

Advisor

NEWSLETTER

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Winter 2017

Featuring

Christmas in Care

Creating a Welcome Book

Exploring Play Therapy

Talking to Your Foster Child

Breathing Exercises for Kids

Plus

The Ministry's New Approach

Cold vs the Flu?

How Media Use Affects Children

Petty's Kitchen Recipes



**SASKATCHEWAN
FOSTER FAMILIES**

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During the Holiday Season more than ever, our thoughts turn gratefully to those who have been a part of our past year. And in this spirit we sincerely say "Thank You".

May the warmth that is all around us during the Holiday Season fill your heart with joy, and shed radiance over the year that lies ahead. On behalf of the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association, we want to wish you and your family a very ***Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!***

The content in Advisor Magazine is intended to be used for general information, educational or awareness purposes only. Guidelines, tips and strategies provided are to be used at the sole discretion and assessment of the reader. Any suggestions or opinions expressed in the editorial are not necessarily those of the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association Inc.



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*We need
your
email*

We are now sending e-mails to our foster parents on a monthly basis. To be added to our list and receive the latest news, please send your e-mail address to wayne@sffa.sk.ca

THANK-YOU!

Moving towards a new approach to working with all families

Over the past number of years, some of you have likely heard us mention “Flexible Response” and, more recently, “Integrated Practice Strategies” when talking about what we’re doing to work differently with families. You may have also wondered what this means for you as a foster parent, and for the children and young people in your care.

These two terms describe an approach that puts the families we are working with in the driver’s seat—an approach we think you’ll find reflects similar values as the PRIDE model. Families, as full partners on our team, self-identify what their challenges are, and then choose the supports they feel they need to best help them get back on their feet.

The team approach also includes all of us providing care or supports to members of the family—foster parents

and other out-of-home care-providers, workers from any involved community-based organizations, and all of us here at the Ministry.

Over the past number of years, we’ve been moving towards this approach. Originally, we referred to it as “Flexible Response” when we piloted it in Saskatoon. The focus at the time was to find alternate ways to support vulnerable families where we might be required to remove children from their family home for safety reasons.

Since then, we have expanded use of this approach to include more families with different needs, and in more areas of the province. In the next four years, we expect it will be province-wide and our approach to working with all families, no matter their level of vulnerability.

So, what can you expect as a member of the team? Over

time, you will see a shift where we may have more case conferences with you to ensure we are all on the same page. You will be asked to provide input, ideas and feedback. You will also see the family you are helping to support being asked to participate as a fully engaged member of the team, along with their children.

While we are at the beginning stages of this shift, we believe that it is going to make a difference for the children and the families we are supporting. We also believe that it very closely aligns itself to the PRIDE model you are so familiar with. *If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to ask! Just contact Tina Carter at 306-787-9191 or Jill Fauth at 787-0192 if you want more information.*



We all have the capacity to be a superhero. In order to become one, you just have to find your unique power or ability and exploit it for the greater good. The cape and mask are optional accessories, but a kind heart is essential.

– Robert Clancy





Christmas in Care

Christmas can be and should be a magical time for children, but many of our fostered children and young people find this time of year very stressful and difficult.

All around on social media, television, billboards and advertising we promote the vision of the perfect family enjoying the festivities – think back to your childhood and then put yourself in the shoes of the children and young people you care for, what if you are separated from your birth parents for whatever reason, how would you feel? The thoughts of our young people and children in care will revert back to their previous situations evoking some very powerful emotions both positive and negative and many will have difficult contact with their birth family and relatives around the holiday season.

Despite the efforts of well-meaning foster carers, even asking a child to make a list of the gifts they would like can stir up feelings of low

self-esteem, negative energy, anger and a lack of self-worth. Many children find it difficult to allow foster carers to penetrate their defences at the best of times but Christmas is a time when comparisons will come to the forefront.

Some children will have experienced parents getting violent, sleeping through Christmas day due to the effect of alcohol or drugs, with no Christmas lunch or presents to open, is it any wonder that it is at this time of year the number of absconded children rises, the tantrums faced by foster carers increases, the strain on many placements is exasperated and the number of children that enter the care system escalates.

Some of the issues you may face as a foster carer could be:

I hate Christmas, I'm not doing it.

You may know a little of the child's past with some of the issues they have faced and could act accordingly.

