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### The Joys of Life

Pick flowers \* Walk in the rain \* Admire nature

Hug trees \* Kick leaves \* Climb a hill

Be happy \* Nurture and nourish your spirit

Believe in miracles \* Listen to music \* Write letters

Cook a meal for a friend \* Dance under the stars

Take a risk \* Learn from mistakes \* Look for joy

Go on a holiday \* Fly a kite \* Splash in puddles

Believe you can and you will

Begin Today



**EXECUTIVE OFFICERS**

**Eddie Newton** (Chair)  
**Shirley Fowler** (Vice Chair)  
**Debbie O'Neil** (Treasurer)  
**Nicole Shuglo** (Secretary)

**N.L.F.F.A. STAFF**

**Diane Molloy**  
Executive Director  
[dianemolloy@nfld.net](mailto:dianemolloy@nfld.net)

**Lori Petersen**  
Social Worker  
[loripetersen@nfld.net](mailto:loripetersen@nfld.net)

**Amy Powell**  
Administrative/Financial Assistant  
[amypowell@nfld.net](mailto:amypowell@nfld.net)

**Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association**  
Suite 105, 21 Pippy Place  
St. John's, NL, A1B 3X2  
Tel: 754-0213 Fax: 754-5007  
Toll Free: 1-877-754-0218  
E-mail: [nlffa@nfld.net](mailto:nlffa@nfld.net)  
Web: [www.nlffa.ca](http://www.nlffa.ca)

See back cover for a listing of Local Associations throughout the province.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**CENTRAL REGION**

**Marcia Drover**  
Grand Falls-Windsor

**Dawn Evelley**  
Gambo

**LABRADOR REGION**

**Nicole Shuglo**  
Hopedale

Vacant

**GRENFELL REGION**

**Shirley Fowler**  
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Red Bay

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**Debbie O'Neil**  
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**Lana Brennan**  
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**ST. JOHN'S REGION**

**Eddie Newton**  
Conception Bay South

**Angela Blundon**  
St. John's

**EASTERN REGION**

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Newman's Cove

**George Blake**  
Hant's Hr.

**Community Representative**

**Youth Representative**

**Susan Onalik**  
St. John's

**Nicole Withers**  
St. John's

**Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development**

**Provincial Representative**

**Regional Representative**

**Cathy Morris**  
St. John's

**Barry Rice**  
Baie Verte

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## Greetings from Board Chair

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Hello Everyone,

Fall is certainly in the air - I hope you find time to enjoy the great outdoors this Autumn, such a beautiful time of year.

This year's Foster Families Week Kick-off at Corpus Christie Parish Centre in St. John's was the best attended kick-off I can remember. It was so great to see almost as many adults there as it was to see children of all ages. Many thanks to everyone who helped coordinate the day especially our very capable staff, Diane, Amy & Lori. It really was fun to see the kids coloring together, and showing off their gymnastic skills. We even got serenaded by a four year old who was clearly no stranger to the microphone.

Thanks to staff of the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development for taking time to join us.

A special thanks to Derek Bennett, Parliamentary Secretary to the Honourable Lisa Dempster, Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development who attended along with Assistant Deputy Minister Rick Healey. Mr Bennett brought greetings on behalf of Minister Dempster and also signed the proclamation with me (see page 4) . Thank you all for sharing this time with us. We hope you enjoyed spending time with the children and our foster parents.

Congratulations to Shauna Bradbury (again) who received the VOCM Cares/Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association Bursary at the kickoff event. Proud parents Tina and Sean and other family members were on hand to watch as Shauna received this well-deserved award.

Earlier that day, our five year old and two thirteen year old girls were teasing each other about who was my favorite, knowing this was not going to end well I assured them that I didn't have favorites, that I loved and valued them all equally. In fact each time a new child entered our home that my heart grew bigger and I would always have more than enough love for them all. This conversation caused me to reflect on the reasons my heart grows and what that means on the very day we are about to kick-off Foster Families Week. For us, each child brings so much to our lives and kicking off is as much about celebrating them and all the wonderful ways they have enhanced our life as it is what we have and are doing for them. I have no doubt that you feel the same way.

The Board of Directors will be travelling to Grand Falls-Windsor the weekend of November 2-4 for an in-person meeting and training day. We look forward to seeing many of our Foster Parents and Social Workers in the region at this professional development opportunity.

I hope you all keeping well and find time to enjoy this beautiful fall weather.

Edie Newton, Chair



**Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association is now on Facebook. Please like our page and follow us to keep up to date on the latest happenings.**

**Please ask your friends to like and follow us too.**

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## Executive Director's Report

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Happy Foster Families Week! Its hard to believe that Summer is now over and we are back into the Fall routine. Didn't it seem like summer lasted so much longer when we were children? As adults, I sometimes think that we just don't take enough time to slow down and smell the flowers. At our Symposium in June, Lisa and Laurie Pinhorn from Feeding Futures talked about how our lives are so filled with things we have to do and busyness that we often don't stop to assess what we really want to be doing and what brings us joy. I think this was a very good message for all of us. My wish for you in this upcoming year is that you take time to enjoy what makes you happy and strive to find time for self care.

Fall is a very busy time for the Association as we try and get most of our regional travel completed before Winter sets in. In September and early October we travelled to Springdale, Deer Lake, Roddickton, Gander, Bonavista, Clarenville and Marystown. In November, we will be visiting Gambo and the North Coast of Labrador. We are particularly looking forward to our trip to Labrador because we only travelled to Natuashish last year when the runways in Goose Bay were shut down for a week. As usual, when we travel to meet with our foster families we also meet with CSSD staff and do presentations in the schools in each area. We have had a significant increase in the number of schools requesting presentations this year.

Our Peer Mentoring Program started in July and we are pleased with the number of new homes who are interested in the program. We made our first match in July and have made two more since. Three more families will be matched soon. The Waypoints Program continues to receive very positive feedback from foster parents who are receiving support. Participation in training has also increased.

Over the Summer, Amy and Lori did a significant piece of work updating our foster parent database and we are now confident in the accuracy of the database. In keeping with one of the goals of our strategic plan, to date, 403 of our 565 foster families have been contacted by phone to ensure they know who we are and that we are here for support if they need us. The remaining 162 were left messages. We also discovered with these calls that a percentage of our foster parents prefer to get their newsletter electronically and we will begin this process with our Winter newsletter. In September, we also started a Facebook page for the Association and this has become a great tool to make connections, not only with our foster families, but with the community at large.

In October, we moved our community awareness campaign for recruitment from Steel Communications to NTV. We now have a television ad, radio ads on OZ FM, ads in the Herald and a banner ad on the NTV website page. We are hoping that this multi-media campaign will result in our recruitment messages reaching a larger audience.

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate has launched a comprehensive independent Review of the Treatment, Experiences and Outcomes of Inuit Children and Youth in the Child Protection System. Ken Barter has been contracted by the Advocates Office to lead the review which is scheduled to be completed in March 2019. The Association is providing any support we can to the Advocates office to ensure the voice of foster parents is heard during the review.

I am looking forward to the In-person Board Meeting and Training Day in Grand Falls November 2-4th. We are hoping to have a good turnout of foster parents and social workers at this professional development opportunity.

Diane

### Highlights/Ongoing Activities

- Foster Families Week
- Facebook Page
- Multi Media Recruitment
- Peer Mentoring Program
- Waypoints Pilot
- Personal Support
- Allegation support
- Regional Travel
- School Presentations
- Updated Database



## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development, it is my pleasure to recognize foster families throughout Newfoundland and Labrador and offer my sincere thanks for the important work you do.

Foster Families Week, held annually during the third week of October, is a special opportunity to express our heartfelt appreciation and respect for a group of people who care deeply about the safety and well-being of children and youth in our province.

The Provincial Government recognizes the vital role of foster families and we thank you for your inspiring contribution to the future of our province.

