

# Advisor

Winter 2010



[www.sffa.sk.ca](http://www.sffa.sk.ca)

## Advisor

### *Inside this issue*

- 2** Protecting children in sports
- 3** Executive Director's message
- 3** Don't forget to ask
- 4** CFFA Annual Symposium
- 5** Before you celebrate the holidays
- 6** Child welfare presentations
- 7** National project update
- 7** SFFA online
- 8** Library card initiative
- 9** Tree ornament craft
- 10** Discounts for foster families
- 11** Parent & tot program
- 12** Word search
- 13** Celebrate with the gift of time
- 14** How to thrive during the holidays
- 15** Miniature craft big on flavour
- 15** Best rolled sugar cookies recipe
- 16** SFFA contacts

UNICEF Canada is pleased to announce the release of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre Digest No.14, *Protecting Children from Violence in Sport*.

UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre publications identify and research issues relating to children's rights to generate global debate and facilitate the full implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in all countries.

*Protecting Children from Violence in Sport* explores the multifaceted nature of violence against children in sport within the framework of children's rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The report draws on global research and perspectives to:

- define the different ways that children experience violence in sport,
- review existing evidence about violence against children in sport,
- identify gaps in knowledge that research can address,
- provide examples of both good and poor practice,
- and make suggestions for sport organizations, governments and others to assist them in their violence prevention and response efforts.

The report finds: Sport is not always a safe, positive space for children. Children regularly experience mental, physical and sexual violence perpetrated by adults and peers. Violence that is illegal in other community contexts is often considered to be acceptable in sport.

The laws, policies and practices that are in place to protect children outside of sport are not always applied inside sport. The many benefits of sport will be fully realized when children's safety and development are more fully and equitably protected.



The laws, policies and practices that are in place to protect children outside of sport are not always applied inside sport.

The large knowledge gaps on violence against children in sport must be addressed. Overall, there is a marked absence of empirical data on violence against children in sport and a lack of analysis on the most effective ways to prevent it.

While in Canada a number of recent initiatives show promise and constitute global good practice models, a stronger commitment to violence prevention including higher standards shared across jurisdictions, with active roles by both government and sport organizations, can reduce the exploitation, injury and abuse of children by adults and peers.

We hope this Digest provides you with a basis for continuing dialogue, debate and momentum toward strengthening the rights and well-being of Canada's children.

# Message from SFFA Executive Director, Deb Davies

I am always amazed of how quickly a year can pass us by. It seems like just yesterday that we were beginning 2010, with Saskatchewan hosting the World Junior Hockey games. In which many of our foster families were able to attend because of the generous donation of over 700 tickets from the Crown Corporations to our association. It was an incredible opportunity for foster families to attend, it was a once in a lifetime opportunity for our children to see the incredible talent from across the globe.

It has been a very busy, but rewarding year for our Association we have

continued to work with the Ministry in recruiting new foster homes and working diligently in the area of retention. The highlight of 2010 for the association was hosting this year's Canadian Symposium where we welcomed

foster families from across the country. It gave Saskatchewan the opportunity to highlight our beautiful province, showing our visitors our warm hospitality.

As I prepare to celebrate the Christmas holidays with my family, I would like to take the opportunity to say thank you to our foster families across the province that open their hearts and homes to children and

youth in need of protection in our province. Thank you to the Ministry staff who without their support we would not be able to provide the support to the children placed in our foster homes.

On behalf of the Provincial Office Staff and the Board of Directors, I would like to extend best wishes for a wonderful holiday filled with family and friends, laughter, love, peace and happiness.

From my family to each of you, Merry Christmas and the very best for 2011.

*Deb Davies*

---

## Don't forget to ask!

*Foster Parents often wish they had asked more questions before accepting a child into their home. The list below is designed to assist you in your discussion with the Ministry. (All questions do not apply to all placements.)*

- Why is this child being placed?
- What is the child's understanding of the reason for placement/separation from his family?
- What are the child's previous placement experiences?
- What is the family situation- parent's names?
- Where are the parents?
- Will the parents visit? Where? How often?
- Are there siblings? Where are they?
- Will there be pre-placement visits?
- What is the plan for the child? Length of placement?
- What is the child's legal status?
- When was the child's last physical?
- What is the child's health? Allergies? Medication? Last dental check up?
- Who is the child's doctor? The medical number?
- Is religion important to the child?
- What school and what grade does the child attend?
- Are there school problems?
- Does the child have any special behavioural problems? Habits?
- If this child has been sexually abused, is he at risk to himself/others?
- What will help the child feel at home? Favourite food, comforting toy?
- Will there be a clothing grant? Are the child's clothes adequate/appropriate?
- When will the social worker visit/call?
- Who do I call after hours?
- What do you (social worker) expect of me (foster parent)?
- Will I receive the form Confidential Information for Foster Parents Regarding Child Placement?