- Structure and plan Christmas and involve the children in the house equally
- Take time to explain what Christmas means to you and your family so as to help your child enjoy the festivities
- Take time to listen to and understand how your child has experienced Christmas in the past
- Think about the extended family you have invited and how this could impact on your children in care
- Children may have been exposed to the abuses of alcohol so restrict the consumption of alcohol until after the children have gone to bed or avoid it completely.
- Include children in present buying and putting up stockings
- Include children in the food shopping or the planning of the big day's menu to help them with any concerns over food. Children that have an eating disorder may feel more comfortable by planning and producing



- Try to be tolerant and understanding
- Allow them to relax and calm down
- Be supportive
- Try to distract them into another activity
- Act the fool and be silly – break down barriers to re-engage



some of the food rather than be presented with a big plate of festive treats and expected to demolish the lot

I'm going to ruin Christmas.

Children can deliberately disrupt Christmas by isolating themselves or breaking the gifts lovingly purchased for them or generally trying to spoil the day for others. This is often a sign of deep emotional painful feelings breaking to the surface. Children will react the only way they know how or have been accustomed to.

Am I in the way for your Christmas?

With young people in foster care, they can sometimes feel in the way or may be of a different faith or culture so may feel awkward about Christmas.

- Do not make a child or young person feel pressured to join in or neglect them from proceedings
- Ensure they are included within any family traditions (have they got a special stocking for the fireplace or a pillowcase for presents)
- Have they got a special Christmas mug?
- Include a tradition from the young person or something from their faith to run alongside your own

What will my family do without me?

- So often a child worrying about their family missing them is a way for a child to show their insecurities by reflecting their feelings onto their parents. Many children will miss their parents or be worried about another family member. Often children will have been the main care giver for one or more members of their family.



- Discuss birth family contact with both your supervising social worker and the child's social worker around Christmas
- It may be appropriate to arrange a phone call or skype contact on Christmas day with birth relatives
- Provide photographs of school activities and nativity plays for birth parents where appropriate
- Send a card and/or small gift with the foster child for parents to receive during contact sessions

What do you normally do at Christmas?

- It is often the quirky silly routines that we carry out every year that stay with us into adulthood. If you think back to your own childhood there will be things that make you smile and this is a chance to impart positive memories onto others.
- Mix oats and glitter together and spread on the grass and path outside the door so Rudolph will know where to land (they should glisten in the moonlight).
- Get ready for bed early and curl up on the sofa with a Christmas movie, hot chocolate and popcorn.
- Track Santa on NORAD online www.noradsanta.org to watch presents being delivered around the world, set a destination where once Santa reaches it, it is then time for bed
- Put out a carrot and mince pie out before going to bed for the big man and Rudolph (ensure Santa has taken a bite by the morning light)
- Dress the tree with some homemade decorations

- Make a Christmas cake or pudding or mince pie with your fostered children, for the more adventurous a gingerbread house

Father Christmas won't know where I am?

Your child may be new to placement and may be worrying if they will be with you for Christmas or are they returning home or will they ever go home or will they have to move to another placement?

- Communicate with the fostering team to resolve any ambiguity; don't answer these questions without confirmation.
- Visit Santa to reassure your child that he will know where they are
- Involve them in planting a "Santa Deliver Here" sign
- Encourage the foster children to write a letter to Santa

Can you take a placement on Christmas Eve?

- Situations can often come to a head around this time of year and it is not unlikely for foster carers to be asked to take a placement at late notice.
- Include one or two generic presents that are non-gender specific and could cross a multitude of ages to your shopping list, wrapped and ready, just in case
- A small store of toys purchased in sales can always be used at other times of the year if not used during Christmas for example birthdays or rewards for achievements



Who are all these people?

Christmas is a time when the extended family comes together, often in large groups which can be intimidating for our foster children and



young people. Some members of the extended family may feel uncomfortable about your role as a foster carer or alternatively, many people care about the plight of children and could have lots of questions that initially may seem harmless but can give the impression of an interrogation.

- Try to introduce adults and children beforehand wherever possible, in a less intimidating environment
- It may be appropriate to invite a friend of your foster child from school or a neighbour perhaps to give support and familiarity
- Identify people that your children will meet by photograph beforehand
- Remember confidentiality and politely inform any enquiring friends and family that you appreciate their concern and they will understand that your children's past is confidential for their own security and respect
- You may wish to brief extended family before the day of the party

You love my sister/brother more than me

Children with cognitive impairments may find it difficult to understand the concept between money and value and may perceive that one child has been favoured over another. Children may also compare birth children to fostered children.