Approximately 560 families make up this incredible community of people who provide nurturing homes for children and youth in need of comfort, safety and security. In doing so, you create endless opportunities for these children to thrive and succeed.

We also appreciate the strong working relationship we share with the Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association and I would like to thank the board and staff of the Association for your time, commitment and continued support to foster families throughout our province.

Thank you again for your tremendous contributions to the children and youth of our province. I wish you continued success in the coming year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Dempster". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Hon. Lisa Dempster  
Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development





PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

October 2018

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to everyone celebrating National Foster Family Appreciation Month.



This month offers a wonderful opportunity to recognize foster families for their commitment to the children and youth living under their care. I am certain that participants will leave with a better understanding of the challenges facing foster families, and with a renewed appreciation for their vital role in our society.

I would like to commend the Canadian Foster Family Association for advocating for foster families throughout Canada. You can take pride in the knowledge that you are making our country a better place to live.

Please accept my best wishes for a successful month of events.

Yours sincerely,

The Rt. Hon. Justin P.J. Trudeau, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada

## **VOCM Cares/ Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association Bursary Presentation**

The VOCM Cares/ Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association Bursary is awarded each year to a foster parent's birth or adopted child who is completing post-secondary education. The bursary recognizes the support these young people provide to the children/youth who are placed in their homes.

I am pleased to announce that the bursary winner for the second year in a row is Shauna Bradbury from Flatrock. Shauna is the daughter of foster parents, Tina and Sean Bradbury. She is currently attending Memorial University majoring in science and plans to pursue a career in the medical field.

In her application, Shauna not only demonstrated a keen understanding of the challenges faced by children when they come into foster care, she also showed an understanding of birth families and the struggles they may experience. Shauna talked about ways she has supported her foster brother but she also talked about what she has learned from him: to not worry about things she cannot control; if it cannot be fixed in less than five minutes, it can wait until tomorrow; to be fearless in everything she does and that ketchup can be served with every meal. Shauna indicated that being a foster sister has changed her life and because of this experience, she hopes to become a foster parent when she is older.



Frederick Power, one of Shauna's high school teachers, indicated that "academically and scholastically Shauna is in the top percentage of academic skill" but just as importantly he also indicated that "When working with other people she has a unique way of making them feel comfortable and in helping them reach their potential". Social worker, Louise Kirby described Shauna as a very caring and supportive foster sibling. She indicated that Shauna loves her foster brother and has accepted him as part of her family. It is obvious from Shauna's application that she is a proud big sister who supports her Mom and Dad in their role as foster parents.

Congratulations Shauna. This bursary is to say thanks for all you do. We wish you well in your studies and all your future endeavors.

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**"Just when the caterpillar thought the world was over, it became a butterfly." ~ English Proverb**

**"May the sun bring you new energy by day,  
may the moon softly restore you by night.  
May the rain wash away your worries,  
may the breeze blow new strength into your being.  
May you walk gently through the world and know its beauty all the days of your life."  
Author Unknown**

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## Regional Reports

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### Central Region

#### **Exploits Central Foster Families Association**

Hope you all had a great healthy Summer and are enjoying our beautiful Fall

I was so fortunate again this year to have the opportunity to attend the 2018 Foster Families Symposium and Conference in St. John's June 1<sup>st</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup>. It was a wonderful opportunity. You get so much information at the Symposium and meet so many people. Hats off to all who made this weekend possible and for the countless hours that must have went into planning such an event! I strongly encourage everyone to attend this wonderful weekend next year - you will take away some very helpful and beneficial information. Plus you also get to spend the weekend with other lovely foster parents in our province. You will not be disappointed!!

Thanks to Executive Director Diane Molloy and Social Worker Lori Petersen from our Provincial Association who came out to meet with our Local on September 16<sup>th</sup>. Special thanks to the foster parents who attended. I believe they took away useful information that will help them. I strongly encourage all foster parents to attend their Local meetings; take my word it's unreal the information and support you can get.

We are looking for foster parent volunteers to help strengthen our local. We would love to have you join our team to organize get together, share ideas etc. Thanks for considering this.

Happy Foster Families Week to all Foster Families - be reminded of the wonderful investment you are putting into the beautiful children and youth of our province. Thanks foster parents. :) You are valued so much!

Coralee Roberts, Chair

#### **Kittiwake Central Foster Families Association**

We held our first meeting of the Fall on Tuesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> with three people in attendance. We also had regrets from a number of people who normally attend but were unable to make the meeting. We were very pleased to welcome our new member Tonia Pritchett who started fostering in June.

Because we only had a small group, we took the opportunity to talk about our Local and answer questions for our newest member. We also discussed our intention of having a children's Christmas party. We will plan the details for the party at our next meeting on November 20 at 6pm. Diane and Lori from the Provincial Office will also be attending this meeting. Looking forward to seeing a good turnout.

Laurie Wicks, Chair

**The Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association will be holding a Training Day in Grand Falls-Windsor on Saturday, November 3, 2018. Invitations have gone in the mail. Hope to see you there.**

## Eastern Region

### **Bonavista Foster Families Association**

Our Local chapter held its first meeting in October when we had a visit from Diane and Lori from the Foster Families Association office. A review of the work of the Foster Families Association and how they can be of help to foster families was provided along with a review of the new strategic plan of the Association. Diane also reported on The Waypoints Pilot Program and its extension to the Bonavista Peninsula area hopefully in the coming year. This was followed by a Q&A session for those in attendance along with a social. Some ideas were also discussed for potential training sessions/workshops for our local in the near future. It was encouraged by Diane, Lori and others that foster parents should avail of any training that is offered as one can always learn something new or be refreshed.

Some of our Foster Parents reported on attending a training session held by the Vista Family Resource Centre in Bonavista over three nights in September titled - Kids Have Stress Too. Those that had attended the training said that they had found it not only beneficial, learning new ways to cope with stress for themselves and their children but also found it was good to get out for a night and to socialize. As we all know one can never avail of too much training and it was encouraging to see participation from local parents. The Vista Family Resource Centre is offering additional training over the Fall/Winter with the next one being a six week session titled, Nobody's Perfect starting October 22.

Our Local will now focus on some training/workshops for our Foster Parents and organize a get-together for our parents and children before Christmas. We look forward to an active Winter.

Thank you to the support from the CSSD office in Bonavista and Social Worker, Laurie Anne Connors for her support to our local.

Jim Miller, Chair

### **Burin Peninsula Foster Families Association**

Well it's that time of the year again when you break out the warmer clothes and turn up the heat. Kids are settled back in school and routines have taken shape.

Here on the Peninsula we are starting to plan our usual get togethers with our Local. We are having a Halloween pizza party with the kiddies, sharing in a lovely meal with our local parents to celebrate Foster Families Week and gearing up for a possible breakfast with the big guy in December.

In October, we were also able to have a great local meeting with Diane and Lori, our lovely visitors from the Provincial Association and we were able to attend a training session on Resiliency offered by Waypoints. If ever you have the opportunity to attend this session do so. It was an excellent presentation.

I like to take this opportunity to wish all our Foster Parents in the Province a Happy Foster Families Week and tell you to keep doing what you are doing. You are all fabulous!

Melanie Smith, Chair

**"A warm smile is the universal language of kindness." ~ William Arthur Ward**

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## **Bay Roberts/Harbour Grace Foster Families Association**

Happy Foster Families Week from the Trinity Conception Placentia Foster Families Association. We had a lovely get together with the CSSD staff at the Harbour Grace office to recognize the contributions foster families and social workers play in the lives of our children in care. Although there was a small number of foster parents in attendance, we did have a great time. It was really nice to see those that did attend and it was a wonderful opportunity for networking. Thank you to the Harbour Grace CSSD staff for the invitation!