# Report on 2010 CFFA Annual Symposium by Sheila Durnford, President

This year our 30th Annual CFFA Symposium was hosted by the Saskatchewan Foster Family Association in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The conference – Walking Together, Voices for Change was held June 7 – 13th.

The CFFA meetings went well, being held during the first part of the week, with the Executive meeting on Monday, the Board of Directors on Tuesday, the National Working Group on Wednesday, and the AGM Thursday morning.

to be collected from foster parents and others involved in the child welfare system.

During the afternoon an information sharing session was held. Directors shared information from their Provinces and reported on what is happening in their areas.

Elections were held at the AGM. I would like to welcome Mary Smith from Nova Scotia to the Executive as 1st Vice President. The following is your Executive:

- **President** – Sheila Durnford – re elected (B.C.)
- **1st Vice President** – Mary Smith – elected (Nova Scotia)
- **2nd Vice President** – Sylvia Thompson (Alberta)
- **3rd Vice President** – Sharon Joyal (Man.)
- **Treasurer** – Nancy MacFarlane – re elected (PEI)
- **Secretary** – Connie Mulholland (Man.)

I look forward to working with the Executive and Board of Director's in the coming year.

We are sorry to have to say good bye to Pat Norman. Pat as not able to attend this years symposium. To honor her dedication and work over the years the President's Award plaque was presented, and will be taken back to Nova Scotia to be given to her. She will be missed by everyone, and we hope that we will see her at some of our conferences in the future.

After our meetings ended on Thursday, we were treated to a

fun filled evening with a dinner and dancing to a live band at the Saskatchewan Forestry Farm and Zoo. For those wanting something on the "wilder" side, we were able to visit the animals in the zoo.

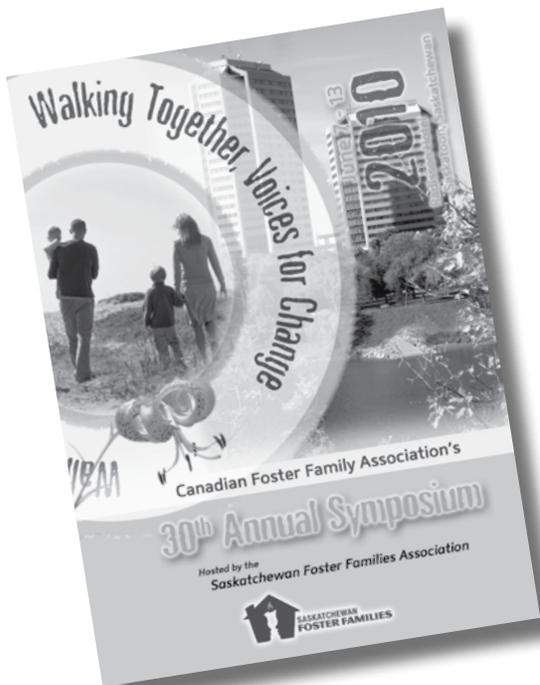
Conference participants were offered an array of workshops and plenary speakers on Friday and Saturday.

Saturday evening was the Banquet and Closing Ceremonies. The guest speaker was Assistant Deputy Minister, Ms. Cheryl Senecal. The Saskatchewan Foster Parent Association presented awards honoring those who have fostered for over 20 years in their Province.

For the closing ceremonies, the CFFA Banner was passed on to Prince Edward Island, next year's (2011) hosting Province. A short presentation was made and Prince Edward Island invited and encouraged everyone to attend next year's conference being held May 9 – 14, 2011 in Charlottetown, PEI.

A huge THANK YOU to the Saskatchewan Foster Family Association for a wonderful symposium. Thank you to all those that worked so incredibly hard to make this such a successful conference. You were all very helpful, and made us feel right at home! What gracious hosts!

We look forward to seeing many of you at our 2011 Symposium. 2011 CFFA Conference "Building Bridges" will be held in PEI. May 9 – 14th. More details TBA.



During the morning of the National Working Group there was a presentation and a consultation session on our joint National project with the Child Welfare League of Canada (CWLC) – Every Child Matters. (Update report on page 11). During the 3 year project consultation sessions will be set up in various Provinces throughout Canada. This will enable information

# Before you celebrate the holidays with your foster children

by Carrie Craft

Parenting foster children can be a challenge at any time of the year, but holidays seem to be extra stressful. There are a ton of parties to attend, gifts to buy, and the financial strain can really bring a person down. Get 8 quick ideas of things to get done in your foster family before the holidays get here and have time to enjoy a cup of hot chocolate.



