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Leaves

How silently they tumble down
And come to rest upon the ground
To lay a carpet, rich and rare,
Beneath the trees without a care,
Content to sleep, their work well done,
Colors gleaming in the sun.



At other times, they wildly fly
Until they nearly reach the sky.
Twisting, turning through the air
Till all the trees stand stark and bare.
Exhausted, drop to earth below
To wait, like children, for the snow.



Elsie N. Brady



Bonfire Night



Remembrance Day

LEST WE FORGET

"At the going down of the
sun and in the morning,
We will remember them"



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Lori Hudson (Vice Chair)
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See back cover for a listing of Local Associations throughout the province.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Central Region

Dawn Evelley
Gambo

Coralee Roberts
Triton

Labrador Region

Lori Hudson
Happy Valley-Goose Bay

Brenda Jararuse
Nain

Grenfell Region

Tena Reardon
Roddickton

Marilyn Bridle
Red Bay

Western Region

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Angela Blundon
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Heather Bartlett
St. John's

Edward Nuna
Sheshatshiu

Youth Representatives

Brittani Dixon
Victoria

Jessica Wall
St. John's

Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development

Provincial Representative

Lisa Brushett
St. John's

Regional Representative

Jennifer Sullivan
St. John's

Greetings from Board Chair

Happy Foster Families Month! What an honor it has been to be on the Board for the past 5 years. What an even greater honor to become your Chair for the next two years. My name is Angela Blundon and I am a Board member for the St. John's region. I have been a parent for 17 years and a foster parent for 6. Being a Chair, foster parent and a mom in 2020 has taken on a new look, a new light and certainly new direction. For me, I have spent much of my time reflecting, and in absolute awe, on how resilient our children live in a world of uncertainty, fear, and disruption. Children in care face this daily and my mind is blown on how well they survive it. For some of us, this was something we never had to endure until Covid 19.

As your Chair for the next two years I have big shoes to fill. Edie our previous Chair was a fountain of knowledge, gave the greatest encouragement and guidance and was always so welcoming. She has mentored all of our Board members to thrive as we worked together to meet our responsibilities as directors. The stones has been laid and I fully intent to continue along this path of supporting the Board, the Association and foster parents as we all work together in the best interests of children. Our next in person meeting and training day will be in Grand Falls-Windsor the weekend of November 20, 2020. I encourage all foster parents and social workers in the area to come out on November 21 to participate in this learning opportunity. There is so much to learn, not only from workshop presenters but from other foster parents as well. I have gained tremendous knowledge over the years from these in person sessions.

We are still looking for a foster parent to join this wonderful Board from the CBS area. Please give some serious thought to this opportunity and connect with Diane, our Executive Director with any questions you may have. We would certainly appreciate your support!

It is hard to believe that as we read this newsletter, we are well into October! Our children are back in school, the campers are put away for the season and Fall is very much in the air. I hope everyone has done well with the restrictions and changes Covid 19 has brought to our lives. I think as foster parents we are experts at working with uncertainties, but it does come with fatigue. We are foster parents because we love big and give wholeheartedly so remember to also be kind to yourself.

I am looking forward to seeing people in person again soon. I encourage all of you to reach out to the Association when you need support. It is a great resource your support system. I can't thank you all enough for everything that you do, the love that you endlessly give and the difference you make to the families you reach.

God Bless

Angela Blundon

"Self care is giving the world the best of you, instead of what's left of you." - Katie Reed



To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Happy Foster Families Month!



MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development, I would like to recognize October as Foster Families Month.

Currently, 600 foster families throughout our province provide safe, nurturing homes for children and youth in care.

Foster families play a vital role in helping to make children and youth in care feel protected and secure.

The role of being a foster parent is also important as foster families support the relationship of the children and youth they are caring for with their families. This allows for connections to be maintained and to support reunification when it is in the best interests of the child or youth.

Foster families are truly remarkable as their commitment and encouragement for the children and youth in their care is truly inspiring.

From helping a child find their smile to joining the child's parent for a doctor's appointment, foster families are making a difference in so many lives.

Let me also acknowledge the Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association's staff and board members, as well as social workers and many others who are part of the fostering team.

Thank you to all foster families throughout Newfoundland and Labrador for sharing their compassion and dedication to the children and youth who need it most.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Warr'.

Hon. Brian Warr
Children, Seniors and Social Development

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The following reports were presented at our Annual General Meeting on September 27, 2020.

Report from Chair of the Board

2019-2020 was a very interesting year for the Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association, especially the last few months with Snowmageddon and COVID-19! Following our last AGM, we welcomed Edward Nuna from Sheshatshiu as a new community representative and Brittani Dixon from Victoria as a youth representative. Thank you to Edward and Brittani for joining us; we are so grateful you are willing to share your knowledge and lived experience with us. We also had two directors leave the Board this year, Cathy Morris who represented the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development (CSSD) and Nicole Shuglo who represented the North Coast of Labrador. Angela Blundon also stepped into the role of our representative on the Canadian Foster Families Association Board this year. Thank you Angela, we know you will represent us well.

As it is the Board's responsibility to focus on the mission and vision for the Association, the development of policy and procedures and ongoing strategic planning; these areas were a focus of each Board Meeting. I would like to thank our Executive Director, Diane Molloy, for her consistent work with her team to ensure we all stayed on task and for assisting us in reaching the goals we set out to achieve this year.

In October 2019, the Association launched not just a week to celebrate foster families but an entire month which has given us a terrific foray into a new year of possibilities. This year we held the proclamation signing with Minister Dempster at the office; this location allowed the media to come and get their sound bites for the news and the opportunity for a few interviews. It was terrific to have the proclamation signing supported by foster parents, the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development staff, and the media. On October 5, foster families gathered to celebrate at Corpus Christi Parish Centre in St. John's. We were all welcomed to a well-organized and well-attended event with lots for the children and foster parents alike to participate in. Many thanks once again to Martin Gaulton for donating his time and catering services for this event. Appreciation is also expressed to Susan Walsh, Deputy Minister of CSSD for bringing greetings on behalf of the Department. Thank you so much to Diane, Amy and Lori for a great afternoon!

Diane and I travelled to Ottawa on October 20 to attend meetings with the Child Welfare League of Canada. I was very pleased to represent the Association at the Learning Community on Reconciliation. It was an amazing two days of fellowship and learning. Later in the Fall, the Board traveled to Clarenville for a Training Day and in-person Board meeting. The workshop topic for the day was Understanding and Healing the Impact of Trauma, delivered by Renee Piercey and Natalie Ginn from Waypoints. Thank you to everyone who was able to attend. I hope you enjoyed the session and learned something new and of value to assist you in your daily engagement with children in your care. We also had a Board Development session which was facilitated by Bettina Ford from the Community Sector Council. It was great to meet our two newest Directors in person for the first time, Brittani Dixon and Edward Nuna. We also had to say so-long with a gift of appreciation to Board members Cathy Morris and Nicole Shuglo. Their active participation and support around the board table will be missed - thank you ladies! At our November meeting, we also reviewed the progress we are making with our Strategic Plan and approved a new Reconciliation Plan for the Association.



We were very disappointed to have to cancel our in-person Training Day and Board meeting in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and then our Annual Symposium due to the COVID-19 crisis. We had such great training planned and the Symposium was gearing up for another fantastic event. I am very confident the 2021 Symposium is going to be outstanding! The Symposium would have also been the time for our Annual General Meeting (AGM),

however because we could not gather for that either, the current Board Members agreed to stay in their positions until such time as we are able to meet, conduct the business of the AGM.

I have been a Director on the Board for five years and was honored to serve as Chair for four of these years. It is now time to pass the baton. I have enjoyed my time on the Board and feel proud to have accomplished several organizational goals I set at the beginning of my tenure, specifically: enhancing the Board Orientation process for new Directors; ensuring ongoing Board Development; updating by-laws; updating the Policy Manual; a new three year Strategic Plan; and increased Board Engagement. I wish to thank all the Board Members for their on-going support and contribution to the work of the Association and the outstanding staff we are so privileged to have, Diane Molloy, Lori Petersen and Amy Powell. You made my job as Chair a pleasure.

Thank you to the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development for their support of the Association and their commitment to our children in care and the foster families who care for them. And to Waypoints for their support to our families through the Foster Families Support Program and ongoing training to engage, enlighten and inform our Foster Families!

I am grateful and humbled by the opportunity to have served our Foster Families in this capacity and I wish you all the very best and brightest future!