- Allow each child an equal amount of your time
- Share Christmas tasks equally between all children (birth and fostered children alike), allow them to decorate different parts of the tree or cake etc
- Consider what will work for your child's level of understanding and background

Merry Christmas! Santa's been here!

Be prepared to begin Christmas day at the crack of dawn or even before. The excitement will explode into your already busy day – join in and embrace it.

- Ensure you have batteries
- Are any tools needed or scissors to get into boxes etc
- Have someone ready to build presents
- There will be tears, arguments, tantrums, disappointment coupled with elation, laughter and noise – be prepared
- If anything goes wrong or the turkey gets burnt just make the most of it and try to laugh it off, it will all make for positive memories to look back on in the future.

Finally...

Make time for yourself

- Relax with a cup of tea and a chocolate in your dressing gown in front of the telly while your kids are dreaming in their beds.
- Plan breaks and some me-time you will deserve it.
- Relax in a hot bath
- Share the role of caring with your partner or your parents or anyone within your support network



Whatever you do, whatever your children present to you over the Christmas period—you can cope, and you will excel. Use your experience, trust your instincts and remember you are a foster carer for a reason, you care and you make a difference.

Source: <http://www.fosterline.info/christmas-in-care/>

Creating a *Welcome Book*

A Welcome Book is a scrapbook you present to your child to help introduce them to your family. They can be presented to a child once they have been placed in your home.

What Goes Into a Welcome Book?

A typical Welcome Book is 5-9 pages, and contains photos with brief descriptions. For an older child/teenager, you can include more pages. Suggestions for what to include in your Welcome Book are as follows:

- A family photo featuring the parent(s), and brothers and sis
- A photo of the pets in the home
- A photo of the outside of the house
- A photo of the child's room, and any other rooms with significance (living room where you watch TV, play room, kitchen, backyard, etc.)
- A photo of their new school
- A photo of a local park, or your family participating in a favorite weekend activity
- Other suggestions:
- Be cautious when including pictures of extended family and close friends. You don't want to overwhelm the child with a bunch of new people. The main focus should be on the people living in your home.
- When possible, use action shots of people. For example, if your family loves to cook you could have a picture of you and your child(ren) baking cookies in your kitchen. Not only does this allow the child to envision what life is like in your home, but it also makes your family seem more welcoming versus looking at a picture of an empty room.
- For younger children, use less pages and words.
- If you have some information on what types of activities or hobbies your child enjoys, include pictures of those as well. For example, if your child loves to play soccer include a picture of a nearby soccer field where they can play. Or if they love to go skateboarding, show a picture of the local skate park.

It's important to keep the information and photos in the Welcome Book as "real" as possible. Your Welcome Book should show your child what daily life is like in your home. Familiarity reduces fear, so include photos and information about what a child will be experiencing/seeing on a regular basis.

Any new child coming into your home would benefit from a Welcome Book. It will still be a big change for them, and having a Welcome Book to look through will not only make them feel more comfortable, it will also make them feel they are part of your family.



Tips on creating Your Welcome Book

If you are the "artsy-craftsy" type and like to do things hands on—you may already have some scrapbooking supplies in your possession. Another simple option would be to use a photo album. You could incorporate extra images and words cut from a magazine to accompany the photos. Or consider using an exercise book, 3-ring binder or duotang, with sheet protectors. It only has to be as labour intensive and detailed as you choose it to be.

Another option would be to design a digital Welcome book. This mode of communication might be especially appealing for an older child or teen. You don't need extraordinary tools or great software skills, just a simple program on your computer or search out one of the many free tools available online.

Source: http://www.afamilyforeverychild.org/Family/ResourceLibrary2/Matching_Creating_a_Welcome_Book.pdf