## Remember all of the little things that make the season fun

Do you have extra stockings for foster children entering your home at the last minute? It's not uncommon for a child to arrive on Christmas Eve. How about extra gifts for Hanukkah or Kwanzaa?

## Help your foster children understand the season

Most of the foster children that have entered our home have not understood the Christmas holiday. Take time to read a few books. Explain your feelings about the season and help a child learn to enjoy the season on a different level.

## Plan any gifts for birth family whether from you or the children

Are you going to give the birth parents a simple gift this holiday? I have given photo albums of their children or framed photos. What about bus vouchers so that they can get to work or to visits? What a great way to help with the reunification efforts.

Keep in mind that some foster children have not experienced giving gifts to others. The concept may not even cross their minds, so be there to lead the way.

## Discuss the dates for holiday birth family visits

Contact your worker early in the season. Keep an open mind, but also advocate for your family's needs. Remember your holiday schedule and the child's behaviour after visits.

## Watch for signs of the holiday blues

Holidays can be a difficult time for many foster families. This is traditionally a time for family and for a child who is not with his/her birth family, a time for remembering the ones they've had to say good-bye to. All families have their good moments, even if they are few in number. These moments mean the world to foster children in the system. These memories are sometimes the only thing they have left of birth family. It can, however, be a great bonding moment for foster families - a time to sit down and share memories.

## Contact your worker about any travel dates

If you're planning on leaving town for the holidays, contact your worker well in advance. Most require at least two weeks notice. There needs to be plenty of time for the workers to arrange travel vouchers for the child, or if needed respite if the child is unable to attend.

## Plan activities for the kids to enjoy during the break from school

This could be a great time to work on Lifebooks when homework is not a burden. If you start to get a bit cabin crazy look for activities away from home such as attending the YMCA for a swim or the library.

## Prepare extended family and your foster children for family gatherings

Holidays or big family gatherings are a tough situation for introducing your foster children to your extended family. Your extended family may feel uneasy about your choice to be a foster parent in the first place. Meeting the foster child/ren may help this situation or confirm their fears.

# Child welfare presentations conclude

The panel tasked with examining all aspects of child welfare in Saskatchewan has finished three months of hearings and presentations and is now preparing a report to present to government this fall.

“I would like to thank the Child Welfare Review panel for all of their hard work to date on behalf of Saskatchewan children, youth

recommendations for how to transform our child welfare system for the benefit of vulnerable children and their families.”

Among the 85 groups the panel met with were 10 groups of First Nations Child and Family Services Agencies, elders, and Chiefs; the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian

“I am confident that the dialogue begun during this review process can lead to a strong, inclusive and focused approach to improving the lives of children in care in the province.”

and families, and I look forward to receiving the panel’s report and recommendations,” Social Services Minister June Draude said. “I would also like to commend all of the stakeholders and other concerned citizens who met with the panel or contributed written or online submissions over the past several months. I am confident that these combined efforts will result in a report that provides the foundation for a new direction for child welfare in Saskatchewan.”

“Since April, we have met with more than 400 individuals representing stakeholder groups from communities across Saskatchewan, all with a fundamental concern for the safety and well-being of children and a desire to see changes to the current child welfare system,” Panel Chair Bob Pringle said.

“As a panel, we were struck by the quality, comprehensiveness and passion of the presentations,” Pringle said. “Our work now will focus on putting that information into a report that will provide solid

Nations (FSIN); the FSIN Women’s Commission; the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan; the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association; Court of Queen’s Bench Judges; Legal Aid; the Provincial Association of Transition Houses of Saskatchewan; and Ministry of Social Services staff, supervisors, and managers. Many people with direct experience with the child welfare system also attended the meetings. Approximately 80 written submissions from agencies and individuals and 57 website “e-consultations” were also received. A number of provincial and First Nations/Métis organizations also engaged in separate processes of information gathering, organizing meetings that were attended by more than 800 people. The input received was then summarized and presented to the panel.

Throughout the review, the panel focused on the broad themes of prevention, protection, quality of care, family reunification, permanency and youth transition. The panel is currently finalizing their recommendations and report, which

they plan to present to the Minister of Social Services by early October.

“The challenges being felt by the child welfare system in Saskatchewan are being felt across Canada,” Pringle said. “In the course of our work, we have studied similar reviews from other jurisdictions, looking at their findings and best practices and how they might be applied here. We’ve also consulted with experts in child welfare from other provinces and at the national level.

“We are not alone in trying to find solutions to this critical issue,” Pringle said. “I am confident that the dialogue begun during this review process can lead to a strong, inclusive and focused approach to improving the lives of children in care in the province.”

