

Support to Family Care Network

West Kootenay/Boundary
February 2012

In this news report I've included:

- ~ Ongoing Training Opportunities
- ~ Foster Parent Support Line
- ~ Facebook Groups
- ~ Relief
- ~ Macro Board
- ~ Request from MCFD
- ~ Meeting schedule

Ongoing Training Opportunities

1. Safe Babies Update Training

We will have this training in the first week of April - details will follow soon.

2. BC Foster Parent Education Program

For those of you who still need to complete this program, this is a gentle reminder that it is mandatory and I'm happy to set up with either on-line or correspondence delivery for you. Just give me a call or drop me an email! ☺

3. FASD Learning Series

The Alberta for Child, Family & Community Research has two more sessions in their learning series. They are on Feb 22 and Mar 28 from 9 to 11 am (Alberta time) and can be viewed as a webcast. You do need to register in advance at the following link and filling out the form:

<http://www.research4children.com/admin/contentx/default.cfm?PageId=10000447>

Here is a brief description of the subjects of the webcasts:

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Learning Series 2011-12

Cognitive Interventions to Improve Memory Jacquie Pei, Carmen Rasmussen,
Karmen Krahn February 22, 2012 ~ 9 - 11 am

In this session the presenters will discuss the current literature regarding memory-based interventions. Working from the limited information available specific to those with an FASD, we will also expand to a discussion of research with other populations that may inform interventions in this area. Direct application of this research will be explored, and specific strategies for intervention will be discussed. They will also discuss the important of evidence-based practice, what it is and what it means to you.

Learning objectives:

- Increased knowledge of research in memory interventions
- Increased understanding of how this research can be applied in practical ways
- Consideration of your role in engaging in evidence based practice

Cognitive Interventions to Improve Math Skills Jacquie Pei, Carmen Rasmussen, Karmen Krahn March 28, 2012 ~ 9 - 11 am

In this session the presenters will discuss the current literature regarding math-based interventions. Working from the limited information available specific to those with an FASD, they will also expand to a discussion of research with other populations that may inform interventions in this area. Direct application of this research will be explored, and specific strategies for intervention will be discussed. Presenters will also discuss the important of evidence-based practice, what it is and what it means to you.

Learning objectives:

- Increased knowledge of research in math interventions
- Increased understanding of how that research can be applied in practical ways
- Consideration of your role in engaging in evidence based practice

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**Provincial Foster Parent Support Line --- 1-888-495-4440**

(keep this number handy)

Ever hear of the Foster Parent Support Line? Here is a place that foster parents can call with any question they have from children's behaviours to social worker's policies, these folks are a wealth of **information** and **support**. They may be social workers but they do not work for MCFD. They work from their homes and do NOT have call display. Any call you make to them is completely anonymous unless you give them your name. Even then, what you share with them is not shared with MCFD unless you'd like them to. (There are exceptions regarding critical/reportable circumstances.)

I have talked to a few foster parents over the year that have found this support to be very valuable, and was reminded again recently how important it is for foster parents to have someone to talk to. These folks are available Mon-Fri from 4 pm to 12:45 am and on Saturdays, Sundays and stat holiday from 8 am to 12:45 am.

Here's the information that is in their brochure:

Support

Need to vent? Want to problem solve an issue about your child in care, or maybe, your worker? Involved in a Protocol procedure? Want to know limits of the Rights of Children in Care – or maybe YOUR rights as a foster parent? Got an idea on how to deal with some issue and just want to run it by someone? Confidentiality is assured.

### Educate

Forgotten what they said during foster parent orientation? Need to know the exact policy from MCFD? Want assistance in understanding the Protocol procedure? Is what just happened in your home a critical incident or reportable circumstance or does it need documentation? What is the 'chain of command' to take issues/matters to a higher level? Need the email adders for a worker or organization?

### Document

We DO NOT document (unless there is a critical incident or reportable circumstance) but we CAN document if YOU want it or if we suggest it and you AGREE to it – and we will phone you back and read the exact contents if you request it. Our line can be used to get messages to your worker(s).

### And for Ministry Staff...

We are here to serve you in your efforts to support caregivers. Numerous resource and line offices submit Action or Information ALERTS to us requesting such things as calling a newer foster home with first placements or homes receiving difficult children, emergency placements or ...

We can be proactive on your behalf in calling caregivers to see if any available support services may be helpful. Caregivers will be pleased that you have thought about them and asked for a call of support.

### **Facebook Groups**

Remember to join one or both of the new facebook groups launched for foster parents. There's already been fast and furious swapping done in one group. If you want to know more about them, just give me a call or drop me an email. Here are the links to join:

- 1. West Kootenay Foster Parent Clothing Swap**  
<http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/231754320219206/>
- 2. West Kootenay Boundary Foster Parent Relief List**  
<http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/230366413694106/>

### **A bit o' clarity around.....Relief**

The Resource Team has a document called "Caregiver Support Service Standards" which outlines how they do their work. Some of you may have a copy of the document from the training in 2006. I will now attempt to simplify the message that is in that document and blend it with what is in the Foster Parent Handbook and Foster Parent Standards.

In short, foster parents need to arrange and use relief for themselves and they must also consult with the children/youth's social worker and their resource worker so that everyone is in agreement about the plan before implementing it.

The following is what the Ministry has to consider in all their decision making...

A regular or Level 1 foster parent may have up to six children/youth in the home (that includes the foster parents own children/youth) and relief is paid for by the Ministry.