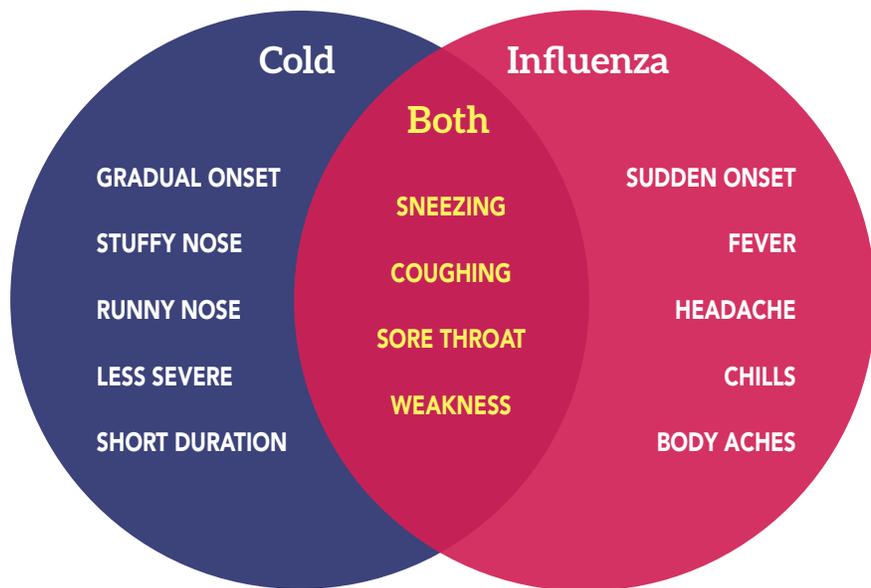


Is it a Cold or the Flu?

Uh oh! You're getting that achy feeling in your joints, your throat is scratchy, and you can't seem to get warm. There's no doubt you're getting sick, but is it a cold or the flu? The flu generally comes on more quickly and body aches are a prominent feature. The flu can also cause other health issues, so it helps to recognize the difference.

Germs are spread on surfaces, by people and through air. Consider what you can do to help reduce the spread of cold and flu viruses.

How to tell the difference



Get the flu vaccine



Stay home if you are sick



Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces



Wash hands regularly with soap and water



Sneeze and cough into your elbow or a tissue



EXPLORING PLAY THERAPY

Unlocking Hidden Emotions: Play Therapy for Foster Children



Trying to understand what a child is thinking can be difficult. Without the ability to express themselves, or if past trauma has affected their ability to do so, handling grief and trauma can become a major obstacle for foster parents. Whether it's attachment issues, stubbornness, or acting out, behaviors you experience with foster children may be cries for help. It has been concluded by many professionals that "Children don't have the same cognitive ability as an adult to say what's bothering them. The problem could be a behavioral issue, psychological issue, or maybe even medical." But how can foster parents break through and help a child when they can't understand what that child is expressing? This is where play therapy for foster children comes in.

Magical Thinkers: Think Like A Child

For young children, play can be a way to help them bring out those emotions and ideas that are trapped inside them. Play therapy is a technique that employs the child's natural mode of being—play—in attempts to unlock the trauma that sparks the outwardly apparent emotional and behavioral issues. Children can work on issues that are distressing to them, can play out issues of what the future will be, and can talk about trauma. If it's too hard to put into words, they can work on it with play.



Play therapy is a unique opportunity to gain access to the inner, unexpressed feelings of children.



“Children don’t have the same cognitive ability as an adult to say what’s bothering them.”

This approach has been determined as appropriate because “Preschoolers are ‘magical thinkers,’ and they may believe their thoughts, feelings, or actions caused their loss. They do not readily share their magical thinking, so adults must assess their experience of grief through behavior, play therapy, or other means. Children this age may feel anxious, hopeless, clingy, or withdrawn and emotionally numb.”

For those children who have no means of understanding their trauma, play can be powerful. According to the Association for Play Therapy (A4PT), play therapy can address a multitude of issues stemming from things like including anger management, grief/loss, abandonment, anxiety, depression, ADHD, and autism. A4PT believes that “play therapy is more than working out feelings.” Playtherapy.org tells us that the goal of play therapy for foster children is to create “a safe, confidential and caring environment which allows the child to play with as few limits as possible but as many as necessary (for physical and emotional safety).” The entire focus is to help the child pull out and express trauma that may be resting in their unconscious mind.

Play Therapy and Your Foster Child

It is recommended that each child be evaluated officially before any therapy can begin. If your child’s behavioral issues seem serious, it is recommended that you speak with your caseworker to discuss your options.

Source: <http://foster-adoptive-kinship-family-services-nj.org/>



Understanding Play Therapy

Play therapy is generally employed with children aged 3 through 11 and provides a way for them to express their experiences and feelings through a natural, self-guided, self-healing process. As children's experiences and knowledge are often communicated through play, it becomes an important vehicle for them to know and accept themselves and others. Play is now widely recognized as being beneficial in the emotional development of children. It has a therapeutic value.



“ Many children need support in emotional literacy. Others have behaviour or mental health problems at some stage that prevents them from fulfilling their full potential.