The independent Child Welfare Review panel consists of Chair Bob Pringle of Saskatoon, Howard Cameron of the Beaudry’s and Okemasis First Nation, April Durocher of Saskatoon (originally from Île-à-la-Crosse), and Carol Skelton of Harris.

## **For more information, contact:**

Brian Miller  
Social Services  
Regina  
Phone: 306-787-0531  
Email: brian.miller3@gov.sk.ca

Bob Pringle  
Child Welfare Review  
Saskatoon  
Phone: 877-370-6511  
Email: pringle@saskchildwelfare-review.ca

# National project update – Every Child Matters: Strengthening Foster Families in Canada

August 31, 2010

The CFFA is working with the Child Welfare League of Canada (CWLC) on a two and a half year project that will bring together foster families across Canada. Foster families will be involved in consultations and focus groups, exchanging information during national teleconferences, and contributing to an understanding of how we recruit, train, and retain foster families nation wide. In May 2010, the project team met with the Directors of Child Welfare from across Canada and engaged them in the data collection phase of the project. This data differs from the national databases online in that the focus is on you. We need to know how many foster families there are in Canada in 2010, how you work with your private and public agencies, and why you leave fostering or choose to stay.

Data on pre-approval and post approval training for foster parents was also collected from provincial and territorial training coordinators this spring. The models of training,

training hours, and training modes (foster parent as lead trainer or co trainer) are different across this country. The project team also consulted with researchers in Canada who have surveyed foster parents and studied recruitment and retention strategies.

In June 2010, the team presented Every Child Matters at the annual CFFA Conference. After the presentation, delegates from across Canada shared information on the strengths, concerns and successes of their provincial/territorial foster care system. This information is being used to plan for upcoming project activities.

Children in care identify foster family care as their preferred alternative care provision (Flynn, 2003:194). The educational outcomes of children in care who live in foster families are higher than those children who live in other types of alternative care provision such as group or residential care options (Kluger, Alexander & Curtis, 2000). There is also

considerable international research (Bass, Shields, and Behrman, 2004) supporting family based alternative care as the preferable care option for the child. In a word, foster family care is the best alternative out of home placement for a child who cannot live in the parental home. The question becomes how to support this best alternative placement, and this project will indicate how this support works best across Canada.

## What to look for this Fall?

- CWLC will be going across Canada holding focus groups with foster parents.
- A National Teleconference (with a toll free number of course!) with a lead Canadian researcher in the field of foster family recruitment and retention
- An edition of Canada's Children focusing on foster families.
- There are many success stories in Canada to share, and many agency foster parent partnerships that are working well. Working together we achieve so much more!

---

## Check out the SFFA website

You'll find:

- Updated **manuals and policies**
- A **calendar of events** for the whole province
- Continuous **announcements** from our staff
- A list of our **Resource Centre materials** ... and much more!

We ask that all SFFA Local Committee Executive members notify us of all current and upcoming events as well as any training so that we may post them on our website calendar.



“Please visit our website for the latest information on fostering in our province.”

**www.sffa.sk.ca**

# What is the “One Province, One Library Card” initiative?

All public libraries in Saskatchewan are moving to a “One Province, One Library Card” initiative, which will connect all public library systems throughout the province.



As part of this initiative, all Saskatchewan public libraries have agreed to a new set of borrowing terms. In Canada, an agreement on this scale, involving over 300 libraries, is unprecedented.

## What is the SILS Consortium?

The Saskatchewan Information & Library Services Consortium (SILS Consortium) brings together all 10 public library systems in Saskatchewan, plus Provincial Library, a branch of the Ministry of Education.

## Why was a Consortium created?

The SILS Consortium enables members (each public library system) to collaborate on joint projects and purchases for the benefit of all patrons in the province.

## How has this initiative been funded?

In October of 2008, the Provincial Government committed \$5.2 million over four years to the Single Integrated Library System (SILS). This included \$2 million in one-time

funding to the SILS Consortium to purchase software, and \$1.3 million to assist library boards with purchasing local computers. The remaining \$1.9 million will be used to support the implementation of SILS throughout the province. Regional and Municipal Library Boards are also major contributors to the SILS project.

## What is the time frame for implementing the new system?

Considering the complexity of this initiative, a phased-in approach will be used to migrate all public libraries over to SILS.

*The first four public libraries to migrate to the new system are:*

**Saskatoon Public Library** – December 15/09

**Palliser Regional Library** – January 12/10

**Southeast Regional Library** – January 12/10

**Regina Public Library** – February 2/10

## How will residents be affected by this change?

The move towards a new integrated library system across the province is far reaching – with thousands of library patrons and library staff, at over 300 public library locations, experiencing changes.