A Level II home is allowed to have three children/youth (who are *in care*\*) in the home and there are three days of relief per child/youth included every month in the service payment.

A Level III home is allowed to have two children/youth (who are *in care*\*) in the home and there are three days of relief per child/youth included every month in the service payment.

\* "*in care*" includes short and long term placements, and relief and respite placements.

There is also a limit with regards to preschool children. No more than 4 preschool children should be placed in a single foster home and no more than 3 children under the age of 2 ½ .

If there are more children in the home than the six/three/two outlined above, a process called an "Exception" needs to happen. This is when the Ministry understands that there are more children in the home than their standards say is acceptable, but that in this case there is a demonstrated rational and support for the "Exception" of placement numbers to occur. The "Exception" has to be approved by the Director of Operations.

Foster parents may request additional relief to be paid for by the Ministry and the Ministry may require foster parents to show that they have regularly used their relief before approving such a request.

Foster parents are expected to arrange their own relief ensuring that the children/youth's social worker and their resource worker are in agreement with the plan. Foster parents may use someone outside the foster parent network so long as the prospective relief caregivers understand the requirements of the Ministry for caregivers and they must also have had a criminal records check OR foster parents may use an existing home.

If foster parents are using an existing foster home, it's important to speak with the resource worker ahead of time, so there is sufficient time for an "Exception" to be approved if necessary.

It's important not to confuse relief with vacation. Relief is critical in maintaining foster parents' ability to continue to do the work. And although vacations may also give relief they are different by definition. If a vacation is planned that doesn't include the foster children, "substitute care may be approved by the ministry, but is paid for by the caregiver." This is from the Caregiver Support Service Standards.

Now, what about payments? This is a contentious issue and can cause a lot of misunderstandings. When the Ministry is paying for relief, they pay the designated daily relief amount for any part of a calendar day. When a foster parent is paying for relief, what they pay can be negotiated with the relief caregiver

and **may but does not have to** follow the Ministry's rates. This is no doubt confusing for the relief caregivers who would like to be paid at their designated rate scale.

A couple of thoughts as you work this through for yourselves:

Relief caregivers need to decide how firm they wish to stand on rates, they may have more relief placements if they are flexible. Many factors come into play in this decision including age of the child, challenges the child lives with, time frame, etc.

Foster parents needing relief need to recognize how valuable a consistent and reliable relief caregiver is to the child as well as to themselves when they need a break and pay them accordingly. Maintaining a good relief situation can make the difference between having extra work with the child when they return or a smoother transition back into the home routine.

And remember - it's okay to say "no" if something doesn't work for you.

### **Tips**

It is critically important for foster parents to have a relief caregiver that not *only* meets the needs of the child or youth *and* meets the requirements of the Ministry, they must also be someone that the foster parents are comfortable with *and* available when they are needed.

- have more than one option when it comes to relief – you won't be stuck if they are busy.
- if you are a level 2 or 3, there are 3 days of relief in your service payment, set it aside from your regular monthly expenditures so that it's there when you need it.
- each of those relief days is meant to be 24 hours of down time – negotiate this with your relief caregiver if possible.
- plan your relief time ahead of time so that you have some flexibility.

### **Request from MCFD**

If you need to submit an "extra mileage" form, please get it in as soon as possible after the expense is incurred.

### **Notes from the Macro Board**

Mary-Ann Kelly is the West Kootenay Rep to the Regional (Macro) board and is the voice of West Kootenay and Boundary foster parents to the regional decision makers. The members of the Board are required to have a back up person who can attend conference calls on their behalf and report back – if there is anyone who is interested in filling that role OR who has something they'd like to see discussed at the Regional level, please call Mary-Ann at 250-231-4040.

## Foster Parent Community Team Meetings Reminders

|           |           |         |                  |
|-----------|-----------|---------|------------------|
| Castlegar | Feb 21/12 | 9:30 am | at Julie's house |
| Nelson    | Feb 23/12 | 10 am   | Baker Street Inn |



### Your Community Team Coordinators

|           |                         |          |
|-----------|-------------------------|----------|
| Nakusp    | <b>Janis Dahlen</b>     | 265-4622 |
| Castlegar | <b>Julie Johnson</b>    | 365-8342 |
| Trail     | <b>Mary-Ann Kelly</b>   | 364-3069 |
| Nelson    | <b>**vacant</b>         |          |
| Boundary  | <b>Lorna MacDougall</b> | 442-0144 |

**ARC Programs Ltd.**  
**Kootenay Regional Division**  
305-625 Front St.  
Nelson, BC V1L 4B6  
250-352-5514  
Toll free 1-866-352-5514

*In  
partnership  
with*

Check with them for the next Foster Parent Community Team meeting in your community.

\*\*The Nelson/Salmo/Kaslo area is in need of a Community Team Coordinator – if you'd like to know more about what that entails, give me a call or drop me a line at 250-352-5514 ext 224 or [jjohnson@arcprograms.com](mailto:jjohnson@arcprograms.com)

**Interior Community Services**  
Toll free – 1-877-376-3660  
<http://www.interiorcommunityservices.bc.ca/programs/support-to-family-care-network>

E-mail: If you would like to get last minute information on training and community events, email me at [jjohnson@arcprograms.com](mailto:jjohnson@arcprograms.com) and I'll make sure you are on our foster parent e-mail list!