The Play Therapy Tool-kit

The techniques and methods are the tools in the tool-kit of a play therapist or a practitioner of therapeutic play. The more skills or tools that a play therapist has the better the therapist can adapt to new situations, difficulties or problems and follow the lead given by children in the sessions.

These tools are also resources. The more resources, inner and outer, that play therapists have access to, the less likely that they will “burn out”. However it is no use knowing the theory of a tool without the practical experience of using it, initially under safe conditions. This is why Play Therapy Canada (PTC) places great emphasis on practical and experiential play therapy training.

The main ‘tools’ are:

- Creative Visualization
- Art - Drawing & Painting
- Therapeutic Storytelling
- Sandtray / Sand Worlds
- Music
- Dance and Movement
- Dramatherapy
- Puppets
- Masks
- Clay

There are many other tools which are extremely valuable in specific circumstances.

Source: <http://www.playtherapy.ca>



Recognizing when Play Therapy may be of benefit

Some studies indicate that up to 20% of children have some form of psychological problem and that 70% of these are helped through the use of psychological based therapies such as play and creative arts.

Do you know a child who?

- Is not realizing its full potential—academically, or socially?
- Has nightmares or has disturbed sleep?
- Is at risk of being/is excluded from school?
- Has suffered trauma?
- Has suffered emotional, physical or sexual abuse?
- Is adopted or fostered or in the process of being?
- Suffers because of separated/divorced parents?
- Suffers from anxiety, stress or phobias?
- Has suffered a loss or bereavement of any kind?
- Is withdrawn or continually unhappy?
- Is ill, disabled, or autistic?
- Finds it difficult to make friends?
- Quarrels frequently with peers or siblings?
- Bullies others or is bullied themselves?
- Displays inappropriate behaviour?
- Doesn't play?

Source: <http://www.playtherapy.org.uk/ChildrensEmotionalWellBeing/HelpingChildren/ConditionsList>

How media use affects children



Most kids today are plugged into devices like TVs, tablets, and smartphones well before they can even ride a bike.

Technology can be part of a healthy childhood, as long as this privilege isn't abused. For example, preschoolers can get help learning the alphabet on public television, grade schoolers can play educational apps and games, and teens can do research on the Internet.

But too much screen time can be a bad thing:

- Children who consistently spend more than 4 hours per day watching TV are more likely to be overweight.
- Kids who view violent acts on TV are more likely to show aggressive behavior, and to fear that the world is scary and that something bad will happen to them.
- Teens who play violent video games and apps are more likely to be aggressive.
- Characters on TV and in video games often depict risky behaviors, such as smoking and drinking, and also reinforce gender-role and racial stereotypes.

That's why it's so important for parents to keep tabs on their kids' screen time and set limits to ensure they're not spending too much time in front of a screen.

What's Recommended?

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends these guidelines for screen time:

- **Babies and toddlers** up to 18 months old: No screen time, with the exception of video-chatting with family and friends.
- **Toddlers** 18 months to 24 months: Some screen time with a parent or caregiver.
- **Preschoolers:** No more than 1 hour a day of educational programming, together with a parent or other caregiver who can help them understand what they're seeing.
- **Kids and teens** 5 to 18 years: Parents should place consistent limits on screen time, which includes TV, social media, and video games. Media should not take the place of getting enough sleep and being physically active.

Source: <http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/tv-affects-child.html?WT.ac=p-ra>

**SHARE
YOUR
STORY**

If you have a fostering story to share with our readers, please send it in!

We accept stories/articles about:

- Fostering tips and tricks
- Personal stories and reflections about being a foster parent
- Long term connection with past foster children
- Challenges you've experienced and creative solutions
- How your extended family or children have responded to your fostering lifestyle
- Great resources for foster parents that you'd like to share
- Foster-related book reviews
- Foster-related movie reviews
- Foster placements resulting in a family growing through adoption
- ... other notable foster related experiences

Please submit your articles by email to: wayne@sffa.sk.ca.

Talking to your Foster Child about their Parents



There are many conversations parents never look forward to having with their children, such as answering why the family pet is no longer with them, who you love more and where babies come from. Along with the usual battery of questions, foster parents also face another one that is even more daunting: *Why am I not with my real parents?*

It's a question that's likely on your foster child's mind, but he or she may be afraid to ask. They might not bring it up because they think they're not supposed to talk about their biological parents or that asking about them will hurt your feelings. It's important to create an opportunity for the child to talk openly to you and reassure them that you're always willing to answer any questions.