Eddie Newton

**"Everyone wants to be the sun to brighten up someone's life,
but why not be the moon to shine on someone's darkest hour?" - Unknown**

Executive Director Report

Our 2019-2020 year was anything but ordinary. Following a week long state of emergency in January, we returned to the office with mountains of snow everywhere and we ended the fiscal year with a Pandemic that led to a public health state of emergency where we were all living in bubbles and social distancing. For the first time in 18 years we were unable to hold our annual Symposium in June and our AGM is now being held virtually. In spite of how it ended, we have accomplished a great deal this year and continued to make progress on all the goals in our Strategic Plan. We have also learned that we can face any challenges that arise and adapt how we do our work to continue to meet the needs of our foster families.

This year we provided personal support to 180 families which was an increase of 110 from last year. We also provided allegation support to 13 families, 3 more than last year. We responded to 158 inquiries which was an increase of 40 and were pleased to welcome 45 new families to the fostering community. Our Peer Mentoring Program continues to support new foster parents as they start their fostering journey.

Our 2018-2019 Symposium was very successful with an increase in participants from previous years. We incorporated greater diversity in our workshops, speakers and entertainment which received very positive feedback from those in attendance. We offered a Training Day in Clarendville in November facilitated by Renee Piercey and Natalie Ginn from Waypoints. The topic was "Understanding and Healing the Impact of Trauma" and we had twenty-eight people in attendance. Our second Training day for the year was scheduled for March in Happy Valley-Goose Bay but had to be postponed due to Covid-19 concerns. The importance of ongoing professional development cannot be overstated and we encourage all foster parents to attend these educational opportunities when they are offered.

The Waypoints Supporting Foster Parent Pilot continues to be an excellent resource and has been very positive for our families and the children they care for. A second evaluation has been completed and we are hoping that

the program will be expanded further across the province this year. The Pilot currently supports 74 families and this year 17 training sessions were offered. We want to thank family support workers, Shelley Sullivan, Mary-Anne Smith and Kim Furlong for their commitment to our foster families. They are the best! We also express appreciation to the Waypoints management team, Rick Kelly, Jackie Kelly, and Renee Piercey for their ongoing support for this program and our work. Appreciation is also expressed to the other members of the Advisory Committee, Mary Furey, Kevin Greene, Tanya Knight and Karen Burke. We were sorry to see Cathy Morris leave the Committee in December as she was one of the original members. We have recently welcomed Lisa Brushett as a new member.

Our community outreach was quite extensive and diverse this year. We continue to be a member of Coalition Against the Sexual Exploitation of Youth. We increased the number of class presentations at the School of Social Work and the number of social work students we met with at the office to talk about fostering. We participated in the Wellness Expo in Paradise and walked in the PRIDE parade for the first time. On June 21, 2019, we participated in National Indigenous Peoples Day celebrations and the unveiling of the Heart Garden at Government House. Heart Gardens honor all Indigenous children and their families who were impacted by the residential school system. The PRIDE parade and Indigenous Day activities were wonderful opportunities to celebrate diversity and promote the importance of inclusion.



We participated in a Youth Engagement Session organized by the Community Sector Council and a Strategic Visioning Session organized by the Jimmy Pratt Foundation. We also participated in a roundtable at the School of Social Work on Indigenous child welfare issues and promising practices. We had the opportunity to meet with President Johannes Lampe of Nunatsiavut and also visited the Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network and the People of the Dawn Indigenous Friendship Center in Stephenville. We also met with Innu Round Table Secretariat staff in Sheshatshiu and Natuashish. We did community presentations in Sheshatshiu and Port Aux Basques; a presentation for staff at the Royal Bank in Paradise; and met with the women's group of the Pentecostal Tabernacle in Port Au Grave. We renewed our membership with the Canadian Foster Family Association, Youth in Care Canada and the Child Welfare League of Canada.

Regional travel continues to be an important piece of our work as it provides an opportunity not only to meet with our foster parents and but also to offer our Different Kinds of Families presentation to students. This year we had meetings in St. John's, Harbour Grace, Marystown, Clarenville, Bonavista, Springdale, Gambo and for the first time Summerford and Fogo. We also met with foster parents in Deer Lake, Roddickton, St. Anthony, Corner Brook and Stephenville. We travelled to Sheshatshiu and the North Coast in the Fall and thanks to good weather, we were able to get into all four communities we had scheduled; Natuashish, Nain, Hopedale and for the first time Rigolet. We planned to return to the Labrador for meetings in Goose Bay, Makkovik and Postville in March but this did not happen due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We also visited 38 schools, 19 were new and 19 were repeat visits. 4696 students had the opportunity to learn about foster care inclusion and diversity. Due to Covid 19, 10 other scheduled school visits had to be cancelled. Our Different Kinds of Families presentation continues to get very positive feedback from students and school personnel.

This year we were able to invest in a much needed data management system for the Association. The development and implementation of ARMS was a lengthy process but we are very pleased with the outcome. We began using the new system in January and we were so fortunate to have it when we started working from home. At the end of the 2020-2021 year we will be able to provide more detailed statistics on the nature of the support provided. I want to specifically thank Amy Powell, our administrative staff member for researching and finding the most effective system to meet our needs and for the huge piece of work in transferring all our information over to the new system.

Foster Families Month was celebrated throughout the Province in October. We held the proclamation signing at our office on a weekday and the Kick-off on the weekend. We had a great turn out for both of these events. Because the proclamation signing was on a weekday, both CBC and NTV attended and did feature stories on the evening news. Throughout the month, we used our facebook page to share video clips from foster parents about their fostering journey. This generated a very positive response and many people had the opportunity to get an inside glimpse into the life of a foster family. I want to thank the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development for their efforts to ensure all foster families were recognized in some way for the valuable role they play in the child protection system. Special thanks to Jennifer Barnes, Director of In Care and Adoptions, former Minister Lisa Dempster who participated in the proclamation signing, Deputy Minister Susan Walsh who brought greetings at the Kick-off and all CSSD regional staff who planned or participated in recognition activities.

Foster parents had an opportunity in February to participate in a teleconference for the Adoption Act review and we also submitted a written brief with a number of suggestions for ways to improve the foster parent adoption process. We developed a presentation for social workers employed by CSSD on the role of the Association which was recorded by the Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning at Memorial University through the support of the Department and the School of Social Work. It will be used in the orientation of new social workers and will also be available to current social workers through Share Point.

This year we met with CSSD staff in Bay Roberts, Harbour Grace, Marystown, Bonavista, Clarendville, Lewisporte, St. Anthony, Deer Lake, Roddickton, Corner Brook, Stephenville, Port Aux Basques, Nain, Hopedale and Natuashish. We also met with Assistant Deputy Minister, Linda Clemens-Spurrell to discuss a number of matters; some related to our strategic plan and others more general in nature. We also talked about the importance of training for foster parents and social workers on developing cultural connection plans.



We are so appreciative of the positive working relationship we have with the Department; which has been particularly evident during the current pandemic. Working together, we were able to keep foster parents well informed and address any challenges that arose. When the Department acted quickly to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and families, foster parents came up with new and creative ways to ensure ongoing access for children. When in-person visits were reinstated, the Department provided clear guidelines that helped ease the worries of our foster parents. Jennifer Barnes and her team worked tirelessly during this time to maintain open communication and ensure foster families were provided the information they needed. I want to thank Jennifer for

her responsiveness to all my inquiries, and her ongoing support for the work of the Association.



I am very pleased to share that we now have a Reconciliation Plan for the Association. This plan identifies actions we are taking in response to the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Hearings. Edie, the Chair of our Board and I travelled to Ottawa in October to participate in a Learning Community on Reconciliation organized by the Child Welfare League of Canada. We joined with others from across the country to talk about the important work of Reconciliation and started developing our own Reconciliation Plans. This work was led by Elder Albert Dumont and a group of Youth Mentors who shared their personal stories. In November, our Board approved a

Reconciliation Plan for the Association which will guide some of our work over the next few years. We also continue to participate in quarterly meetings with the Reconciliation Learning Community Working Group.

We had an increased media presence this year. In addition to the stories carried by NTV and CBC during Foster Families Month, I was a guest on VOXM On Target with Linda Swain which was an opportunity to talk about the challenges/rewards of the fostering experience and the need for more homes. The Telegram and the Northern Pen also did articles on fostering. Edie and I appeared on Out of the Fog with Rogers TV and I was a guest on the Open Line show. I was also interviewed by CBC when family access visits were suspended due to the pandemic. Working with NTV, we are continuing our television and radio recruitment ads. We also ran a television ad for 30 days thanking frontline workers. Our social media presence has grown and we have almost 1000 followers on Facebook.