At this time, every public library system has their own schedule of late charges, with a few library systems currently not having any charges. In order to ensure a “common user experience” for all library patrons

across the province, all Consortium members have agreed to use the same schedule of late charges. These will come into effect as each library system migrates to the new system.

## How will this new initiative benefit the residents of Saskatchewan?

From a holistic viewpoint, the “One Province, One Library Card” initiative will provide all Saskatchewan library patrons with faster and more equitable access to public library services and materials.

*More specifically, library patrons will benefit in the following ways:*

### More convenient access

- Patrons will be able to access public library materials from anywhere in the province
- Access to the catalogue 24/7 from any computer that has Internet access
- Patrons will be able to request materials to their preferred library location i.e., the branch closest to where they live or work)
- Patrons will receive notices for holds, late charges, etc. through a centralized notification system which now includes email

### Increased security

- Patrons will receive a personalized library card account providing them with borrowing rights at all Saskatchewan public libraries
- Patrons can be assured that others can't abuse the borrowing privileges of the card because the cards will be non-transferable

### Easier to use

- Patrons will experience a much more user-friendly catalogue displaying the front covers of all materials – just like users would see on Amazon.ca or Chapters.ca
- Patrons will be able to easily find the materials they want using the new catalogue

### Faster access to materials

- Patrons will get their materials in a more timely manner due to overall improvements in the way materials are purchased, catalogued and processed

### We'd like to take this opportunity to update you on our progress regarding our One Province, One Library Card initiative.

In mid-December, Saskatoon Public Library went live with a new single integrated library system. Out of necessity, we were the first library system to go live — our existing circulation system was outdated and could not support further enhancements. Since Saskatoon migrated, three other library systems have also moved to the new system. By early June, more than half of the 306 public libraries in the province will have migrated. By the end of 2010, all public libraries will be working on the new system.

Again, thank you for your patience as we experience this “change in progress.”

## Make your own tree ornament

by Amanda Formaro

*Difficulty: Very Easy*

*Age: 5 and up*

*Parental supervision recommended*

### What you'll need:

- 1 jumbo craft stick
- 5 regular craft sticks
- Green and brown craft paint
- 12" yarn or ribbon
- 1 gold glittery chenille stem
- ½ silver glittery chenille stem
- 25-30 colored sequins
- Paintbrush
- Scissors
- White craft glue



### How to make it:

1. Cut one of the regular craft sticks in half. Put aside.
2. Cut half an inch off of each end of two of the regular craft sticks, discard cut ends.
3. Paint the jumbo craft stick brown.
4. Paint the uncut craft sticks (2), the half craft stick pieces (2), and the trimmed craft sticks (2) the color green. Allow all craft sticks to dry.
5. Glue the green craft sticks horizontally onto the brown craft stick (trunk), starting with the longest sticks at the bottom and working your way upward. Try to space them out evenly. Allow the glue to dry.
6. Bend silver chenille stem into the shape of a star. Trim excess if needed.
7. Cut the gold chenille stem into four pieces, each one smaller than the other (4.5", 3.5", 2.5", 1.5").
8. Curve each of the gold chenille stems and glue them onto the tree as garland. Start at the bottom, gluing the longest piece in place. Next, move up and glue the second longest piece, and so on.
9. Glue the silver chenille star to the top of the tree.
10. Use the white craft glue bottle tip to dot on glue in various spots on the green craft sticks. Place sequins onto the glue dots and set aside to dry.
11. Turn the ornament over and glue a looped piece of yarn onto the back for the hanger.

**Tips:** About 10 minutes into drying time, carefully lift the craft sticks off the paper if they have become stuck. Put back down to complete drying. Save wooden sticks from your kids' desserts to use for craft projects. If you are having trouble handling sequins, use a pair of eyebrow tweezers.

## Discounts for Foster Families

If you know of a local business to request discounts from please call Tracey Arnold for more information: 1-306-975-1580 and we will provide you with a letter you can present to the business which will then be followed up by the SFFA.

Please bring in your membership card to the businesses below and receive great discounts.

**Costco Wholesale** (Saskatoon Location): When foster families purchase a NEW membership at Costco, you can receive a \$10.00 Gift card. This is not available for membership renewals. Please contact Debbie Oberhammer at 933-4262 if you are interested in this offer.

**ICI Paints:** Offers 30% off paint and 20% percent off brushes and rollers. Bring your membership card in and the discount account is under Saskatchewan Foster Families. The account is available all across Saskatchewan.

**Saskatoon Travelodge:** Offers Standard rooms from \$104.95 for single/double. This rate is subject to availability. Group conference rates (10 rooms or more) can be negotiated at the time of booking. If you have trouble booking a room, please call Alana at 978-6520.