Talking to your FOSTER CHILD about their Parents

The thought of talking to your foster child about their parents may even scare you. Talking to your foster child about a difficult topic isn't easy, but it can strengthen the bond between you and them. Not only will it help him or her to gain a better understanding of why they are with your family, but it also can prove that you're someone they can trust. By creating an environment where you and your foster child can talk openly about his or her biological parents, you're helping them rid

“ It's important to create an opportunity for the child to talk openly to you and reassure them that you're always willing to answer any questions.

themselves of any shame they may feel about being in foster care.

It's important to have a well thought out answer prepared before they work up the courage to ask about their birth parents. Answering a question of this magnitude off the cuff can hurt your foster child, rather than help them understand why they're in your care. Using vague statements when talking to your foster child about his/her parents can result in them being more confused about their situation than they were before they talked to you. Depending on the age of the child, going too in-depth when talking about her biological parents can turn the experience into a scarring memory for them.

There are several factors to keep in mind when talking to your foster child about his/her parents. Consider the age of your foster child. An answer that an older child would understand and accept is far different from one suitable for a preschooler.

Talking to your YOUNGER FOSTER CHILD about their Parents

If your younger foster child asks about their biological parents, not only do you need to phrase your response in a way that they will understand but also put it in a way that you are okay with them repeating. A younger child's more likely to share what you tell them with others, as they don't always know what to filter out when talking to certain people, which means they may repeat what you said to their parents during a visitation.

It's important to put it in terms a younger child can relate to. If their parent is incarcerated, you can explain the situation this way.

"You know how our house has rules? Some rules are so important they are called laws and everyone has to follow them, even grown-ups. When someone breaks a law they have to go away to time-out and learn how to behave. So you are staying with us until daddy is out of time-out."

By relating laws to household rules and jail to time-out, you've explained what happened to his/her parent in terms that they may be familiar with and avoided using words that are harsh or hurtful. Don't use words like addiction, abuse and poverty that can go over your younger child's head or sound scary to her. Along with using age-appropriate language, also try to normalize the situation she's going through. One way to do this is by saying,

"Some parents need help getting a job or making safe choices before they can care for their child again, so while they are learning, their child stays with a family that has learned how to do those things."

Phrasing the situation like this conveys a few messages to your foster child. It tells him/her that their parents are making an effort to better themselves, that there are other children going through similar situations and that you're able to take care of them while her parents work towards reunification.

Talking to your OLDER FOSTER CHILD about their Parents

An older foster child will have a better grasp on why they are with you, and answering their

questions about his/her biological parents will require a more in-depth explanation. Explain to them more precisely what their parents did that lead to his/her removal. If their father was placed in jail, one way to explain it to an older child is by saying, "Your dad broke the law by stealing from a family. A judge decided that he needed to go to jail to think about what he's done. He's going to be there for a year, so while he's thinking about why he's there, we're here to take care of you."

By putting the situation like this, you're telling him/her the truth about what happened to their father without vilifying him. With this phrasing, they won't see your response as an attack on someone they love but rather an answer to a question that's troubling them.

No matter the age of your foster child, he/she most likely knows more about why they are in foster care than you think. Remind them that if they ever want to talk to you about anything she can come to you. Creating a safe space for him/her to talk freely can form the foundation on which you build your responses. When they do open up to you, listen closely to how they talk about their parents. Gauge his/her feelings and what he/she knows to determine how much information you should divulge and how to frame it.

When talking to your foster child about his/her parents, make sure they know that it wasn't their fault that they are in foster care and that they are not being punished for something they did. Being in foster care can result in her feeling confused about her emotions. Reassure your foster child that it's completely normal for him/her to care about both you and his/her birth parents at the same time.

If you have questions about your foster child's past, you can work with their caseworker to gather information to use in your answer to them. If he/she asks questions that you don't have answers to, discuss possibilities with your foster child in a positive light.

At first, talking to your foster child about his/her parents can seem like an intimidating assignment, but by taking the time to prepare a well thought out response you can transform it into a bonding experience.

Source: <http://foster-adoptive-kinship-family-services-nj.org/talking-to-your-foster-child-about-her-parents/>

8

FUN BREATHING EXERCISES FOR HOME & SCHOOL

for kids



“ Teaching children to breathe provides them with a simple but effective strategy for slowing down, both mentally and physically, helping them to take notice of how they’re feeling and to relax or calm down in the face of overwhelming emotions.”