We are in the process of planning our annual Christmas party for our children but we are in desperate need of help from other foster parents in our area. If you are willing to pitch in help to organize this party, please contact either Debbie Sellars, Anne Marie Tilley or myself - your help would be greatly appreciated! I can be reached by email at kimnewman@hotmail.ca or by phone at 589-8686.

Kim Newman, Chair

## **Western Region**

### **Deer Lake-Pasadena Foster Families Association**

Hello again! I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving. Also happy Foster Families Week. We would like to thank Diane and Lori for coming to see us in September. As always it was very informative. Lots of laughs and stories were shared.

On October 25th there was a party for our foster families at the Hub/Treehouse in Pasadena. Everyone dressed up for Halloween. There was food, cake and loot bags for the children. On October 29th there is an information session being held in Corner Brook that we have been invited to attend. Paula Sheppard Thibeau will be presenting, "Consent: what it is and how to talk to our children about it". We have our next meeting scheduled for Nov. 20th and Amy Parsons from the Autism Society will be there to speak with our families.

We look forward to seeing everyone at the party and for future meetings. Stay safe trick or treating! Happy Halloween!

Vicki McCarthy, Chair

### **Corner Brook-Bay of Islands Foster Families Association**

Happy Fall! By now everyone is back into the swing of school, activities, and getting ready for Halloween!

We are just getting back into the swing of things with our Local. On October 29th, we have training planned. Paula Sheppard-Thibeau from the Women's Center in Corner Brook coming to give a talk "Consent: what is it and how to talk to your kids about it". We are looking forward to the Foster Families Appreciation Event this week as well. Hoping for a good turnout.

I will be contacting our foster parents in the near future to plan the Christmas party. So if anyone has any ideas on what you would like, please contact me. We are always looking for training ideas or persons to do training for us. If you have a topic of interest or know of anyone who could help with the training, please let me know.

Stephanie Lowe, Chair

## Labrador Region

### Hopedale Foster Families Association

Greetings from the North Coast of Labrador!

Our foster parents recently met over tea and muffins for an information-packed session on Autism with Labrador-Grenfell Health Behaviour Management Specialist Linda Tibbo. I am looking forward to our next gathering in November when Mental Health & Addictions Counsellor Allie Clarke will be delivering a presentation on Self-care.

As I write this it is Foster Families Week in our province. There are truly no words that can ever fully express enough gratitude for the immeasurable difference that our foster families make in the lives of children, youth, and families within our province. For all you do... NAKUMMEK!

Nicole Shuglo, Co-Chair

### Labrador West Foster Families Association

Parents are back in full swing with Fall routine again... however, in Lab West we are deep in snow! We have already had a snow day for school!

Our Local has had a meeting already in October and have our Christmas Social planned. The social will be December 7th 4:30-6 at the First Steps Resource Center. Please watch the mail for details concerning this event.

Eunice Earle, Chair

## Grenfell Region

### Grenfell Island

Hello from the beautiful Grenfell area.

We hope you all are having a great Fall and all the kids are settling in school for another year.

In September we had another opportunity to have Diane Molloy and Lori Petersen visit from the Provincial Association. We were happy to have them join us for a great night of discussion, it's always nice to see staff from the office.

Hope you all have a great Foster Families Week.

Shirley Fowler, Director

**A good laugh and a long sleep are the best cures in the doctor's book. ~Irish Proverb**

**If you are too busy to laugh, you are too busy. ~Proverb**

## St. John's Region

### St. John's/CBS Foster Families Association

The St. John's and CBS Local Chapter has had quite a productive quarter. We have been steadfastly focused on our goals of improving team engagement and building relationships in the community. We started the summer off right with a Canada Day Party that brought together more families than we even thought possible! In September, MAX donated a carnival party to our local! It was a blast and we were happy to see even more new faces partaking in the excitement. October brought with it a lovely donation from Polka Dot Place and a small social for Foster Families with young children.

We have gathered for meetings in June, September and October. We always meet on the 2nd Wednesday of every month at the Bell Building on Kenmount Road. November 14th at 7:30PM will be our last meeting for 2018. Please join us!

We currently do most of our communication via email. Although we have been working to collect emails we do not have everyone on our list...yet! If you are in the St. John's, Mt. Pearl, Paradise, CBS or surrounding areas and you have not yet received an email from us please email me at [daphne\\_r@live.ca](mailto:daphne_r@live.ca) or call/text me @ 764-0525. We will soon have a private Facebook page. Invitations to this page will be sent out via email.

Our Christmas Party is scheduled for December 8<sup>th</sup>, 10am - 12pm @ the Double Ice Complex in Paradise, Resource Room B. There will be a professional photographer doing mini photo shoots, a Christmas craft and SANTA!!! We hope to see everyone there! Please make sure we have your email address as we will have more details to share about this party.

Lastly, we would like to thank all the individuals and businesses that have humbled us with the depth of their generosity. We have a long list of foster families, teens, and social workers, which have contributed time and materials at each of our events. We have businesses like MAX, the Town of Paradise and Polka Dot Place that show us their support by providing us with space and entertainment, so we can socialize and engage with each other. We did 2 mini fundraisers and managed to raise enough money to pay for the venue for the Christmas Party! Morgan Cole was the winner of the quilt that was sewn and donated by Pat Morris.

Daphne Richards, Foster Parent



**It's that time of year to...**

- ✓ Check the operation of your smoke detectors, and change the batteries. Install additional detectors if needed.
- ✓ Inspect and ready your heating system. Empty the ashes, and clean the soot from your fireplace.
- ✓ Check the weather-stripping around doors and windows, and replace those that are worn.

**...and remember to set your clocks back one hour on November 4, 2018.**

**Fall Time Reminder...**

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## Foster Parents Share Experiences

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Foster Parents Share Experiences is a regular feature in our newsletter. It would be great if Foster Parents would write a story of their experiences providing care for children and forward it to the office. We want to have a ready supply of stories for future newsletters. It is realized that not everyone is comfortable writing about themselves but everyone has a story to tell. If you would like to share your experiences but need help putting it on paper, you can call the office and we will give you a hand.

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As a young married couple we knew it would be difficult for us to have children and we began to look at other avenues to bring the joy of children into the house including fostering. Similar to other couples, we too questioned the possibility of becoming too attached and how we would cope with the loss when children would leave. These hesitations prevented us from inquiring further for a couple of years. After five years of being married and pretty well giving up on the idea of having our own biological children, we were blessed with our first son; he was our whole world for the following five years though the thought of fostering had not diminished. Once our son had started kindergarten our desire to nurture and foster had, once again, come to the forefront. We had our own child now and had a new appreciation of what it was like to love and care for a little human being and to be able to provide the things he needed to grow to be a successful young man. That too brought fears, the fears of doing it right and similar what if questions that came up years before when we considered fostering. We realized that raising children was full of fears but also full of so much love and reward. We concluded that if everyone didn't choose to foster because of those fears, the many children being raised in some pretty great homes would not have had a stable environment where they could grow and thrive into the amazing individuals they would become. We began thinking that we could be that one family that could put our own fears and feelings aside to open up our homes and hearts to care for a child needing a home.

The two of us began to talk about it, we considered the possible impacts it could have on our impressionable son who is still developing and decided that the plan for us was to foster and help children who required intervention and a stable loving home. The three of us as a team would provide a safe and loving home for as many children as we could for a week, a month, a year or in our case longer. We cautiously set aside any apprehension we had of any negative impact on our son for the possible good it would do for him and the children requiring intervention. The rewards were unimaginable! Not only is our son compassionate of others he has welcomed these children with open arms as his siblings. We know fostering has instilled in him empathy of others at such a young age that he will hold with him long into adulthood.

The last five years have certainly brought many challenges to our family. We have gone through the feelings of success when a family was reunited to the heart break when it failed again a year later. We have seen children leave and had feelings of helplessness when a child is clinging to you begging not to leave you. Grief is an inescapable part of fostering. The many emotions, fears, frustration and loss that come along with loving our children in care will come and go but the reward far outweighs any negative.

