - 6) (3 hours)**

This module helps caregivers understand how children and youth develop and grow, and will explore potential influences on their development. Participants will learn how to support the growth and development of children and youth placed in their care.

**Attachment, Separation, and Loss  
(S1 - 7) (6 hours)**

A child entering placement in foster care can experience separations from his parents, family members, and other significant people which can affect their development and behaviour. In this module, the learner will focus on understanding attachment and loss of attachment through discussion in small groups and through the use of case studies. Learners will also address to promote healthy attachments in the children/youth in their care.

**When Children Experience Abuse and Neglect  
(S1 - 8) (6 hours)**

Learners will explore how to recognize the symptoms and indicators of abuse and neglect and the effect on children. Emphasis will be placed on learning ways to deal positively with reactions and feelings about child abuse and how to identify

and respond to the needs of abused and neglected children. Understanding how to support a child who is disclosing will be discussed.

**Guiding Behaviour of Children and Youth  
(S1 -9) (6 hours)**

This module will introduce ways of understanding and guiding behaviours using a child/youth-centered approach. Learners will explore ways of understanding and being with children and youth where behaviours may present challenges for caregiver(s).

## **Series 2 (17 hours/5 modules)**

While it is recommended that Series 2 be taken after completing Series 1, it is not a requirement.

**Cultural Responsiveness  
(S2 - 1) (3 hours)**

Learners will explore how caregivers can welcome and be mindful of the diversity of children and youth-in-care. Learners will address the importance of maintaining cultural identity for children's healthy development and will learn supportive ways to respond to children's social and cultural experiences.

**Aboriginal Children in care  
(S2 - 2) (3 hours)**

In this module, learners explore the importance of understanding and integrating the child's Aboriginal culture in ways that promote and enhance the well-being of Aboriginal children in care. Learners will address the variety of cultural heritages of Aboriginal people within their own region and will learn how to access local Aboriginal resources.

**Substance Misuse Awareness  
(S2 - 3) (3 hours)**

Learners will explore the varying degrees of substance use, the indications of substance misuse, and the factors that may contribute to misuse. Participants will learn ways to assist and support a child or youth who misuses substances. Access resources dealing with substance misuse will be discussed.

**An Introduction to Fetal Alcohol and Neonatal Abstinence Syndromes  
(S2 - 4) (3 hours)**

This module provides caregivers with some factual information about the effects of prenatal exposure to alcohol on the development of children. Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome will also be introduced. Attention will also be given to understanding the implications of caring for children whose development and behaviours may be

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influenced by this condition and how to respond and support the needs of these children.

**Suicide Awareness  
(S2 - 5) (5 hours)**

Through the use of lecture, experiential exercises, video and group discussions, emphasis will be placed on warning signs, risk assessment, response mechanisms, and where to get help.

## **APPENDIX II: OVERHEADS**

**OVERHEAD #1**

**British Columbia Foster Care  
Education Program**

**CARING FOR CHILDREN:  
OVERVIEW**

**(3 hours)**

**Ministry of Children and Family Development**

***July 2002***



**OVERHEAD #3**

## **Learning Outcomes**

The caregiver can:

- describe and identify the legislation under which the caregiving system operates and its relationship to children/youth experiencing care
- describe the guardianship model and explain the importance of the plan of care to the life of the child/youth
- describe the role of the caregiver as a member of the caregiving team in terms of day-to-day care, contributing to and carrying out the plan of care, and relating to the child/youth's family and community
- reflect on an introduction to the BC Foster Care Education Program and describe the content areas within.