Since our last AGM, we have lost five of our foster parents, Justin Wickham, Melvin Pilgrim, Anita Rich, Mae Wilkins and Mike Shannon and a former foster parent Cyril Winsor. We extend condolences to all their families as they move forward without their loved ones. May precious memories keep them always close.

I always find election years for our Board a little difficult because it means we are losing some great people and the experience they brought to their positions. This year is no exception as we say good bye to Shirley Fowler, Debbie O'Neil, Melvina Elliott, Susan Onalik, Edie Newton and Barry Rice. Thank you for the contribution you have made during your time as Directors. You will all be greatly missed! I would also like to welcome the incoming Directors; Brenda Jararuse, Tena Reardon, Robin Hatfield, Coralee Roberts, Jim Miller, Heather Bartlett and Jennifer Sullivan. We are happy to have you and we believe you will find your time on the Board enjoyable and rewarding.

An annual report would not be complete without thanking those organizations who supported our work this year, specifically; RBC, Newfoundland and Labrador Credit Union, Pay Pal Giving Funds, VOXM Cares, Sisters of Mercy Responsible Sharing Committee and The Benevity Community. A special thank you is extended to the family of the late Don Newman who requested donations to the Association in his memory. We are very grateful.

I want to express appreciation to all our foster families who continue to meet the needs of children in care despite what nature throws at them. Not even a pandemic slows them down! You will always be the heart of the foster care program and there will never be enough words to thank you for everything you do. The difference you make each day in the lives of children, youth and families can never be measured but it is felt with the heart and reaches far into the future. In the words of John Spence, "Making a person smile can change the world - maybe not the whole world, but their world." You change the world every day! Thank you

2019-2020 has been a year we will not quickly forget but through it all we continued to move forward supporting our families and meeting the goals of our Strategic Plan. I want to extend sincere appreciation to the Board for their unwavering support. You are the best! I also want to thank Amy and Lori for their commitment and everything they do for the Association. Together, we make a great team and I am so lucky to have you.

Diane Molloy, Executive Director

Labrador Region

2019/2020 has been quite the year. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time thus far on the Board of the Foster Families Association. I have attended all in-person meetings as well as the monthly teleconferences, with the exception of one, due to a previous work commitment.

I take great pleasure in the wealth of knowledge I have obtained from being on the Board, from training obtained during in person meetings, meeting new foster families and sharing information, to policy and procedures. In May of 2019, I attended my first symposium and what a wonderful weekend was had by all, the sharing of

knowledge, the messages of inspiration, and a feeling of hope for why we do what we do. As a foster parent, I walked away with such a feeling of peace, a toolbox of new information and inspiration.

In the Fall of 2019, I attempted to host a meeting with local Foster Parents in the Goose Bay area, only one local parent made it to the meeting. I would love to see more involvement in our local area so that foster families in our area could also avail of training and information sessions. Working together, I feel we could accomplish so much. Hopefully, once we reach "our new normal" I will attempt this again.

I would also like to take this time to reach out to the parents of Upper Lake Melville. If ever you have any questions or concerns, or maybe you just need to talk to someone especially during these trying times, know that I am available via email lhudson@innueducation.ca or phone 896-9025. Please do not hesitate to write/call. I look forward to serving on the Board for the 2020/2021 year as your local representative.

Lori Hudson, Director

Grenfell Region

Hello from Grenfell Area, I hope everyone is staying safe. I'm writing this report with sadness in my heart because this is my last term on the Board. I have enjoyed it so much; meeting all the different people, learning so much through workshops, and making lots of new friends. One of the things I always look forward to is the Symposium in June where we meet with foster parents from all over the island for workshops and have a great time together.

In July, our Local Association had a family picnic; it was a great evening with games and lots of food. There was a candy toss which the kids loved. It was an awesome time with 65 in attendance. In the Fall, we had Diane and Lori visit from Provincial Association. This meeting is always a great night of discussion with the foster parents who attend.

In early October, we had another great evening with a fire where we roasted wieners and marshmallows. There were 37 in attendance and the children really enjoyed it. Our Halloween party is always a great success with the kids all dressed in their costumes and having lots of fun. This year we had a potluck supper and the kids went home with treat bags from CSSD. We had a big turnout of 76 people.



I went to Clarenville in November for a training day with foster parents and social workers in the area and an in person Board meeting. This was another great weekend of learning. In December, we had an ugly sweater Christmas party with an awesome attendance of 87 people. Most of the kids came in ugly sweaters and we did a draw for the ugliest sweater. We also had ugly sweater cakes. There were games for the kids and they all went home with a treat.

We didn't have any other events in our area after December due to Covid-19. We are hoping this will all soon be over and we can get back to normal. It was with sadness that we lost one of our foster parents this year, Melvin Pilgrim; you are missed.

The new Director for our area is Tena Reardon. I hope she will enjoy her time on the Board as much as I have. I hope you all have a great Fall and stay safe.

Shirley Fowler, Director

Western Region

This year our Stephenville Local continued to meet on a regular basis. In September and October we had Sean Hilliard speaking on drug and alcohol addiction; it was initially planned for one session in September but there was so much information and discussion we had him come back for the second session. Both sessions were very interesting and an eye opener for everyone in attendance. We also had Les Budden do a presentation on behaviour management.



We had a Christmas party on Dec 1st with the best turnout ever, roughly 70 people. Santa came with presents for all the kids. We wouldn't be able to do this if it wasn't for the help from all our foster parents; thank you so much.

Then January arrived and shortly after came the biggest snow storm St John's ever had shutting down everything for a week or more and then it still took weeks to get back to normal. In February, Diane and Lori from provincial office in St John's were in Stephenville to meet with foster parents. Attendance was high at this meeting and there was some great discussion.

Now, we are in the middle of a global pandemic and as I write this I still can't believe we are going through this; it's like something you watch in a movie. We have all been doing what the CMO suggests and we have flattened the curve. Let's keep up the good work and stay safe. I am now finishing my term on the Board. It has been an excellent experience and I am really going to miss it. I want to extend a welcome to Robin Hatfield who will be the new Director for our region.

Debbie O'Neil, Director

Hello from the Western Region! We started the year on a very good note with Diane and Lori visiting for our first meeting of the year in Deer Lake. We held elections and voted in our new executive. We had many families turn out for our Foster Families Month Party which had a Halloween theme and lots of food, refreshments, treats and activities for the children. This annual party always seems to be a hit with the children! We also held a meeting in October on the topic of Mental Health and we made our own stress balls.

In November, we had Public Health in to talk about Teens, Drugs and Drug Refusal Skills. Unfortunately, our Christmas Party was cancelled in December due to low numbers. We will definitely try something different this year. For January's meeting, we decided to change things up a bit and we met at Tim Horton's for an informal chat. This informal meeting proved to be quite beneficial!

In February, we had our supervisor come out to answer several questions that had been composed by our foster parents. Later the questions, along with the answers were posted on our Local Foster Parent Group Page for those parents who couldn't attend. We appreciate Raylene MacDonald coming out to our meeting and enlightening us on so many topics!



Then, of course, we hit the month of March! I'm sure everyone will never forget March, 2020 and Covid-19! As we waited in anticipation, schools and businesses closed, meetings were cancelled and life, as we knew it, just changed before our very eyes! As so many people said, it was/is like something out of a movie! Though we haven't been able to have meetings at the local level, we have been reaching out through our own local Facebook page to see how everyone is doing and offering words of encouragement during this unprecedented time. I feel it is so important to reach out to others who may be alone, anxious, depressed, etc. A few words of support can go a long way! There are endless activity ideas on Facebook for children of all ages and definitely lots of entertainment for parents. I, myself, have learned the basic guitar chords through YouTube videos and I am really enjoying it! This time can be so challenging for some people and for others, it is a time to slow down, reconnect with family members and old friends, make amends with someone you may have wronged or who have wronged you, learn a new skill, etc.

As for my husband Dominic and I, we are happy to announce the birth of our first grandchild, a baby girl, Lennon Ella, on April 15! We have never felt so blessed! When I wrote this report, she was just five days old and we were loving isolation with Lennon and her parents! She is just perfect and was a very welcomed distraction from the outside world!

Be safe! We will all get through this! See you at the Symposium next year.