When you see that 9 year old boy who is on the verge of the wrong path, now five years later choosing the right path, playing sports, being respectful to teachers and peers, wanting a better life for his future than his past provided. That 2 month old who after being home and back is now almost 4 and looks to you for guidance and safety as the only consistent parents in his little life. Every child that is brought into care has a story, a different history and a potential different outcome. For us, our goal is to provide a safe, loving home to help them progress along the way and break the cycle of revolving doors in the system.

We now have our house full of children and full of more love in our blended family than we could ever imagine. Some days are chaotic and crazy in our busy home and we wonder how we are ever going to get through a rough day but our family stands strong together including our children and we make it happen....everyone safe, loved, and feeling like they will forever have a place to call home no matter where life takes them.

Stacey and Chris Fallon

Thanks for your wonderful story Stacey and Chris!

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**Voices of Youth**

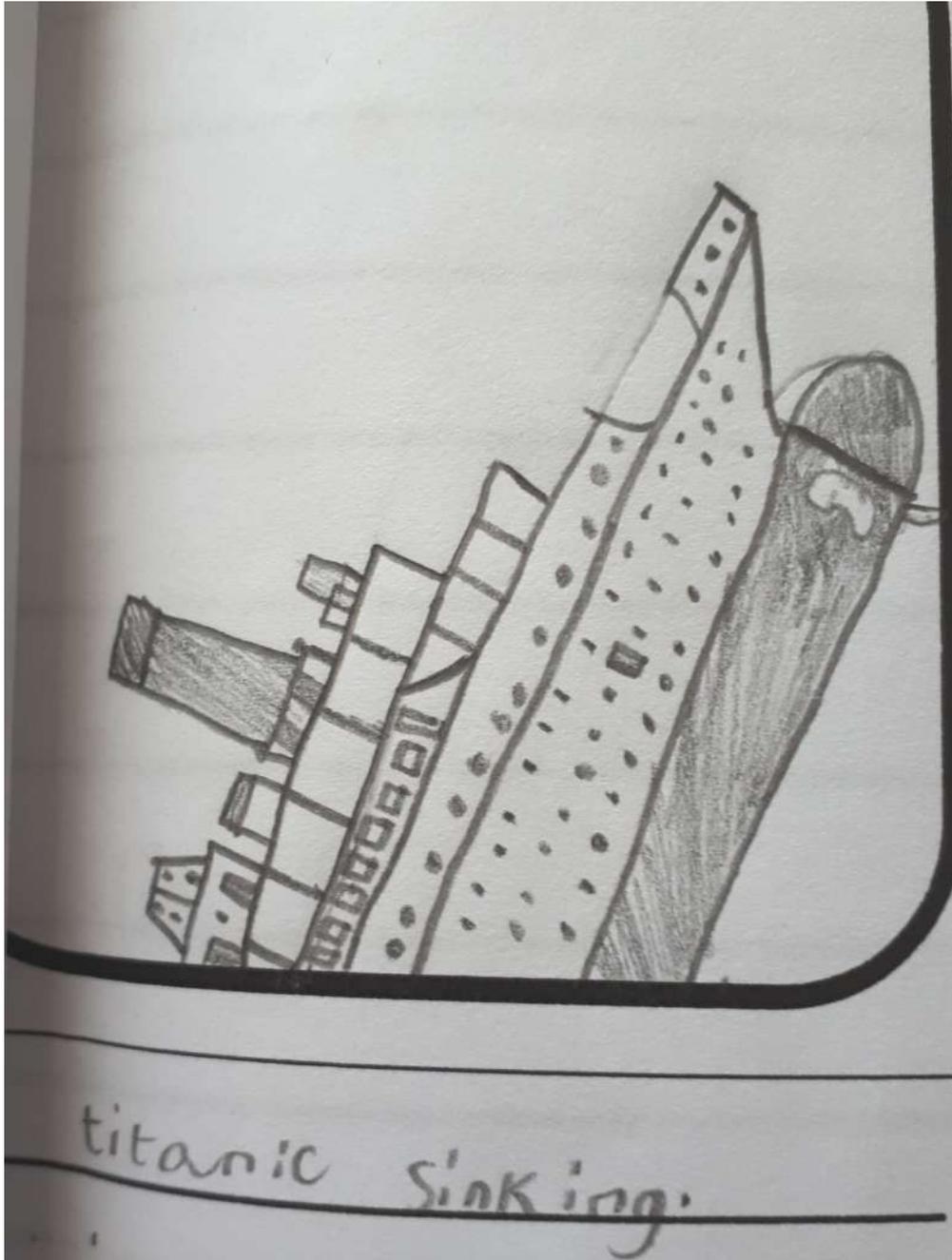
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Voices of Youth is a regular feature. This space will be available for the printing of poetry, drawings, short stories, or life experiences of young people. If submitting a drawing, please ensure you use a dark pencil. For reasons of confidentiality, the full names of those who submit will not be printed unless the individual is over 16 and has provided their consent.

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Zachary, age 9

**Thanks for your drawing Zachary. You are a great Artist!**

## Teen Corner

### Cannabis: What you Need to Know

On October 17, 2018 it became legal for adults in Canada to purchase cannabis from licensed retailers. The legal age to purchase Cannabis is 19.

Some facts for teens about the health effects of cannabis:

- Cannabis can make you feel relaxed and happy, but it can also:
  - harm your ability to think and make decisions
  - harm your ability to concentrate and remember
  - slow your reaction time
  - affect your ability to drive
  - impair performance in sports and school
- Impairment can last for more than 24 hours after use, well after other effects have faded.
- With long-term, frequent and heavy use some of these and other effects may continue even after you stop using and may not be reversible:
  - cannabis can be harmful to brain development and the brain does not stop developing until around age 25
- The health risks related to cannabis use are higher:
  - the younger you are when you start using it
  - the more often and the longer you use it
- Cannabis has become much more potent in recent years, which could increase health risks.
- Cannabis can be addictive and about 1 in 11 people who use cannabis will become addicted:
  - the risk rises to about 1 in 6 for people who start using cannabis as a teen
- When smoked, cannabis can cause breathing problems, as the smoke has chemicals that can damage your lungs.
- Cannabis use has also been linked to the development of psychosis and schizophrenia. This is especially true:
  - when use begins in adolescence
  - when use is frequent
  - where there is a family history of these illnesses
- Frequent cannabis use has also been associated with an increased risk of:
  - depression
  - anxiety disorders



### What to do if you're experiencing bullying

If you're experiencing bullying, it's important to remember that it's never your fault and that there are things you can do to address it.

Being the target of bullying can be hurtful, scary and isolating. Even though it's difficult, remember: you're not alone, and there are ways you can keep bullying out of your life. Here are some things you can do to address bullying:

- **Stay safe:** Keeping yourself physically and emotionally safe is the most important thing to do if you're experiencing bullying. This could mean avoiding certain people and situations as much as possible, turning off social media and surrounding yourself with people you trust. If you need help coming up with a safety plan, you can always contact **Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868**.
- **Report it:** By speaking up about bullying, you're protecting yourself and maybe even others. You can report the harassment at your school by following its bullying prevention policy or by talking to the office staff. If the behaviour is happening outside of school, you can contact the police. If you don't feel comfortable reporting what's going on, you can talk to a parent, caregiver, teacher or other safe adult for support and advice. It's also a good idea to keep a record of any bullying incidents, by saving texts or taking screenshots of abusive posts. You should also keep a record of what is happening, including when and where. This will help you prepare for any information you may be asked for when reporting the bullying.
- **Get support:** Having friends and family as support can help you feel better while you're experiencing bullying. Talk to people you feel you can open up to and don't be afraid to ask for help. If you feel embarrassed to let your friends and family know that you're experiencing bullying, try to keep in mind that many young people disapprove of bullying and will likely be on your side.
- **Take care of yourself:** Bullying can be stressful and harmful — you may begin to believe the negative comments or think that you deserve the abuse. Remember that bullying is not your fault, it's not OK and it's important to be kind to yourself. Eating right, getting enough rest and being active and social will help you stay positive. Keeping a journal is also a great way to get your thoughts and feelings out.