Breathing has to be the handiest tool we can gift our child for their big emotions toolkit, after all your breath goes everywhere with you! Teaching children to breathe provides them with a simple but effective strategy for slowing down, both mentally and physically, helping them to take notice of how they're feeling and to relax or calm down in the face of overwhelming emotions. These eight simple breathing techniques for use with kids can be used at home or school. These exercises can be used as part of your calm down plan (though it is obviously important to teach children the technique when they are calm so they can then put it to use in the heat of the moment), as a prior-to-sleep relaxation activity or as a brain break exercise to refocus and re-fresh. The techniques have been specifically chosen as they are fun and relatable for children of all ages. Introduce the exercises one at a time, taking time to master each one before introducing the next.

BACK TO BACK BREATHING



Find a partner and sit on the floor back to back. Sit tall and close your eyes if you want to. Decide who will start—that person begins by inhaling deeply and then exhaling slowly, and then continues to breathe slowly and deeply. Their partner should feel the expansion in their partner's back each time they breathe in and then try to sync their own breathing so that both partners are breathing in time together.

TUMMY BREATHING



Lie on the floor and place a small stuffed animal on your stomach. Breathe in deeply through your nose and feel the stuffed animal rise, and then feel it lower as you slowly exhale through your mouth. Rock the stuffed animal to sleep using the rise and fall of your stomach.

ELEPHANT BREATHING



Stand with your feet wide apart and your arms dangling in front of your body like an elephant's trunk. As you breathe in deeply through your nose, raise your arms up high above your head. Then slowly swing your arms down again as you breathe out through your mouth.

TAKE 5 BREATHING



Sit comfortably, resting one hand in front of you with fingers outstretched like a star and the pointer finger of your other hand ready to trace your hand. Starting at the base of your thumb on the outside of your hand, breathe in slowly through your nose as you slide your pointer finger up to the top of your thumb. Breathe out slowly and slide your pointer finger down the inside of your thumb. Breathe in as you slide your finger up the next finger and out as you slide down. Continue breathing in and out as you trace your whole hand.

BUBBLE BREATHING



Sit comfortably with your eyes closed. Begin by imagining you are holding a bubble wand. Breathe in deeply and then, as you breathe out slowly and gently, imagine you are blowing bubbles into the room. Imagine the bubbles are filled with peace or love or happiness and that you are filling the whole room with a peaceful, happy feeling. As you keep breathing slowly and blowing your imaginary bubbles, feel your body become calm and relaxed.

These exercises can be found online as a series of printable cards. To download and print the cards in a larger format visit: <https://childhood101.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Calm-Down-Brain-Break-Breathing-Exercise-Cards.pdf>

BALLOON BREATHING



Sitting in a comfortable position, place your hands around your mouth as if you were about to blow up a balloon. Take a deep breath in through the nose and, as you slowly exhale through your mouth, start to spread your hands out as if you are blowing up a great big balloon. Hold your hand position as you inhale again and then spread your hands further as you exhale. Once your balloon is as big as it can be, gently sway from side to side as you release your balloon up into the sky.

SHOULDER ROLL BREATHING



Choose a comfortable sitting position. As you take a slow deep breath in through your nose raise your shoulders up towards your ears. Breathe slowly out through your mouth, lowering your shoulders as you exhale. Repeat slowly, rolling your shoulders up and down in time with your breath.

BUMBBLEBEE BREATHING



Sitting comfortably, gently place the tips of your pointer fingers in your ears and close your eyes. Breathe in through your nose and then hum quietly as you slowly breathe out.



Canning Lid Christmas Tree Door Hanger

This mason jar lid Christmas tree door hanger is adorable and so easy to make at home!

Supplies Needed:

- 15 wide mouth canning rings
- 14 small ornament bulbs
- Clothespins
- Twine
- Hot glue gun
- Metal glue (or other strong glue)

Directions:

Take the canning rings and attached them together in a triangle shape using a strong glue. You can use clothes pins to hold them together until the glue dries. Once it is dry, tie the little store bought ornaments to the top of each ring with thin twine. The outside ornaments might need to be held in place with a dab of hot glue because the twine may have a tendency to slide down the side. Add a burlap bow (or another bow of your choice) to the bottom middle ring with wire (or a twist tie). The star ornament—if metal, is glued on using metal glue, and if it is made of another material, hot glue should do.