Lana Brennan, Director

Central Region

I can't believe another year has come and gone so quickly. Hope everyone is doing well and staying safe! Hopefully with the snow almost gone and nicer weather in the air we can get outside more and do more of the things we love!

October was Foster Families Month and our awesome social workers put together a pizza party for the kids with games and loot bags. It was a very lovely evening! Our November annual pot luck supper with Diane and Lori was also a very enjoyable evening. In December, we had a nice turnout at our pizza/swimming party for the kiddos for Christmas. We had a meeting planned for March but we decided to cancel due to the increasing concerns over Covid 19.



It saddened me that we had to cancel our Training Day and in person Board meeting in Goose Bay in March and that our Annual Symposium 2020 had to be cancelled as well; but safety is our main priority for everyone! I'd like to say thank you Diane, Lori, and Amy for all their hard work throughout this year and keeping everyone up to date throughout this pandemic!

In closing, I want to say thank you to my fellow Board members for making this year so enjoyable, I will miss all the old Board members and look forward to the time when we can all meet again! Congratulations to our new members and I look forward to working with you in the Fall!

Stay Safe everyone and have the most amazing Fall!

Dawn Evelley, Director

Eastern Region

Here we are another year concluded and while 2019 was a busy one, the first few months of 2020 are going to be the most memorable... snowmageddon and then COVID-19. Our Bonavista Local held its Fall meeting on October 22 and we had hoped to set regular meetings for the remainder of the year, in an effort to encourage more foster parents to participate. However, good plans sometimes fall apart before they even begin and so was our case with weather and other factors causing disruption to our idea and then COVID-19. We hope that it won't be too much longer before we are able to get together again or we may need to look at potentially going virtual like so many groups have done in the past couple of months. A Local cannot work without a membership either way and we therefore encourage you to take part in events and meetings when possible when invitations are sent.

We had our annual visit from Diane and Lori from the Provincial Association in mid-November. At this meeting we also had Cst. Rumbolt from the Bonavista RCMP detachment who shared information on local drug awareness, vaping and other issues that are relevant in our region. It was very informative and it was decided to have someone from the detachment attend another meeting again in the future. A recurring topic for our Local and reiterated by Diane and Lori during their visit was the need to attend any training that is offered. We can always learn something new or take a refresher course as things are constantly changing in regards to our society and means of delivery of foster care... as the saying goes, "Every day is a learning day."



My term as Director on the Board for our area was to come to an end in June at the AGM/Symposium however it was extended due to Covid-19 not allowing us to gather at that time. I gladly accepted this extra time. I have been pleased to represent the region these last number of years and have enjoyed meeting people from around the province and being an active part of our Association. I am pleased to also report that Jim Miller from Trinity, who is also involved with our Local in Bonavista, will be the new Director for Eastern after the AGM.

In closing, I thank the Social Workers in the Department of CSSD who work in our region. Thank you for always being there and being a part of our family; a support group for us and the children in our care. I conclude by saying to everyone please stay safe, practice social distancing, wash your hands and remember we will get through this together.

Melvina Elliott, Director

During the last couple of months, we are experiencing a Worldwide Pandemic which has changed the world we live in and the course of history. Certainly, it has changed our family dynamic and our children in care. We have adjusted to the new normal, which is a life for our children without school and being more dependent on us for guidance. "It takes a village to raise a child" is a very true statement during this difficult time.

I have seen amazing acts of kindness to each other and complete strangers across Newfoundland and Labrador. Strength and hope are our core values to weather the storm to see a new day. Our Local Association hasn't had any news in the last few months but it looks like it may continue this way for the next little while. If you feel stressed, lonely or just don't know what to do, please contact any member of your Local Association. We are here together to help each other. Be kind and count your blessings.

George Blake, Director

St. John's Region

"In the middle of everything difficult lies opportunity." Albert Einstein must have been able to see the future because this quote couldn't be truer with the world we live in today. What an amazing, yet out of this world, year we have had in our St. John's/CBS Region. I feel very lucky to be a part of this region as our Local Association is strong, dedicated and highly motivated. We are blessed to have the Waypoints Family Support program at our fingertips providing us with 24-hour support and endless training opportunities. Our social workers have gone above and beyond to be involved in social events and ensuring the safest environments for our children to celebrate special events. Also, in our region a local Girl Guide group, RBC workers, and our Association Members have volunteered their time for our social events.



In May 2019, our Local was given 100 Edge Hockey tickets compliments of Nevaeh's Lemonade Stand. The tickets went fast, the stands were full, and a great time was had by all. On June 30, we had our Canada Day Carnival Party at Max Athletics on New Cove Road. It was so nice to see new faces and reconnect with the old ones. In July, Waypoints offered a day trip to their Springwood venue on Salmonier Line where families could enjoy swimming, kayaking, paddle-boarding, zip lining and a yummy BBQ to top it all off. It was a beautiful day and a great turn out. On July 14, the Provincial Association invited us to be a part of the St. John's Annual PRIDE Parade. The families who came were very welcoming and a sense of belonging was overwhelming. We had kids in strollers to seniors join us, all together sharing the importance of love and acceptance.

In September Waypoints started us off another busy school year with a training session on "Bullying, What We Know and What We Can Do." October was another busy month. Waypoints provided training on the topic "Caring for Those Closest." Another great training opportunity for our region was "Trauma Informed Practice." which was provided by Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network. <https://www.nlhhn.org/> is their website and if you click on the events button it will give you a list of the upcoming workshops. October is officially Foster Families Month. The Proclamation signing with Minister Lisa Dempster was at the Association office and families were encouraged to attend. Diane, Lori and Amy also invited all families to a Foster Families Month kickoff party at the Corpus Christi Parish Centre for rock painting, science experiments, stickers and treats. We were even entertained by some children who sang songs and played the piano. Families of all ages and sizes had a wonderful time.

In November, we started planning for Christmas. We had a much-appreciated donation of \$1000 of recyclables from Verafin. Our recycling account has given us extra funds throughout the year for event planning and contests the children can participate in to get prizes. I would like to thank Ruby Hearn for setting this recycling program up for our local. There has been an account set up at The Green Depot and Evergreen. The Local Account number is 6311171. Below are the 4 areas where you can drop off your recyclables to help our Local.

Mt Pearl Green Depot
5 Old Placentia Rd
(709) 368-7466

Ever Green Recycling
Waterford Bridge Rd.
(709)777-3832

Ever Green Recycling
79 Blackmarsh Rd.
(709) 758-5350

CBS Green
2684 Topsail Road
(709) 834-5449

Also in November, Waypoints provided the training "Safe Talk, Suicide Alert Helper". Throughout the year we were very grateful and pleased with the quality of training they have provided for our CBS/St. John's Region. We ended 2019 on a great note. On December 22, we had a huge Christmas Party. The Town of Paradise donated the venue, Dominos donated pizza, Verafin donated money for extra gifts for the children, Foster Parents donated door prizes and Denise baked and delivered absolutely delicious cupcakes. We were able to execute our largest

social event yet with help from RBC, Girl Guides, Waypoints, Social Workers and Foster Parents. We would like to extend a genuine thank you to everyone who helped make our 2nd Annual Christmas Party possible. Because of your efforts we were able to provide a safe place for our children to party and a fabulous environment for Foster Families to socialize with like-minded people. Also in December, Waypoints had a paint night for adults with treats. It was very much enjoyed by all who attended; a quiet atmosphere with adults of the same humor and lifestyle in one area enjoying adult conversation. A great break from the hustle and bustle that December brings.

In January, our Region was hit by the biggest fall of snow most of us have ever seen. Our busy cities and towns came to a halt and endless shoveling, acts of kindness and beautiful memories were made. At the end of each day there were many soggy mittens and red rosy cheeks. In February, there was a Local meeting and it was nice to see new faces and hear new ideas. Waypoints also provided us with a session on "Love Languages". In March, Daphne Richards our Local Chair had this message in the quarterly newsletter, "First of all, my message to all Foster Parents. YOU GOT THIS! Every single one of us are experiencing big adjustments in our homes but I continue to hear stories of those stretching outside of their comfort zones, building better connections and inevitably becoming more resilient foster parents. Our homes are challenging to operate at the best of times; please do not fight this alone, reach out to your peers, other foster parents, the Association or your social worker if you need support or even just a warm conversation."

If you have made it to the end of this annual report it is easy to recognize our region is busy and we have many wonderful opportunities to continue our education, stay connected and find comfort in a like-minded community. We have had another eventful year with great opportunities for both Foster Parents and children in care to build their support systems, make new friends and enjoy events together! We are all very proud of the work our Local has accomplished in 2019/20.