Source: [www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)

### 8 Feel Good Tips to Boost your Mood

Everyone has good days and bad days. If you're in need of a pick-me-up after a bad day, here are a few things you can do to beat the blues.

**Take your mind off it:** make plans with friends or family. Laughing and spending time with loved ones can be a good distraction from a bad day.

**Let it out:** cry, yell, sob... it's OK to express yourself in whatever way feels right for you.

**Breathe:** focus on your breathing. Take a few deep breaths, relax your body and mind and concentrate on feeling better.

**Focus on you:** what makes you happy? Take some alone time doing something just for you, such as listening to your favourite music or watching your favourite TV show.

**Give back:** if you're having a bad day, helping to brighten someone else's day may make you feel better. Do something nice for a friend or volunteer with a local charity.

**Get artistic:** draw, paint or write about how you're feeling to turn your bad day into something creative.

**Talk about it:** Sometimes all it takes to feel better is talking about a problem. You can speak to a friend, parent/caregiver or teacher about what's on your mind. You can also call a Kids Help Phone counsellor at 1-800-668-6868.

**Exercise:** go for a walk, dance to music or do some other physical activity you enjoy. This can help boost your mood and make you feel better (mentally and physically).

**Remember: you're not alone.**

Almost everyone has bad days from time to time — lots of people feel the same way you're feeling right now, but it will get better.

Source: [www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)



**STAPLES®**  
**Photo Calendars**  
'Tis season to start placing your personalized calendar orders!!

**MAKE more HAPPEN™**

**Deluxe Calendars**  
Starting at \$24.99

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Starting at \$12.99

The advertisement features several images of personalized calendars. One shows a calendar with a photo of a person and a calendar grid. Another shows a calendar with a photo of a child and a calendar grid. A third shows a calendar with a photo of a car and a calendar grid. A fourth shows a calendar with a photo of a child and a calendar grid. A fifth shows a calendar with a photo of a child and a calendar grid.

## Children's Pages

### Popsicle Stick Scarecrow

**What you need:** 8 popsicle sticks, glue, brown, yellow, white and orange paper, scissors, brown/black marker, brown paint

**Directions:**

- Start by cutting a rectangle out of cardboard (we used a cereal box) and spreading glue all over it. Stick on 7 popsicle sticks in a row.
- Glue the last popsicle stick diagonal to make the scarecrow's hat. This is the perfect time to glue the straw hair (yellow paper) with the hat brim! Paint it brown and let dry.
- Cut out some eyes, a nose, and a flower for the hat. You can draw on his smile with a brown or black marker. There you have the cutest little scarecrow around!



### Fruit Pita Pockets



**Ingredients:** 1/4 cup peanut butter, 1/8 teaspoon of cinnamon  
2 whole wheat pita pocket halves, 1/2 medium apple, thinly sliced  
1/2 medium firm banana, sliced

**Directions:**

- In a small bowl, blend the peanut butter and cinnamon;
- Spread inside pita bread halves;
- Fill with apple and banana slices. Enjoy!

### Riddles

**Q:** What has to be broken before you can use it?

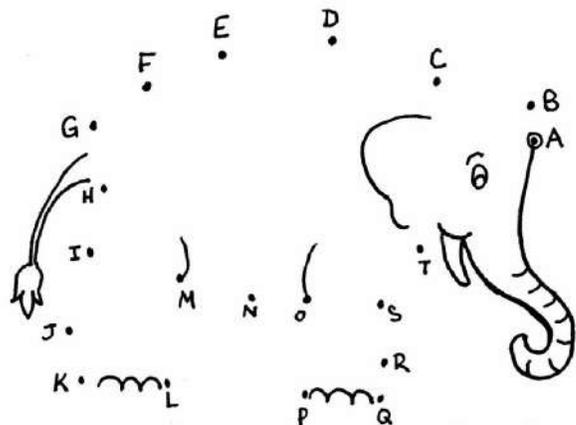
**A:** An egg.

**Q:** Why do bees have sticky hair?

**A:** Because they use honeycombs.

**Q:** What doesn't have wings and doesn't have eyes but can cry?

**A:** A Cloud.



Would you like to win a prize? Color this page to enter our Fall Coloring Contest. Four prizes will be awarded. Send your picture to Suite 105, 21 Pippy Place, St. John's, NL, A1B 3X2 before November 30, 2018. Copy the page and share it with a friend!



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## Educational Section

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### Screen Time and Young Children: Promoting Health and Development in a Digital World

The digital landscape is evolving more quickly than research on the effects of screen media on the development, learning and family life of young children. This article examines the potential benefits and risks of screen media in children younger than 5 years, focusing on developmental, psychosocial and physical health. Evidence-based guidance to optimize and support children's early media experiences involves four principles: minimizing, mitigating, mindfully using and modelling healthy use of screens..

Exposure to digital media in Canadian family life is increasing, as are concerns about how screen time affects children and families. 'Screen time' refers to time spent with any screen, including smart phones, tablets, television, video games, computers or wearable technology. 'Digital media' refers to content transmitted over the Internet or computer networks on all devices, unless particular ones are specified.

#### Why Focus on this Age Group?

- Research recognizes important developmental differences between preschool and later childhood, and TV-based data have established that a child's earliest screen encounters can be formative.
- They may be habit-forming, and early overexposure increases the likelihood of overuse in later life.
- Health routines, including family media use, are established more easily in early childhood than later on.
- Screen use tends to increase over time to include more entertainment (versus exclusively educational viewing).

#### Some important trends are reshaping early childhood:

- Active Healthy Kids Canada reported in 2014 that children 3 to 5 years old spend an average of 2 hours per day in front of screens. Only 15% of preschoolers met current Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for the Early Years, which recommend limiting screen time to less than 1 hour per day.
- TV still dominates total screen time and appears to be increasing for this age group. Many preschoolers accumulate screen time at home and in child care, from a variety of screens that are easily transportable.

#### Impacts of Screen Media on Development

Whether early exposure to screen media changes the developing brain is not known, and published research on how (and how much) children younger than 5 years of age actually learn from screens remains limited. Still, studies show that while babies do not absorb content from TV, it can catch and hold their attention. They can imitate specific actions they see on screen between 6 and 14 months, and remember brief sequences by 18 months.

Children begin to understand content by the end of their second year. There is solid evidence that infants and toddlers have difficulty transferring new learning from a 2D representation to a 3D object (e.g., from screen to real life) and are unlikely to learn from TV at this age. By contrast, they learn intensely through face-to-face interaction with parents and caregivers. Early learning is easier, more enriching and developmentally more efficient when experienced live, interactively, in real time and space, and with real people.

## Potential Benefits for Development

Beginning at about 2 years, quality TV—well-designed, age-appropriate programs with specific educational goals—can provide an additional route to early language and literacy for children. Quality programming also fosters aspects of cognitive development, including positive racial attitudes and imaginative play. Early evidence suggests that interactive media, specifically applications that involve contingent responses from an adult (i.e., timely reactions to what a child says or does), can help children retain taught information. This responsiveness, when coupled with age-appropriate content, timing and intensity of action, can teach new words to 24-month-olds. There is early evidence that interactive 'learn-to-read' apps and e-books can build early literacy by providing practice with letters, phonics and word recognition [1]. However, while screens may help with language learning when quality content is co-viewed and discussed with a parent or caregiver, preschoolers learn best (i.e., in expressive and vocabulary terms) from live, direct and dynamic interactions with caring adults.