**Payless:** Is offering foster families a 15% off all regular priced merchandise for 2009. The discount cannot be used in conjunction with any other promotion or discount. You must show your membership card at time of purchase.

**Tomas The Cook** (Saskatoon): Members of the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association will receive 10% off at Thomas The Cook restaurant when they present their membership card.

**Cozy Cradles & Kids Wear** (Regina): Offers a 10% discount to Foster families.

**Uncle Ed's Furniture** (Saskatoon): Talk to Bernie or Manfred and they will give you a good discount 244-2057.

**The Brick:** In Saskatoon contact Randy King or Ken Collier and they will give you contract pricing. Make an appointment with Randy and the process will go more quickly 244-1400. For Prince Albert contact Heith Olmstead for contract pricing 763-1775. In Regina contact Roger Martin for contract pricing 924-2020. For Moose Jaw contact Ron Morin for contract pricing 692-9520, and in North Battleford contact Nathan for contract pricing 446-3433.

**Kids Trading Company** (Regina): Is offering foster families a 10% off discount for everything in the store. Show your membership card at time of purchase. See [www.kidstradingcompany.ca](http://www.kidstradingcompany.ca)



---

## Something to check-out

The Foster Care Trading Post, that used to be called Foster Care Share, is exclusively for foster parents to use and has all kinds of FREE items up for the taking. Do you have used articles that you no longer need, such as children's clothing, toys, furniture or appliances? Do you need some new items like a bed, household items or personal items?

Next time you are on the computer, you can visit one of these sites:

**Saskatoon** ...<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/saskatoonfostercaretradingpost/>

**Regina** ...<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/reginafostercaretradingpost/>

**Fort Qu'appelle** ...<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FQfostercaretradingpost/>

# Free parent & tot program



Parent-talk follows. Enjoy a coffee or tea, meet other parents, and focus on positive parenting and early literacy learning skills. Childcare and a nutritious snack are provided in a separate room at this time.

**P**arent and Tot is a 2 hour, free program, which runs weekly from September to June for parents, relatives, caregivers and their children 0-5 years old.

The program is lead by a parent worker who facilitates the session with help from two childcare workers. Parents are encouraged to help and take part.

Families are together for the first hour for free-play, a circle time of songs, rhymes, finger-plays, a story and craft, and other fun early literacy based activities.

The Family Support Centre (Parent & Tot) Program is a partnership with the Greater Saskatoon

**For more information contact Anita Fengstad, Program Facilitator GSCS, tel. 659-7267, email: [afengstad@gscs.sk.ca](mailto:afengstad@gscs.sk.ca) or visit [www.columbusboscohomes.ca](http://www.columbusboscohomes.ca)**



Catholic Schools and Columbus Bosco Homes. It is non-denominational and open to all families in the community.

## Testimonials

*"I was so happy that I found a group that I could attend with both my children. Parent & Tot was just what my family needed. We enjoyed the playtime, songs, stories and crafts. I liked being in the room with my children for the first half and appreciated being able to have the parent time as well. It is a positive and comfortable environment. Thank you Parent & Tot!"*

*"It's very educational - my children are very happy and they look forward to coming so it makes me feel secure. It gives me a chance to meet other parents and children to interact with other kids."*

*"I can honestly say I'm a better person and a better mom to my son since coming here."*

*Join us!*

### School Location & Time

**Bishop Roberecki**  
24 Pearson Place  
Mon - Thurs 9:30am-11:30am  
Tues 12:30pm-2:30pm  
(Full) Please call Shirley at 384-7204

**Bishop Klein**  
1121 Northumberland Ave  
Mon 12:45pm-2:45pm

**St. John Bosco**  
1205 Ave N South  
Tues 9:30am-11:30am

**St. Bernard**  
203 Whiteshore Crescent  
Thurs 12:45pm-2:45pm

**St. Anne**  
102 Ravine Court  
Tues 1:00pm-3:00pm

**St. Edward**  
1002 Ave P North  
Wed 1:00pm-3:00pm

**St. Mark**  
414 Pandygrasse Road  
Thurs 9:00am-11:00am

**St. Michael**  
22-33rd Street East  
Fri 9:30am-11:30am

**Bishop Filevich**  
125-105th Street West  
Fri 9:30am-11:30am

**Bishop Pocock**  
227 Avondale Road  
Fri 1:00pm-3:00pm

# Christmas word search for kids



Words can go across and down only.  
Words may overlap but do not share letters.