As our world changes and the future has many uncertainties we can appreciate how strong our children in care must be to live much of their lives like this and thrive. Stay strong, keep your head high and if you need comfort, look at your children and draw strength from their strength and resilience. Winnie the Pooh says "You're braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think." All the best as we move through 2020!

Angela Blundon and Edie Newton, Directors

Safety Solutions To Combat Covid-19

solutionshop
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staplescopyandprint.ca

Customizable Floor,
Wall & Window Decals



Plastic Face Shields



Cling & Permanent Decals



Desk & Counter Partitions



Signage Solutions



Name Badge Talkers



VOCM Cares-Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association Bursary Winner

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.

We are pleased to announce that the bursary winner for 2020 is Andrew Dogurga from St. John's. Andrew is the son of foster parent Sherrie-Lynn Dogurga and is a student at Memorial University majoring in political science. Andrew hopes to pursue graduate studies in physiotherapy.

In his application, Andrew demonstrated an excellent understanding of the needs of children who enter the foster care program and the role foster families play in supporting them. This quote from his application is reflective of how he views the foster care program. "There are no other programs in government or schools that can match the necessary services provided by social workers and foster families. The effort put into these homes and children is life-changing."

Janet Nixon, one of Andrew's teachers commented "Andrew is perfect for this bursary. In addition to his high academic standard, he is a very empathetic, well rounded student who has clearly demonstrated where his priorities lie. He has tutored his foster siblings and included them in his social circle and worked very hard to maintain his school, family, friend and athletic responsibilities."

In her reference Social Worker, Jessica Clowe Card talks about the role Andrew has undertaken in welcoming, nurturing and caring for his foster siblings. He has built trusting relationships, is a confidant, a fierce defender of them and a very positive male role model. Jessica commented "Never before have I seen a foster brother show such concern for his foster sisters. He models openness, respectful and healthy communication, and accountability to them daily." She further added, "Andrew is tremendously kind hearted, genuine and a supportive friend to all. In short, the world could use a few more Andrews."

Andrew also expressed how he has been impacted by the fostering experience with this statement, "Becoming a foster brother has changed my life. Every time I interact with my sisters, I have to think before I speak. And what I think is "How can I make this person feel safe right now and how can I say something that will add value to their interactions with me?" This is the kind of support we want all children in care to find in their homes, their schools and their community.

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

"You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending."

– C.S. Lewis



Foster Parents Share Experiences

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. While not everyone is comfortable writing about themselves; 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.

I am a foster parent/respite provider in Nain, Nunatsiavut. I have had many different children stay in my home. All with very unique personalities and backgrounds. My current child has been living with me just over 2 years. It was a long time adjusting as I started out as a single mom with one toddler of my own. It took about 6 months for us all to adjust.

Some struggles I face living in a remote community is having to make sure my child can get the services they need. We don't have a clothing store so everything needs to be flown in. Also the price of food is outrageous.

We are very culturally oriented so we get to go hunting and gathering out on the land which my foster daughter enjoys very much. We live in the same town as the child's birth family so they get to see each other often; if not daily. I know the importance of family and I support as much contact as possible. For special gatherings I invite the birth family to my home or we go to theirs.

It was a very long time trying to receive Pride here in Nain and once I received it, I learned so much for myself and from other foster parents and kinship care providers. We see many social workers come and go and I can't count on one hand how many social workers we have dealt with. I would love to see more foster homes opened in Nunatsiavut to keep children in their home communities and to keep the cultural connections strong.

Like anything in life it comes with struggles but it also comes with great memories. I love being a foster parent and any child living in my home will always be a part of our family.

"Open your heart and open your home"

Nakummek,

Crystal Allen

**Thanks Crystal and Jackie for sharing your stories.
Maintaining cultural connections for children is so important.**

I began fostering in October 2004 and did my PRIDE in 2005. Being a foster parent is so rewarding. I have had many kids of all ages throughout those sixteen years and I wouldn't change any of them. I've loved each and everyone of them and treated them all like my own.

I've always had good relationships with birth families, not always at the start of placement but with time. I know how important it is to support a child's family and I see this to be a very important part of my role as a foster parent. It's been great helping out the children and seeing children be able to return home.

A few years ago I had an indigenous child placed in my home, she is a sweetie and I love her so much. It makes me so happy that she has regular contact with her family and that her family are supportive of me. I have done everything I can to keep her connected to her culture. I have family visits at my home when possible and take her to the Friendship Centre in my area. She also has regular visits to her community. Like all my grandchildren, she calls me Nana and I believe she is happy here.

Jackie Lemoine

Voices of Youth

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.

Making A Difference

My parents started doing foster care in July of 2016 and this has definitely been a big turning point for me. When my parents told me they were going to foster children in our home, I wasn't sure what they meant. I had never really heard that word before and wasn't sure what that would mean for my family and me. They said that we were going to have kids come into our home to live with us for a little while who needed a place to stay. I was surprised at the thought that there would be other kids living in my house and why they would even need another place to stay. I was an only child so it was a little exciting to think that I would have the experience of having a brother or sister to talk to and play with.

When my mom and dad got a call that there were two girls who were coming to stay with us, I got a little nervous. I immediately started to wonder if they were going to like me or if they were okay staying with us. When the social workers brought the girls to our house, I could tell they were scared and sad. I offered to show them around the house so they wouldn't be as scared. The first place I showed them was the play room. I looked over at them and saw a smile on their faces when they saw all the toys.

After a couple of days having them in my house, we started to get along and have fun together. They loved having me play with them and I loved it too. I wanted to obey my parents and be kind so I could be a good example for them to follow. I wanted to be the best big brother I could be.

The girls stayed with us for a little over a year when we got the news that they would be going back to their home. I was really sad and so were they. When we got to the airport they were sad to leave us but happy to see their family again. I could tell my parents were sad too. The girls were a part of our family. The drive back home was really quiet and we all cried. It was a really sad day when they left but we have a lot of good memories of our time with them.

My parents are still fostering to this day and we all love it. We love how big a difference we can make in someone's life. When children come into my house they feel loved and safe. Not everyone is able to foster, but we should all be looking for ways to help those around us. That is what I have learned from my parents doing foster care and that is why it has been my turning point.

Landon deVries was born in Moncton, New Brunswick but has since lived many other places in Canada. He lives at home with his parents and his dog, Peaches. He enjoys playing outdoors, sports and spending time with his friends and family. Landon at age 12 entered this story in an essay contest with the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District and won second place for Labrador Region. Landon and his family have recently moved to Nova Scotia and will be continuing their fostering journey in that province.

Thanks for sharing your story Landon and for being an awesome big brother!

“If you think you're too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito.” – Dalai Lama

Teen Corner

Living in Care: Adjusting to a Foster Home

Some family challenges make it difficult or unsafe for young people to keep living at home. Young people should receive the care, protection and support they need in order to thrive. Unfortunately, this doesn't always happen in some families. If child protection services feel that you're living in an unsafe or unhealthy situation, they may place you "in Care."

Young people can be placed in care for different reasons, such as:

- a parent is struggling with a mental health disorder, emotional challenge or physical illness that is not properly managed
- a parent is dealing with a drug or alcohol addiction
- parents have died before their children are ready to care for themselves
- a young person is struggling with a mental health disorder, emotional challenge or physical illness that is not properly managed
- a young person is being abused or neglected



What does "in care" mean? Being placed in care means you are removed from your home for a period of time and placed in the care of someone else. This could mean living in a foster home, in a group home, in another care facility or with other family members. A foster home usually includes one or two adults who live in the home (possibly with their own children) and care for the young people who are placed there. A group home usually has staff who work and take care of the young people there.

Who makes the decision to place a child in care? Child protection services makes the decision to place a young person in care. They must explain the reasons to a judge and the judge decides if the young person will stay in care. Child protection social workers often use information provided by the child, people in the community (such as neighbors and teachers) and occasionally parents to help them make a decision. Sometimes, parents give their consent for a child to live in care, depending on the situation. In almost all cases, the plan is for the child to return to the family home when it's safe.

Do I have to go into care? Yes, a young person has to go into care if a court order says they must. Going into care is often a temporary solution as social workers try to help parents resolve certain challenges. Usually, child protection agencies try to place kids with someone they know (like friends or relatives). If this isn't possible, young people are placed in foster or group care.