## Risks for Development

Research examining TV exposure has demonstrated associations, although not direct causal relationships, between heavy early screen exposure (more than 2 hours/day by infants younger than 12 months in one study) and significant language delays. Evidence of an association between screen time and attentional difficulties is mixed, with negative effects only clearly apparent when exposure is extremely high (i.e., more than 7 hours/day). High exposure to background TV has been found to negatively affect language use and acquisition, attention, cognitive development and executive function in children younger than 5 years. It also reduces the amount and quality of parent–child interaction and distracts from play. While e-books have been shown to offer benefits with children's reading engagement, parents appear to use fewer reading strategies during these interactions. Further, e-book sound effects and animation can interfere with story comprehension and event sequencing in preschoolers, when compared with paper books.

Some studies associate prolonged TV viewing with lower cognitive abilities, especially related to short-term memory, early reading and math skills and language development. Fast-paced or violent content can negatively impact executive function, and these effects may be cumulative. The inability of young children (especially those younger than 2 years) to distinguish everyday reality from what happens on screen, along with their efforts to make sense of competing experiential realms, may interfere with and impede executive function.

## What Makes the Difference? Minimizing and Mitigating Screen Time

Because there are no proven benefits of media exposure for infants and toddlers, and some known developmental risks, parents should minimize young children's screen time. Minimizing screen time leaves more time for face-to-face interactions, which is how young children learn best.

When children watch educational, age-appropriate content with an engaged adult, screen time can be a positive learning experience. When adults mitigate screen time, they:

- Watch with children. Adults can connect what is being viewed with real life, and build language and cognitive skills, such as attention, memory and thinking. Shared screen time also avoids the disadvantages of solitary viewing.
- Actively curate children's screen activities by prioritizing educational content or apps, avoiding mainstream or commercial programs and using a media classification rating (e.g., the Canadian Home Video Rating System) to guide viewing choices.
- Combine touch screen use with creative or active play.



## The Psychosocial Impacts of Screen Media

Co-viewing quality screen content can affect more than children's learning. Studies have shown that parents can positively influence children's social adaptive skills, sleep patterns and behaviours by being involved with and setting limits on their screen time. Television research shows that socioeconomic factors can shape the content and mediation of screen use. Further, TV viewing has been found to be negatively associated with school readiness skills, especially as family income decreases. However, the time spent viewing—across diverse middle-income households, for example—is stable. In fact, socioeconomic status appears to have little bearing on the degree to which families comply with current screen guidelines. Raising awareness around how children learn best and their need for screen time limits is important for all families, regardless of economic circumstances.

### Potential psychosocial benefits

Quality content can enhance social and language skills for all children aged 2 years and older, particularly for children living in poverty or who are otherwise disadvantaged. Educational TV reaches children in lower-income homes almost as much as higher-income homes, and among children whose families own a laptop or mobile device, barriers to accessing and using educational content have almost disappeared. Well-designed, age-appropriate educational programs and screen activities can be powerfully pro-social, helping children to learn antiviolence attitudes, empathy, tolerance and respect. Appropriately used, screen time can calm a child who is overexcited or distressed (e.g., during a medical procedure). But screen learning can affect behaviour both positively and negatively, so ensuring quality content is crucial.

Developing a family 'media action plan' can help protect and reinforce quality family time [58]. Ideally, planning begins prenatally; accounts for the health, education and entertainment needs of each child and family member; includes screen-based activities in child care; and is reviewed periodically. Setting meaningful limits when children are young and sharing them as a family is far easier than cutting back screen time when children are older. Studies have found that parents' comfort level with saying 'no' to their children's requests to play games on screen, along with their own media-related beliefs, intentions and attitudes, are key components of constructive, positive limit-setting. For children—and parents—off-screen time is critical for developing essential life skills such as self-regulation, creativity and learning through physical and imaginative play.

### Psychosocial risks

Recent studies confirm a strong association between parents' screen time and that of their children, raising concerns that increasing media presence is displacing quality (face-to-face) parent-child and family interactions. A recent study of smartphone use in fast-food restaurants observed that as time spent by parents on their phones increased, so too did the likelihood of children acting out to gain attention, often leading to negative interactions. Another study found that parents who allow 1- to 4-year-old children to use their smartphones frequently also report offering the phone to reward or distract more often. Consequently, their children ask for the phone—and become upset if refused—more often.



Parents report that their own use of mobile technology demands more intense attention than other distractions, such as reading books or watching TV. Smartphones blur the line between work and home life, timing is unpredictable and responding often requires emotional investment. In a recent study, parents reported that shifting attention between screens and family life can be stressful, tiring and reduces their ability to interact 'in the moment' with children.

Recent evidence suggests an association between elevated levels of TV exposure at age 2 and self-reported victimization, social isolation, proactive aggression and anti-social behaviours in middle childhood. Excessive TV viewing (more than 2 hours/day) has been clearly associated with early childhood self-regulation difficulties. Such

effects could be more pronounced in children with special behavioural needs, and self-perpetuating because parents are more likely to use screen media to pacify a child with challenging behaviours. Research shows that excessive levels of screen media exposure are associated more strongly with low levels of stimulation in the home and low parental involvement than with socioeconomic position.

While quality educational programming is a leading mitigator of psychosocial risk on any screen, studies show that children's access to and choice of optimal content peaks early: at 2 to 4 years old. As children age, they are more likely to view entertainment programming.

### **What makes the difference? Mindful use of screen time**

Children younger than 5 years learn best from live, immersive interactions with family members and caregivers. Given the choice, they will nearly always opt for talking, playing or being read to over screen time in any form. By using screen time mindfully, parents and caregivers:

- Actively enhance—and limit—media encounters by choosing them together and purposefully ('Let's watch or play this content, at this time, for this reason').
- Limit screen use in public places and during family routines, such as at meals. Family times are prime opportunities for social learning.
- Select content from quality, non-commercial sources, to minimize exposure to advertising.
- Pay attention to messages about gender, body image, violence, diversity and social issues when choosing content.

### **The Impacts of Screen Media on Physical Health**

For preschool children, physical activity is associated with improved measures of health, while sedentary behaviour is associated with less favourable health outcomes.

#### **Potential benefits for physical health**

Children's screen time does not have to be passive; digital media use can encourage and complement physical activity. Especially after age 3, children respond to activity-based programming when it is fun, designed for them and encourages imitation or participation. One study found that active video games could acutely increase light-to-moderate or moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (PA) in the short term. Families and child care programs may consider using fun, age-appropriate movement (e.g., yoga or dance) and fitness apps or console games to integrate more PA into daily routines. Mobile devices with apps for exploring the natural world can enhance outdoor PA. Quality content connects on- with off-screen experiences, fosters engagement with caregivers and peers and supports active, imaginative play.

#### **Risks for physical health**

Although evidence for an association between screen time and body mass index in very young children is inconclusive, several studies have suggested that risks for overweight established by early screen use can persist into later life. TV viewing in the early years can become routine, placing children who are heavy viewers at higher risk for being sedentary or overweight. One 2012 Canadian study found that children who watched just 1 hour of TV/day were 50% more likely to be overweight than those who watched less. Another study from 2009 measuring PA and body fat in middle-class preschoolers linked TV viewing to higher body fat, and found this relationship did not change when children's variable PA rates were taken into account.

While reinforcing sedentary behaviours, commercial TV also exposes children to advertisements for unhealthy foods and encourages snacking, which increases overall food intake. A 2012 systematic review of TV watching and adverse dietary effects in children 2 to 6 years old found most studies reported negative effects with as little as 1 hour/day of viewing.

The amount of time spent viewing screens before bedtime is associated with an increase in sleep problems for this age group, and evidence suggests that volume of screen time—rather than content alone—is detrimental to sleep patterns. The presence of any electronic device in a bedroom is associated with fewer minutes of sleep per night, due in part to melatonin suppression.