r c i v y w a d v e n t d b k  
e h p s n o w m a n r w e q t  
l r h c t l t n l t u z c x b  
v i o a m l p b j p d t e t n  
e s l r m e r r y e o n m p d  
s t l o r h p r h a l l b n s  
j m y l p m p z h c p p e l t  
o a t s k l v z y e h g r m o  
y s d t m z n m f t o y s r c  
s c b r t n o r t h p o l e k  
l m k e w f k t s a n t a y i  
e j f e b r l s n o w r m v n  
i n r e i n d e e r y x f d g  
g f j i n g l e b e l l s y k  
h r n t i n s e l w d s t a r

advent

ivy

reindeer

star

carols

jingle bells

rudolph

stocking

christmas

joy

santa

tinsel

december

merry

sleigh

toys

elves

north pole

snow

tree

holly

peace

snowman

# Celebrate the holidays with the gift of time

**H**ave you been feeling stretched by financial pressure? If you're facing tough buying decisions, the responsibilities of the holiday season may be getting you down. In these challenging times, in more ways than one, you just have to let go of the idea of a perfect Christmas, Hanukah or Kwanzaa.

Even though it's important to honour the tradition of giving, the accumulation of material things cannot hold a candle to the gift that matters most. Bringing cheer to others is a great way to cheer yourself up as well, and you can do it without breaking into your savings account. With the holidays fast approaching, you certainly don't want to add more pressure. Follow these practical tips and keep stress in check as you focus on more joy and less stuff:

## Give the gift of CONNECTION

Put heart in your relationships. Arrange a regular weekly date with your parents. Invite them out to lunch, a museum or the movies. Send a card to someone with whom you've lost contact. Enclose a recent family photo, your email address and a promise to keep in touch. Drive an elderly neighbor to the grocery store, a doctor's appointment or the shopping mall.

## Give to a WORTHY CAUSE

Get the family or a group of friends together and spend a couple of hours at a homeless shelter. Pass forward gifts you've never used. Or bring some toys or clothes that are in good shape. Buy a small present for a street person you pass regularly and make eye contact when you give it. Put a big smile on your face and help cook the holiday dinner at a soup kitchen. Make a donation to Aunt Sue's favorite charity; every gift counts no matter how much you spend.

## Give OF YOURSELF

Enjoy time with your friends by inviting them over for an evening

of fun. Organize a potluck dinner and have them bring their signature dish. Cut down on expenses by exchanging memories instead of presents. Or express yourself and create some of your holiday gift items. Make a coupon book filled with orders for good deeds. Add a personal touch by baking decorative cookies with the kids. Show others you care with an IOU to babysit so they can have a much needed night out.

## Give TO YOURSELF

Take some downtime over the holidays. For a couple of hours each day, try not to focus on your problems. Curl up with a great book from the library, watch the ballgame with your teenagers or take your grandkids to the park. Enjoy peace of mind by paying down your debts. Hold back from buying lots of gifts or taking the family on an expensive outing. Decide together how to spend a fun and relaxing day. Your family will understand and grow from the experience.



Cut down on expenses by exchanging memories instead of presents.

The holidays don't always have to look like a Norman Rockwell painting. You create more stress for yourself if you stick to old routines and operate on automatic pilot. Begin to lay the groundwork for change in your gift giving rituals. As you can see, it doesn't have to cost you anything but time. And when money is tight and life is challenging, connection and support mean the most.

It will be a gift to yourself when you recreate the joy of simpler days. Small changes can represent a new beginning. Take heart as you give a little that feels like a lot. And in these hard times, that's a good lesson for all of us.



## How to *thrive* during the holidays

**T**he snow is falling and the winter season has begun to set in. Neighborhoods are buzzing with children sledding down snow covered hills, and families are busily decorating their homes. It really is “beginning to feel a lot like Christmas!” Before we know it, school winter breaks will be here and our children will be home for a couple of weeks. With the holidays right around the corner, I thought it might be helpful to share some tips and activity ideas that will help you and your family thrive during this busy time of the year.

**1** **Keep a consistent schedule.** During this busy time of the year, it is very easy for families to get away from their regular routine. Before you know it, the kids are eating breakfast at noon and staying up until all hours of the night. It is important for families to keep a fairly consistent schedule even through the holidays. Keeping regular bed, wake, and meal times will be important to maintain your routine.

**2** **Have some jolly holiday fun.** There are so many fun activities that you can undertake during this holiday season. Making holiday cookies and snacks, having a red and green meal, going sledding

or caroling, decorating the house, and making holiday ornaments for friends and relatives are just a few of the fun activities that you and your family can enjoy.

**3** **Don't overdo it!** The holidays tend to be an extremely busy and stressful time of the year. When you are looking at your calendar and scheduling activities, be sure that you are limiting them so that you are also including time for just your family.

**4** **Make a family New Year resolution.** The new year is a great time to start a new endeavour.

Are there things that you would like to work toward in the new year? Keeping the house clean, sharing chores among family members, and saving as a family for a desired trip are all great things to work toward. As a family, sit down and create a family resolution for the new year. Be sure it is something reasonable to which all family members will be able to contribute.