Who can I talk to? When you go into care, you're assigned a social worker. This person ensures that all your needs are met and that your wishes are expressed to the child protection team. You can also talk to family members, foster parents, teachers, Kids Help Phone or anyone else you trust. Often, social workers and foster parents will have helped families in similar situations to yours. Remember, they're there to help you in any way they can.

What if I have concerns about my social worker? There is a big difference between your social worker not doing what you want and not listening to you or being there for you. You may not always agree with the decisions your worker makes and there can be times when you have difficulties with them. However, you have the right to talk to someone else about your concerns if:

- you feel like your worker is not listening to you
- your worker is not returning your calls
- you don't get along with your worker

You can talk about your concerns with your foster parent or you can talk to your social workers supervisor.

How will the foster family or group home treat me? Your foster family or group home should make you feel cared for and meet your needs. You have the right to:

- live in a safe home
- participate in decisions about your life and care
- privacy
- proper care including regular meals, attending school, medical and dental care, clothing and participation in recreational activities
- visit with your family, unless a judge or social worker thinks it's unsafe
- practice your religion
- learn about and practise your cultural traditions
- have your individuality respected, including your sexual orientation, gender identity and abilities
- be free from emotional, physical and sexual harm



If you're concerned about the way you're treated in care, you need to tell your social worker. You can also speak with someone at the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate if you feel like your rights aren't being respected.

Adjusting to your new living situation. Living with a foster family or in a group home can be a difficult change. Being in unfamiliar surroundings with people you don't know can be scary and uncomfortable at first. It's common to have lots of questions, like:

- Will these people like me, and will I like them?
- What if I don't get along with these people?
- Will there be a lot of rules?
- Will I go to a new school?
- Will I get to see my family and friends?
- When can I go home?
- Is my family mad at me? Is it still OK to love my family?

Adjusting to your new living situation will take time. As the people and home become more familiar, you'll likely feel more comfortable. And remember, you're not alone. Try to reach out and talk with the people around you including foster parents, social workers, staff or any other kids.

Things to keep in mind. It always takes time to get used to a new situation. Remember that the purpose of care is to make things better and safer for you. To help yourself feel more comfortable in care, you can:

- talk to friends and try to continue participating in activities you enjoy
- find someone you can talk to about how you're feeling (foster parent, teacher, social worker, friend or Kids Help Phone)
- start a journal or express yourself through art

Need more information or support? You can contact Kids Help Phone 24/7. 1-800-668-6868. Text 686868

Children's Pages

Pinecone Hedgehogs

What you need: a selection of pinecones, felt (black, brown or beige), scissors, glue gun and googly eyes

Directions:

- use the brown or beige felt and cut out a face in the shape of a triangle with the corners rounded.
- cut circular noses out of the black felt.
- using the glue gun stick the noses and googly eyes on to the felt faces.
- glue the faces to the pinecone and your hedgehog is complete.



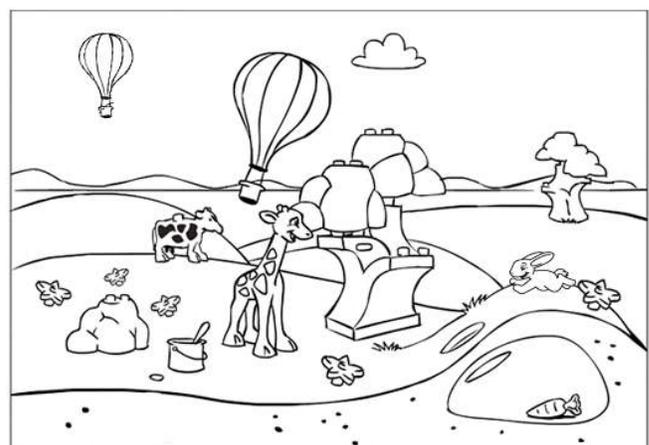
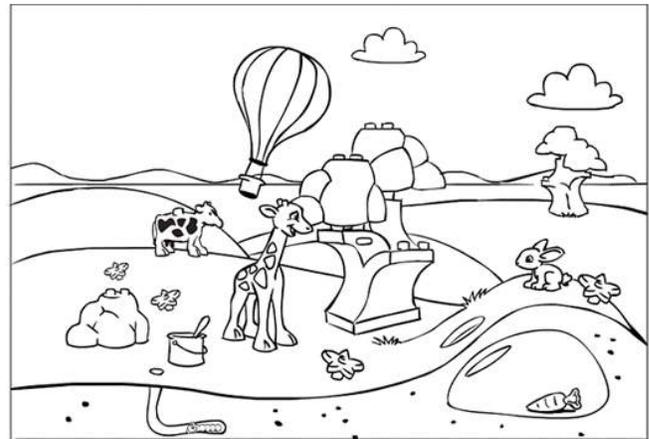
SPOT 5 DIFFERENCES!

Autumn
WORD SEARCH



E	A	X	W	A	L	R	S	T	S	T	
T	K	W	Q	U	E	E	F	G	C	N	Y
F	B	O	O	T	S	F	A	E	I	D	L
H	A	E	A	R	C	I	L	S	K	A	I
M	F	E	O	E	A	P	L	S	C	S	E
A	W	H	H	E	P	U	M	P	K	I	N
S	I	H	K	A	R	B	E	T	P	R	D
E	A	A	N	E	Y	N	M	R	O	A	C
O	R	J	X	K	V	S	N	C	G	R	Q
H	L	E	A	F	S	C	A	R	F	I	O

SCARF	APPLE	BOOTS
TREE	FALL	RAKE
ACORN	PUMPKIN	PIE
HAY	SWEATER	LEAF



Q: If two's company, and three's a crowd, what are four and five? **A:** Nine!

Q: If a brother, his sister, and their dog weren't under an umbrella, why didn't they get wet? **A:** It wasn't raining.

Q: Why did Mickey Mouse go to Outer Space? **A:** He wanted to visit Pluto.

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 211, 90 O'Leary Avenue, St. John's, NL, A1B 2C7 before November 30, 2020 or you could send a picture of your colored page to nlffa@nfld.net. Copy the page and share it with a friend!



Name: _____
Town: _____
Postal Code: _____
Age: _____

Address: _____
Province: _____
Telephone: _____

Educational Section

4 Ways To Create A Positive Sleep Environment In Your Home

A good night's sleep is the goal, but when you have a young family, getting that full eight hours may feel impossible. Night feedings, teething, bad dreams and other sleep disruptors make it seem like your child spends more time awake than asleep at night. And that affects the grownups too.

Creating a positive sleep environment can help everyone get more of that deep, uninterrupted slumber. Overall, consistency is key, so find a routine that works for your family and stick with it. Keep in mind that everyone is different, so it's not a one-size-fits-all solution. It's also totally OK to require sleep supports or comfort items to help you (and your kids) achieve healthy sleep habits. Don't compare your journey to someone else's, instead, build the plan that works for you using these suggestions.

1. Create the perfect lighting

Some kids benefit from the soft glow of a night light, but a pitch-black sleep environment is optimal for others. If your crew falls into the latter, consider using blackout shades or heavy curtains to create a dark, sleep-friendly space. That means screen lights, too. Avoid TV, computers, tablets and even your phone for at least an hour before bedtime. Looking at this type of blue light can throw off your internal clock and delay the release of melatonin, which helps you fall asleep.



2. Choose the perfect bedding

Falling asleep can be the hardest part. Comfort matters and a good blanket is key. Infants may benefit from being tucked into a sleep sack or swaddled (this helps replicate the feeling of the womb), whereas adults may want to try a cooling, heated or weighted blanket. Try finding one that weighs about 10 percent of your own body weight. Don't forget to add a great pillow. You can buy one based on your sleep preference; side, back, stomach etc.

3. Try a sound machine

If every little sound prevents you from nodding off or wakes you up in the night, white noise can help. There are loads of options on the market with varying sounds like white noise, lullabies, thunderstorms, waves crashing and other soothing audio output. A small, simple model will work well for most adults but kids may enjoy a more elaborate machine with light projection and other features. Keep in mind, if your little one has a hard time falling asleep with light (see blackout curtain tip above) opt for a more bare bones model.

4. Calm your senses with essential oils

Lavender has long been known for its soothing, relaxing properties, making it a perfect natural sleep aid. It won't be hard to find some bubble bath or body lotion in this scent, and lavender essential oils can be used in a variety of ways. Look for dried lavender sachets to put in or under your pillow, or even lavender-scented stuffed animals. A blend that includes camomile may also be appealing.