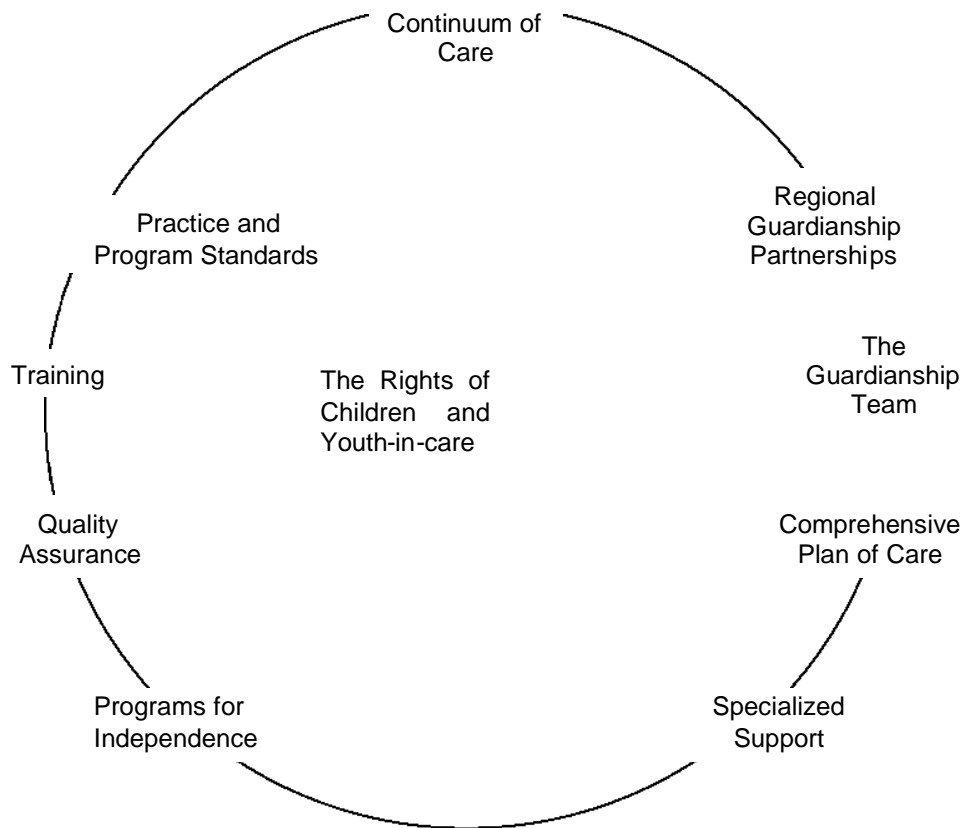
## OVERHEAD #6

## **Legislation: Children in care**

What are some of the key difficulties / dilemmas / anxieties you have that come out of carrying out your responsibilities in these sections of the Act?

How have these sections helped you in carrying out your responsibilities?

**OVERHEAD #7      The Guardianship Model**



**OVERHEAD #8**

Comprehensive Plans of Care:

**Discussion Questions**

What were the child's personal strengths?

At what was the child good?

What were your hopes, expectations, anxieties, and worries for the child?

Reminder: Avoid using children's names or other identifying information in your discussion.

**OVERHEAD #9**

## **Comprehensive Plan of Care Dimensions**

- **placement**
- **health**
- **education**
- **identity**
- **family and social relationships**
- **social presentation**
- **emotional and behavioural development**
- **self-care skills**

## **Teamwork**

How does developing a Child's Comprehensive Plan of Care require that people work together?

What is it like to work with other people?  
What do you think and feel about it?

What is your experience working with others?  
Talk about how people communicate, solve problems, and make decisions.

How do you go about involving other people in caring for and about children in care?

## **APPENDIX III: EVALUATION TOOL**

## BC Foster Care Education Program Module Evaluation

Please answer the following questions to provide us with information on the training session you have just completed. Your feedback will inform us about how the training met your needs and suggests changes for future training sessions. Thank you.

Name of Module \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Training Session \_\_\_\_\_  
 College \_\_\_\_\_ Instructor \_\_\_\_\_  
 Location \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate the training session as follows:

1. The course content was	Excellent 5      4	Satisfactory 3      2	Poor 1
Comments:			
2. The participant materials for this module were:	Excellent 5      4	Satisfactory 3      2	Poor 1
Comments:			
	Excellent 5      4	Satisfactory 3      2	Poor 1
	Excellent 5      4	Satisfactory 3      2	Poor 1
5. The most useful aspect of this training session was:			
6. The least useful aspect of this training session was:			
7. Please provide further comments about the training session:			