**5** **Enjoy the season.** Even though the holidays can be a busy and stressful time of the year, it is important for everyone to sit back, relax, and enjoy the season. Be sure to take time for yourself to get some well deserved rest and relaxation.

# Miniature gingerbread house — big on flavour and fun



This 'mini' craft has big flavour. Kids can decorate this Miniature Gingerbread House and enjoy as a Christmas treat, or as a decoration for years to come.

## What you'll need:

- 7 graham crackers
- Frosting for glue (recipe below)
- Assorted small candies for decorating
- Ribbon
- Pastry bag and tip or Ziploc bag and scissors

## Frosting:

- 1/2 pound confectioner's sugar
- 3 tbs. butter/margarine
- 1/2 tsp. Vanilla
- 1 1/2 - 2 tbs. Milk

## How to make it:

1. Mix all the ingredients together until smooth and easy to spread, but not runny. Add more sugar if too runny.
2. If you have a pastry bag, place frosting in bag and use a small tip. You can use a Ziploc bag, cutting a small hole in the corner.
3. Place one graham cracker flat on the table, squeeze a little frosting around all edges. You may need an extra pair of hands.
4. Place one cracker on each side standing up. It now looks like a box without a top.
5. Carefully squeeze more frosting on all outside corners from top to bottom and around the bottom of the box.
6. Let stand for a short while to let frosting harden a little. This will make working with the roof a little easier.
7. Now squeeze frosting on two of the top edges of the box and place the last two graham crackers in a V shape on as the roof. Looks like a triangle on a
8. box now from the side. It may overhang if you can get the frosting to hold for you.
8. Squeeze frosting along the top of the roof where crackers join. Let stand again until frosting hardens a little.
9. Now comes the fun part - with leftover frosting, cover the roof to look like snow. (two sides are left open) Then squeezing small amounts on candy, place candy on the house to decorate. You can use the frosting to add things like doors and windows. Just use your imagination.
10. After project is totally dry, string ribbon through to open side of the roof and hang on your tree.

**Tip:** If you want to do this project with young children, you might want to make the base house ahead of time, gluing the corners from the inside – and let it harden. Then turn them loose with frosting and small candies to do the decorating.

*Difficulty: Average*

*Parental supervision recommended*

## The best rolled sugar cookies

*Original Recipe Yield 5 dozen*

*Prep Time: 20 minutes*

*Cook Time: 8 minutes*

*Ready in: 3 hours*

## Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups butter, softened
- 2 cups white sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 5 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt



## Directions:

1. In a large bowl, cream together butter and sugar until smooth. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Stir in the flour, baking powder, and
2. salt. Cover, and chill dough for at least one hour (or overnight).
2. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C). Roll out dough on floured surface 1/4 to 1/2 inch thick. Cut into shapes with any cookie cutter. Place cookies 1 inch apart on ungreased cookie sheets.
3. Bake 6 to 8 minutes in preheated oven. Cool completely.



233 4th Ave South  
 Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
 S7K 1N1

Phone: (306) 975-1580  
 Fax: (306) 975-1581  
 Toll Free: 1-888-276-2880  
 E-mail: [sffa@sasktel.net](mailto:sffa@sasktel.net)  
 Website: [www.sffa.sk.ca](http://www.sffa.sk.ca)

*Executive Director*  
**Deb Davies**

*Coordinator of Services Support*  
**Karlee Novakovski**

*Senior Advocate & Training  
 Consultant*  
**Paul Bunz**

*Foster Family Advocate*  
**Mel Brockman**

*Project Coordinator*  
**Kristine Scarrow**

*Damage Assessor*  
**Barry Fraser**

*Office Administrator*  
**Karen Pollock**

*Financial Coordinator/Admin*  
**Kendra Mazer**

*Intake/Volunteer Coordinator*  
**Tracey Arnold**

*Foster Family Advocate*  
**Wayne Roman**

*Tech Support*  
**Rene Stock**

**Board of Directors**

*President*  
**Tracie Gilchrist**  
 Saskatoon

*Directors*  
**Stephen Clark**  
 Prince Albert

**Jordan Carrier**  
 Prince Albert

**Christine Fullawka**  
 North Portal

**Lester Herman**  
 LaLoche

**Tony Carr**  
 Saskatoon

**Tim Adams**  
 Moose Jaw

Watch for our next issue of the *Advisor*.



**Advisor**

**PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 41271051**  
 RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:  
 SASKATCHEWAN FOSTER FAMILIES ASSOCIATION  
 233 4TH AVE SOUTH  
 SASKATOON SK S7K 1N1

Please Recycle