Acts of Kindness: Making a Positive Impact on a World Filled with Negativity

Acts of kindness allows each of us to make a positive impact on a world that is swarming with negativity. Kindness is an act that, simply, “feels good”. It does not matter if we observe kindness, have kindness bestowed upon us, or bestow kindness upon others. It is said that, when a person experiences kindness – in one way or another – it puts them at their absolute best, as people.

Kindness is compassion. Kindness is generosity. Kindness is love. Kindness allows us to connect with others. As parents, we should encourage our children to engage in random acts of kindness. We, too, should engage in these acts. In doing so, we will inspire happiness, high levels of gratitude, and will be making a positive difference in the lives of others that they will want to pay forward! Here are some suggested acts of kindness that we and our children may perform in order to make a positive impact on the world that we are part of:



- Smile when you make eye contact with others.
- Hold the door open for someone.
- Use kind words when speaking to others, such as “please”, “thank you”, and “you’re welcome”.
- Compliment a person on their talents.
- Congratulate someone on a job well done.
- Congratulate someone who has been able to do something new and exciting, such as purchase a house or travel to a new and exciting place.
- Use a person’s name when speaking to them.
- Listen when others talk – not with the intent to answer, but, with the intent to truly hear them.
- Be genuinely happy for someone. They will notice!
- Always strive to encourage others.
- Help those that are less fortunate. Volunteer. There are tons of local opportunities. Places to contact: local Church, schools, libraries, food pantries, hospitals, Red Cross, and animal rescue shelters to name a few.
- If someone recently had a baby, offer to cook a week’s worth of meals.
- If a car is parked where a meter has expired, put money in it.
- Do not use your phone when speaking and/or engaging with others.
- Make friends with the new neighbour they will appreciate it and you will too!
- Make friends with the new kid at school.
- Make friends with the new person at work.
- Invite a neighbor over for dinner.
- Buy a meal for a homeless person.
- Make and hand out blessing bags to the homeless.
- When you buy something new, donate one used item to a family in need, a local charity, or to the local Goodwill store.
- If someone has made a difference in your life, tell them how much you appreciate it!
- Send a “Thank You” card to a teacher that inspires/inspired you.
- If someone has done you harm, simply forgive them and move on.
- If you see someone sitting or walking alone at school, work, at the park, or another type of event, go speak to them.
- When you are done reading books and newspapers, leave them behind or donate them so that others may enjoy them, too!
- If someone is in a lane at the store that has less items than you do, allow them to go first so that they do not have to wait.

- If you have items in your home that you no longer want or need, give them to charity, someone in need, or simply give them away online!
- Give someone that you know and love a big hug and tell them how much they mean to you!
- If you spill something somewhere, clean it up.
- If you make a mess, clean it up.
- Call your grandparents – all of the time!
- Call your parents – all of the time!
- Call all of your loved ones as much as you can!
- If you see litter, pick it up and dispose of it.
- Help a neighbour take care of their lawn.
- Care for a homeless animal.
- Be sure to hold your tongue and refrain from saying things when you are angry, sad, or have doubts.
- Allow others to merge into your lane while travelling.
- Thank every single person who does something for you – from the store clerk, to the teacher, to the bag boy, to the bus driver. Everyone works hard and deserves a little genuine appreciation.
- Help the sick and/or injured by doing their shopping.
- Help make the world a better place by introducing people and connecting them to each other.
- Offer to help someone with their school project.
- Be patient with others.
- Try to find the good in all people.
- Do the dishes. No one likes them, so, it is the perfect thing to do when it comes to being kind!
- Be kind to the animals of the world.
- Be nice to the elderly AND find an elderly person to help.
- Do not say bad things about others.
- Do nice things and don't tell anyone at all.
- Send an anonymous donation to someone or a charity of your choice.
- Do not complain around others.
- Smile! Smile! Smile!
- Be an optimist even in the most pessimistic of situations!
- Look for the best!
- Leave nice comments online. Don't be rude to others online.
- Always arrive early.
- Be kind to the Earth: Recycle, Reuse, Reduce.
- Be kind to Yourself!

(modified) Source: www.more4kids.info

A Parent's Guide to Surviving the Teen Years

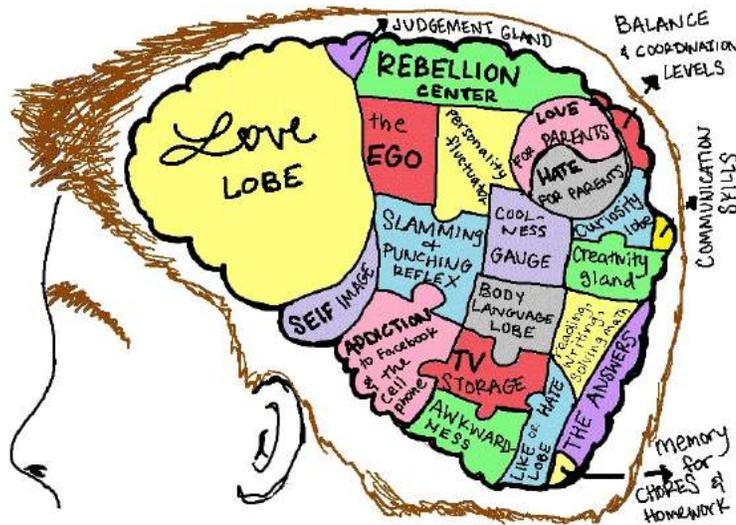
You've lived through 2 a.m. feedings, toddler temper tantrums, and the back-to-school blues. So why is the word "teenager" causing you so much worry? When you consider that the teen years are a period of intense growth, not only physically but emotionally and intellectually, it's understandable that it's a time of confusion and upheaval for many families.

Despite some adults' negative perceptions about teens, they are often energetic, thoughtful, and idealistic, with a deep interest in what's fair and right. So, although it can be a period of conflict between parent and child, the teen years are also a time to help kids grow into the distinct individuals they will become.

Understanding the Teen Years

So when does adolescence start? Everybody's different — there are early bloomers, late arrivers, speedy developers, and slow-but-steady growers. In other words, there's a wide range of what's considered normal.

But it's important to make a (somewhat artificial) distinction between puberty and adolescence. Most of us think of puberty as the development of adult sexual characteristics: breasts, menstrual periods, pubic hair, and facial hair. These are certainly the most visible signs of puberty and impending adulthood, but kids who are showing physical changes (between the ages of 8 and 14 or so) also can be going through a bunch of changes that aren't readily seen from the outside. These are the changes of adolescence.



Many kids announce the onset of adolescence with a dramatic change in behavior around their parents. They're starting to separate from mom and dad and become more independent. At the same time, kids this age are increasingly aware of how others, especially their peers, see them and are desperately trying to fit in. Their peers often become much more important than parents as far as making decisions.

Kids often start "trying on" different looks and identities, and they become very aware of how they differ from their peers, which can result in episodes of distress and conflict with parents.

Butting Heads

One of the common stereotypes of adolescence is the rebellious, wild teen continually at odds with mom and dad. Although it may be the case for some kids and this is a time of emotional ups and downs, that stereotype certainly is not representative of most teens.

But the primary goal of the teen years is to achieve independence. To do this, teens must start pulling away from their parents — especially the parent whom they're the closest to. This can feel like teens are always at odds with parents or don't want to be around them the way they used to.

As teens mature, they start to think more abstractly and rationally. They're forming their moral code. And parents of teens may find that kids who previously had been willing to conform to please them will suddenly begin asserting themselves — and their opinions — strongly and rebelling against parental control. You may need to look closely at how much room you give your teen to be an individual and ask yourself questions such as: "Am I a controlling parent?," "Do I listen to my child?," and "Do I allow my teen's opinions and tastes to differ from my own?"

Tips for Parenting During the Teen Years

Looking for a roadmap to find your way through these years? Here are some tips:

Educate Yourself: Read books about teenagers. Think back on your own teen years. Remember your struggles with acne or your embarrassment at developing early — or late. Expect some mood changes in your typically sunny child, and be prepared for more conflict as he or she matures as an individual. Parents who know what's coming can cope with it better. And the more you know, the better you can prepare.

Talk to Kids Early and Often: Starting to talk about menstruation or wet dreams after they've already begun is starting too late. Answer the early questions kids have about bodies, such as the differences between boys and girls and where babies come from. But don't overload them with information — just answer their questions. If you don't know the answers, get them from someone who does, like a trusted friend or your pediatrician.