### **What makes the difference? Modelling screen time**

Children younger than 5 years require active play and quality family time to develop essential life skills, such as language, self-regulation and creative thinking. Regardless of age, children should not have to compete with screens for parental attention. When parents model healthy screen habits, they:

- Minimize their own screen use when young children are present, especially for mealtimes, play and other prime opportunities for social learning.
- Prioritize interactions with children through conversation, play and healthy, active routines.
- Choose when to use media together, and turn off screens when they are not in use.
- Help children to recognize and question advertising messages, stereotyping and other problematic content, and ensure that media used in the presence of children is free of such content.

### **Recommendations**

To promote child health and development in a digital world, physicians and other health care providers should counsel parents and caregivers of young children on the appropriate use of screen time. Specific recommendations include the following:

#### **Minimize screen time:**

- Screen time for children younger than 2 years is not recommended.
- For children 2 to 5 years, limit routine or regular screen time to less than 1 hour per day.
- Ensure that sedentary screen time is not a routine part of child care for children younger than 5 years.
- Maintain daily 'screen-free' times, especially for family meals and book-sharing.
- Avoid screens for at least 1 hour before bedtime, given the potential for melatonin-suppressing effects.



#### **Mitigate (reduce) the risks associated with screen time:**

- Be present and engaged when screens are used and, whenever possible, co-view with children.
- Be aware of content and prioritize educational, age-appropriate and interactive programming.
- Use parenting strategies that teach self-regulation, calming and limit-setting.

#### **As a family, be mindful about the use of screen time:**

- Conduct a self-assessment of current screen habits and develop a family media plan for when, how and where screens may (and may not) be used.
- Help children recognize and question advertising messages, stereotyping and other problematic content.
- Remember: too much screen time means lost opportunities for teaching and learning.
- Be reassured that there is no evidence to support introducing technology at an early age.

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### Adults should model healthy screen use:

- Choose healthy alternatives, such as reading, outdoor play and creative, hands-on activities.
- Turn off their devices at home during family time.
- Turn off screens when not in use and avoid background TV.

Modified article, Source: [www.cps.ca](http://www.cps.ca)

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### 5 Ways to get Kids to Talk About their Day

For the first two years of my daughter Sophie's school career, she was so chatty at the end of the day. I barely even had to ask, "How was your day?" and she'd be off, recounting everything from the morning announcements to what books her kindergarten teacher read at circle time to who she played with at recess. She held nothing back (and when my husband came home, she'd start all over again). I found I looked forward to the daily report.

But early on in grade one, I noticed a shift to a more guarded rundown of events. I got the dreaded "Fine" whenever I asked, "How was your day?" and, when she did divulge, she often focused only on playground dynamics (and while I wanted to hear about her friends, I wanted to hear about life inside the classroom, too). I tried prompting her in different ways with little success, so I went into what I call like to call MRM—Mama Research Mode. I asked both friends with older kids and teacher friends for their tips, and I searched both the internet and the library (I love good old-fashioned books) for insight. Read on for the five most helpful tricks I found for getting kids to talk about their day in a meaningful way.

**Ask questions that can't be answered with one or two words, or even a single sentence:** This means finding alternatives to "How was your day?" I eventually landed on, "Tell me the best and worst parts of your day. Start with the best." Asking for the best first meant that we focussed on the positives, and sometimes she'd get so wrapped up in a story she'd forget to move on to the negative parts of her day. There was the odd time, on a few particularly bad afternoons, that we handled the worst first, and that's okay, too.

**Make Your Questions Specific:** Ask about French class or the day's science lesson. Find out what sport she played in gym class, or what he has for homework. (If you make a point to know what's happening in the school or classroom by reading the newsletters that come home or the emails from the teacher, you'll be able to come up with detailed questions in a snap.)

**Focus On Character Building:** If you aren't getting anywhere with your line of questioning, change direction. Instead of focusing on events, focus on your kiddo's character traits. Ask, "What did you do that was brave today?" or "How did you show kindness today?"

**Respect When She Doesn't Want To Talk:** There were a few times that I couldn't get Soph to open up, no matter what I tried. Eventually I realized that this was alright. Instead of getting frustrated, I'd just say, "Okay. If you want to talk later, I'll be here." Often, she'd open up at bedtime instead.

**Share About Your Day, Too:** I found that if I told Sophie about how my day was going, she was more willing to tell me about hers, too. Modeling the behaviour you want to foster in your child is always a good idea.

By Katie Dupuis, Source [www.parentscanada.com](http://www.parentscanada.com).

Life's problems wouldn't be called "hurdles" if there wasn't a way to get over them.

## The Importance of Teaching Resilience

One wobbly step at a time, my one-year-old is learning to walk. Right behind her, hovering nervously lest she slip or topple over (or, you know, a bird of prey sweeps down to snatch her), I am learning to relax and let her go, so she actually has room to practise and improve. The metaphor isn't lost on me. "Learning to walk is one of the best examples of what parents should do throughout their kid's entire childhood," says developmental psychologist Dona Matthews, who advises the last thing I want to hear as a non-negotiable: "You need to let her fall. The falling-and-picking-yourself-up process is critical; otherwise you don't learn."

In Matthews' world, this process is called resiliency, and it's gaining tons of traction, legitimacy and attention in the parenting space. "Resiliency is the idea that the child can withstand stress when bad things happen," explains Dr. Michael Ungar, director at the Resilience Research Centre at Dalhousie University. This might sound almost too obvious, but in practise, parents aren't doing so well: A new study from the University of Minnesota found helicopter parenting—the nervous, hands-on, over-protective parenting we're prone to in unpredictable times like ours—actually negatively affects kids, potentially making them less able to regulate their emotions and behaviour, more likely to act out and less able to deal with the challenges of growing up. In short, they lack resiliency. The good news is that building resiliency means I actually get to parent a little less (or at least a little more passively). Ungar lovingly calls this "benign neglect" and— besides pouring a cup of coffee and putting my feet up instead of chasing my soon-to-be walker around—there are many moments of so-called bad parenting that are actually examples of good parenting. To give your kids a resiliency headstart, which may also have a side benefit of turning out more relaxed moms and dads, skip these dos and try these don'ts.

### Don't Shower Them with Endless Praise

Of course your kid is the smartest, sweetest, most beautiful on the planet, but do yourself a favour and don't tell them so every damn minute of the day. "Tell a kid that they are oh-so-smart all the time and watch what happens in a moment that they're not-so-smart," says Matthews. "'Smart' becomes their identify, and to look smart all the time they start avoiding challenges where they might not be as smart." Ditto for cuteness and athleticism— both innate qualities that they didn't earn and can't change, so constantly highlighting them ultimately undermines their resiliency. Not that all positive encouragement is off the table, of course: "Instead, you want to praise things they can control—a skill, an effort, something that with intention they can improve," says Matthews. The more specific, the better.

### Do Take Your Eyes off Them (Yes, Even for One Minute)

"I used to think I should be watching my kids every second," says writer Kim Brooks. But by the time her son was four, happily strapped into his car seat with iPad in hand, Brooks felt fine dashing into the store. "I was at my parents' home, in the suburbs. It was a cool day, a safe area, the car was locked, he was fine." A nosy neighbour with a camera, however, disagreed and called the cops. Alongside 100 hours of court-ordered community service, she wrote *Small Animals: Parenthood in the Age of Fear*, arguing for her son's right to some freedom (even if it comes with some risk). While you might not leave your kiddos in the car just yet, parents of even small children can and should cultivate a sense of independence and comfort with some risk just by plopping a toy in front of them and going to another room for a minute. "It's important to give them this alone time because it helps them learn to self-direct, organize their time, reflect and experience their own imaginations and solve problems on their own."

### Don't Treat Your Kids Equally

"Equal and fair are two very different concepts," says Alyson Schafer, parenting expert and author of *Honey, I Wrecked the Kids*. Kids have unique needs, skills and past-times that will require varying levels of time, effort and



money. Veto the notion that all these should be even by right. “If you don’t make this clear, you’ll raise bean counters. He got a book, I get a book!” It’s irritating already, firstly, but more profound is the very anti-resilient message it sends: “This breeds entitlement and creates a mindset that kids are hard done by. The truth is the world doesn’t owe you a book or anything else,” says Schafer. Resilient kids learn to actively seek what they want rather than passively wait for its arrival.

### **Do Let Them Talk to Strangers**

“Stranger danger” is probably every parent’s most illogical and overblown fear— the odds of stranger abduction in Canada are somewhere around 1 in 5.8 million. “You should actually encourage your kids to talk to strangers,” says Ungar. Not the “strange strangers,” he clarifies, “but your kid needs to know how to interact with sales clerks and coaches and neighbours.” In Brooks’ research, she’s heard overprotective parents are shocked with their 15-year-old can’t hold confident eye contact with a cashier. Don’t let it get so scary by fostering these relationships early—the more, the better. “Kids need a rich network of people they are engaged with, and not just peers but adults too,” says Ungar.

### **Don’t Be Proactive (Reactive Is Good Enough)**

As you near the teen years, explains Matthews, parenting is less hands-on and more about vigilance. “While little kids need your full attention, bigger kids need to be let go.” Stop telling them what to do, stop solving their problems for them, and let them suffer the consequences of their actions. “Instead of being proactive, be reactive,” says Matthews.

Make sure they know you’re present and aware, but wait for them to come to you for advice. Wherever possible, stay out of their peer relationships, don’t call anyone else’s parents (how embarrassing!), and let kids handle their own homework and school activities. Help if you can, but don’t solve everything yourself— it sends the not-subtle-message that they can’t do it on their own. “The resiliency lesson is you struggled but you managed,” says Schafer. “Then when life throws them some speed bumps, as is to be expected, they’re made of all the right stuff to handle them.”

Rosemary Counter, Source: [www.parentscanada.com](http://www.parentscanada.com)

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### **How to Help your Child Handle Stage Fright**

I recently asked a young girl who was talking to me about her anxiety, if she could remember the first time she experienced the symptoms associated with it. She easily recalled standing at the front of her grade 4 classroom when the first wave of panic passed through her. She said that her heart beat more rapidly, her mouth became dry and her hands felt weak. She managed to get through her short presentation, but the experience left her not wanting to feel the same ever again. That evening, she shared what had happened with her mother and her mother offered to speak to the teacher.



In response to the mother’s call, the teacher suggested that instead of standing in front of her peers again, and in order to avoid feeling anxious, that he would accommodate her by allowing her to present to him alone during a lunch break. Both mom and daughter were relieved to hear this.

However, two years later, and feeling anxious in other situations such as when she was asked to take a small part in the end of year school play and even when a waiter in a restaurant asked what she wanted to order, her mother called on me to help. A bright young girl and very self aware, she responded very maturely to my question about whether or not the accommodations were helping her overcome her anxiety. She had already concluded that they weren’t and in fact, realized that they may be making the anxiety worse. When asked what she felt was the best

way to overcome her anxiety of speaking in front of her classmates, she astutely shared that in order to overcome her anxiety, she needed to do what she was afraid of. I was very impressed that she responded in this way because she was absolutely right.

For children who are younger, I sometimes share the story of the fear monster and how avoiding him only makes him bigger and stronger. It is like, I say, feeding the fear monster. The only way to have the fear monster shrivel up and disappear is to confront him. However, I know that this is often easier said than done. Its hard to confront the fear monster if you don't have the tools to ward him off or the self confidence to stand up to him. So, often children are helped by recognizing the warning signs of feeling afraid, where in their bodies the feelings are most intense and how to calm themselves. They are also helped by knowing that once fear has reached a ten out of ten, it won't get any higher and so it has to come down. They are also helped by knowing that fear is a normal human emotion and that they don't have to get rid of fear, just know how to face it.

Often, its helpful to give children the words to say inside of their heads. Words such as, "I know why I am feeling this way. I don't want to embarrass myself in front of my peers. However, nothing bad is going to happen. I wont freak out or run out of the classroom. All of my classmates probably feel the same as me when they're up here, too. I'm going to do the best that I can and when its over, I will feel proud of myself for getting through it and each time I do, it will get a little bit easier and I will feel less anxious." I know that this is a long script, but depending on your child, it can be condensed or just discussed ahead of time.

Most children (and adults too), prefer not to have all eyes on them. Most also fear forgetting their lines or steps in a dance. Some are afraid that some catastrophic event will happen while they're being watched. If your child falls within this majority, try to help him with the knowledge that this is quite normal – plenty of people feel this way! With coaching from you, or in more extreme situations, getting professional help, he can work towards developing the confidence to confront what he is afraid of and not let fear stop him from participating in regular activities.

## **Through The Ages**

### **Preschool**

If a preschooler is showing signs of being anxious, just know that this is an entirely normal developmental phase and don't push her too hard to get over it. However, if the anxiety persists beyond the normal stage, then you might consider your role in helping or hindering the anxiety. Of course, with this age group, you can't approach fear from a cognitive behavioural perspective as you would with an older child who can reflect and process thoughts differently.

### **School Aged**

Normalizing fear is important. However, in age appropriate language, helping your child recognize that running away from fear would make it worse, is important. Remind your child of a time when she tackled something she was afraid of and how this helped her feel more confident the next time. If your child can't remember a time that she tackled fear, perhaps you can share a time when you did and how this impacted you.

### **Teens**

Teens are particularly self conscious and it doesn't take much for them to feel that all eyes are on them, and it makes them especially uncomfortable when they really are. This age group is particularly able to employ more of a cognitive behavioural approach when addressing fear and are able to reflect on what they are feeling, when and how.

## How to Teach Your Kids to Be Good Sports



Here's the thing about sportsmanship—any coach will tell you it's an integral part of the game (any game, really—board games to the Olympic Games) for beginners and seasoned athletes alike. And it's something that needs to be taught from a young age. It's the responsibility of coaches, players and parents to ensure that when the buzzer sounds and the game ends, the victors and those who have been defeated engage in that all-important handshake and high-five. "My definition of sportsmanship is polite and fair behaviour, both on and off the field," says Bates. "Participants need to honour their sport by promoting integrity, self-discipline, honest competition and always respecting their opponent." We asked the coach how to teach your kids to be champions, whether they win or lose.

### **Be A Gracious Winner. Be A Gracious Loser**

This isn't news but losing sucks. Full stop. And learning to lose is a skill kids need to learn, just like riding a bike and catching a ball. This isn't always an easy concept for kids (or, let's be honest, adults), and it's about more than waiting your turn and not sassing your opponent. Tell them that while it's OK to feel sad and disappointed when they lose, it's not OK to accuse the other team of cheating, throwing tantrums or storming off the field. This one's a biggie—kids need to understand that the game is no longer fun if they don't lose—and win—with grace.

### **Show Respect - For The Game And Teammates**

You know what they say: "cheaters never win." Explaining fair play is probably one of the first lessons you'll teach. Kids should know that disagreements happen all the time in sports but it's important to follow the rules. Good sportsmanship is also about showing up for practices and games on time, helping teammates, listening to coaches and being willing to sit out and root for fellow players when it's not your turn on the ice, field, etc.

### **Model It**

Monkey see, monkey do, right? "In many cases players will emulate their parents. That means you must lead by example and keep it fun, whether your team wins or loses," says Bates. Of course this also means not taking the game too seriously—no trash talking, no fighting in the bleachers, no arguing with refs. "When players are beginning to learn a sport, seeing and hearing parents screaming at umps, for example, sends a message that this is acceptable behaviour. Remember, there is a correct way to show support for your child and others while respecting the game—cheer don't jeer," he says.

## Executive Members of the Regional Local Associations

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