You know your kids. You can hear when your child's starting to tell jokes about sex or when attention to personal appearance is increasing. This is a good time to jump in with your own questions such as:

- Are you noticing any changes in your body?
- Are you having any strange feelings?
- Are you sad sometimes and don't know why?



A yearly physical exam is a great time to talk about this. A doctor can tell your pre-adolescent — and you — what to expect in the next few years. An exam can be a jumping-off point for a good parent/child discussion. The later you wait to have these talks, the more likely your child will be to form misconceptions or become embarrassed about or afraid of physical and emotional changes. And the earlier you open the lines of communication, the better your chances of keeping them open through the teen years. Give your child books on puberty written for kids going through it. Share memories of your own adolescence. There's nothing like knowing that mom or dad went through it, too, to put kids more at ease.

Put Yourself in Your Child's Place: Practice empathy by helping your child understand that it's normal to be a bit concerned or self-conscious, and that it's OK to feel grown-up one minute and like a kid the next.

Pick Your Battles: If teenagers want to dye their hair, paint their fingernails black, or wear funky clothes, think twice before you object. Teens want to shock their parents and it's a lot better to let them do something temporary and harmless; save your objections for things that really matter, like tobacco, drugs and alcohol, or permanent changes to their appearance. Ask why your teen wants to dress or look a certain way and try to understand how your teen is feeling. You also might want to discuss how others might perceive them if they look different — help your teen understand how he or she might be viewed.

Set Expectations: Teens might act unhappy about the expectations their parents place on them. Still, they usually understand and need to know that their parents care enough about them to expect certain things such as good grades, acceptable behavior, and sticking to the house rules. If parents have appropriate expectations, teens will likely try to meet them. Without reasonable expectations, your teen may feel you don't care about him or her.

Inform Your Teen — and Stay Informed Yourself: The teen years often are a time of experimentation, and sometimes that experimentation includes risky behaviors. Don't avoid the subjects of sex and drug, alcohol, or tobacco use. Discussing tough topics openly with kids before they're exposed to them actually makes it more likely that they'll act responsibly when the time comes. Share your family values with your teen and talk about what you believe is right and wrong, and why.

Know your child's friends — and know their friends' parents. Regular communication between parents can go a long way toward creating a safe environment for all teens in a peer group. Parents can help each other keep track of the kids' activities without making the kids feel that they're being watched.

Know the Warning Signs: A certain amount of change is normal during the teen years. But too drastic or long-lasting a switch in personality or behavior may signal real trouble — the kind that needs professional help. Watch for these warning signs:

- extreme weight gain or loss
- sleep problems
- rapid, drastic changes in personality
- sudden change in friends
- skipping school often
- falling grades
- talk or even jokes about suicide
- signs of tobacco, alcohol, or drug use
- run-ins with the law

You may expect a glitch or two in your teen's behavior or grades during this time, but your A/B student shouldn't suddenly be failing, and your normally outgoing kid shouldn't suddenly become constantly withdrawn. Your doctor or a local counselor, psychologist, or psychiatrist can help you find proper counseling.

Respect Kids' Privacy: Some parents, understandably, have a very hard time with this one. They may feel that anything their kids do is their business. But to help your teen become a young adult, you'll need to grant some privacy. If you notice warning signs of trouble, then you can invade your child's privacy until you get to the heart of the problem. But otherwise, it's a good idea to back off.

In other words, your teenager's room, texts, e-mails, and phone calls should be private. You also shouldn't expect your teen to share all thoughts or activities with you at all times. Of course, for safety reasons, you should always know where teens are going, when they'll be returning, what they're doing, and with whom, but you don't need to know every detail. And you definitely shouldn't expect to be invited along! Start with trust. Tell your teen that you trust him or her, but if the trust gets broken, he or she will enjoy fewer freedoms until it's rebuilt.

Monitor What Kids See and Read: TV shows, magazines and books, the Internet — kids have access to tons of information. Be aware of what yours watch and read. Don't be afraid to set limits on the amount of time spent in front of the computer or the TV. Know what they're learning from the media and who they may be communicating with online. Teens shouldn't have unlimited access to TV or the Internet in private — these should be public activities. Access to technology also should be limited after certain hours (for example, 10 p.m. or so) to encourage adequate sleep. It's not unreasonable to have cellphones and computers off limits after a certain time.

Make Appropriate Rules: Bedtime for a teenager should be age appropriate. Teens need about 8-9 hours of sleep. Encourage your teen to stick to a sleep schedule that will meet those needs.

Reward your teen for being trustworthy. Has he or she kept to a 10 p.m. curfew on weekends? Move it to 10:30 p.m. And does a teen always have to go along on family outings? Encourage a reasonable amount of family time together, but be flexible. Don't be insulted when your growing child doesn't always want to be with you. Think back: You probably felt the same way about your mom and dad.

Will This Ever Be Over?

As kids progress through the teen years, you'll notice a slowing of the highs and lows of adolescence. And, eventually, they'll become independent, responsible, communicative young adults.

So remember the motto of many parents with teens: We're going through this together, and we'll come out of it — together!

What Reconciliation Is And What It Is Not

For a very long time, mainstream Canadians were unaware of the horrors and conditions that 150,000 Indigenous children endured in the Indian residential schools over a period of more than 100 years. For many Canadians, the first inkling of the atrocities the children suffered was when then Prime Minister Stephen Harper delivered the Statement of Apology on behalf of Canadians for the Indian residential school system in 2008.

The grassroots Idle No More movement raised awareness of Indigenous issues in 2012 with round dances, rallies, teach-ins, and social media. The movement gained significant media attention which brought it onto the radar of mainstream Canada. The next hit of awareness was in 2015 with the publication of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report and 94 calls to action. The calls to action, in particular, awoke in many individuals, organizations, and governments a realization that they had not just a role to play but a moral responsibility to make amends for the past.

It's now five years since the TRC report and reconciliation is a familiar term to most of us. But, there's still confusion over what it means and who is responsible, which could lead to reconciliation become nothing more than a platitude.



The TRC definition of reconciliation:

“ . . . Reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour.”

Here is a list of considerations that may contribute to understanding reconciliation.

Reconciliation is:

- Critical
- Complex
- Multifaceted
- Continuous
- A process
- About working towards solidarity as a society and country
- The responsibility of every Canadian
- Honouring treaties
- Acknowledging and respecting Indigenous rights and title
- Acknowledging and letting go of negative perceptions and stereotypes
- Acknowledging the past and ensuring that history never repeats
- Learning about Indigenous history
 - Recognizing the inter-generational impacts of colonization, attempts at assimilation, and cultural genocide
 - Recognizing the critical roles, Indigenous Peoples have held in the creation of Canada, their contributions to world wars to protect Canada

- Taking responsibility as a person, a parent, an employee, an employer to:
 - Never utter, accept, or ignore a racist comment
 - Never utter, accept, or ignore a statement that includes a stereotype about Indigenous Peoples
- Respect for:
 - Indigenous individuals
 - Indigenous beliefs, cultures, traditions, worldviews, challenges, and goals
- Recognition and support of the deep connections Indigenous Peoples have to the land.
- Supporting the reclamation of identity, language, culture, and nationhood
- Healing for all Canadians
- Good people doing good things
- Building relationships
- Never giving up despite setbacks
- An opportunity to move forward
- A commitment to taking a role and assuming responsibility in working towards a better future for every Canadian

Reconciliation is not:

- A trend
- A single gesture, action, or statement
- A box to be ticked
- About blame
- About guilt
- About the loss of rights for non-Indigenous Canadians
- Someone else's responsibility

Source: <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/what-reconciliation-is-and-what-it-is-not>

Blog title: Working Effectively with Indigenous Peoples® <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog>

Author: Bob Joseph, President of Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. www.ictinc.ca

Truth Telling is one of the **Touchstones of Hope** for Aboriginal Children, Youth and Families.
The Association is committed to Reconciliation and telling the story of residential schools.

Thousands of Indigenous children in Labrador were taken from their communities to residential schools between 1949 and 1980 that were run by the International Grenfell Association or Moravians.
Many were sexually and physically abused, and suffered language and cultural losses.

Quotes from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report

Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, in 1883: "When the school is on the reserve the child lives with its parents, who are savages; he is surrounded by savages. Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence."

"Those schools were a war on Aboriginal children, and they took away our identity. First of all, they gave us numbers, we had no names, we were numbers, and they cut our hair. They took away our clothes, and gave us clothes ... we all looked alike." Doris Young, who attended the Elkhorn residential school in Manitoba.

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