Source: <https://www.craftymorning.com/canning-lid-christmas-tree-door-hanger/>

Child & Family Program Dates Monthly Maintenance Payment released from Linkin

Month Being Paid	Date Maintenance Cheques released from <u>Linkin</u> - Mailed/ *Direct Deposit	Date Youth Allowance Cheque released from <u>Linkin</u> - Mailed/*Direct Deposit
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****IMPORTANT NOTE:** If using direct deposit, it **may take up to 3 additional days** before the funds are deposited in your bank account depending on your Financial Institution.

December 2017	January 3, 2018	November 27, 2017
January 2018	February 2, 2018	December 21, 2017
February 2018	March 2, 2018	January 26, 2018
March 2018	April 3, 2018	February 23, 2018
April 2018	May 2, 2018	March 27, 2018
May 2018	June 4, 2018	April 25, 2018
June 2018	July 4, 2018	May 28, 2018
July 2018	August 2, 2018	June 26, 2018
August 2018	September 5, 2018	July 26, 2018
September 2018	October 2, 2018	August 28, 2018
October 2018	November 2, 2018	September 25, 2018
November 2018	December 4, 2018	October 26, 2018
December 2018	January 3, 2019	November 27, 2018

Monthly Maintenance Schedule applies to Regular Foster Care, Extended Family Care (Person of Sufficient Interest, Place of Safety & Alternative Care) and Assisted Adoption monthly maintenance.

FOSTER THOUGHTS

Our family is like a big beautiful patchwork quilt. Each of us different, yet stitched together by love! 



by Hayley Petrow

RECIPES FROM
Petty's Kitchen



Fudge Brownies

1/2 cup	butter
1 1/2 cup	chopped chocolate or chocolate chips (milk or semi-sweet)
3/4 cup	sugar
1/4 cup	light brown sugar
3	eggs
1 tsp	vanilla
1/2 cup + 2 tbsp	flour (measured accurately)
2 tbsp	unsweetened cocoa powder
1/4 tsp	salt
1 cup	chocolate chips (milk or semi-sweet)

- In a medium sauce pan melt the butter and chopped chocolate, while stirring constantly.
- Once melted, pour chocolate mixture into a large bowl and let cool.
- Preheat oven to 350*, and grease baking dish.
- Once chocolate mixture has cooled, whisk in white and brown sugar.
- Add eggs one at a time, whisking until smooth after each addition.
- Whisk in vanilla.
- Fold in flour, cocoa powder, and salt. Then fold in chocolate chips.
- Pour batter into pre-greased baking dish, and bake at 350* for 35 minutes. Check progress after 30 minutes. Brownies are done when tooth pick is inserted and comes out clean (other than having melted chocolate come out with it).
- Optional: frost once brownies are cooled, if desired.

Recipe found at: sallysbakingaddiction.com

I can't say this is healthy, but who doesn't like brownies?!

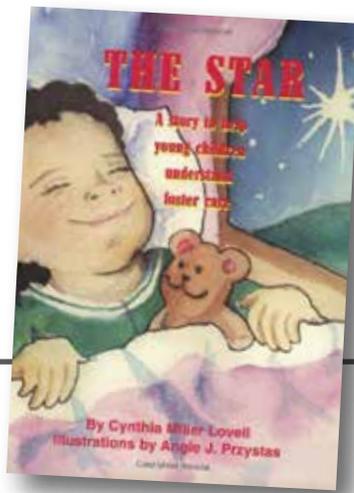
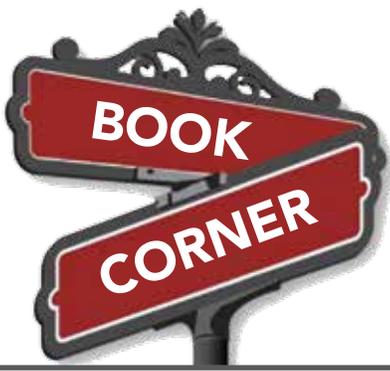
Quick Waffles

2	eggs
1 3/4 cup	milk (any kind, skim to buttermilk)
1/4 cup	oil or melted butter
1 tbsp	honey
1/2 tsp	cinnamon
1/4 tsp	baking soda
2 1/2 cup	flour (whole wheat or white)
2 tsp	baking powder
1/8 tsp	salt

- Mix all ingredients together.
- Pour on waffle iron on medium setting.

Recipe found on:
100daysofrealfood.com

Really quick recipe for Christmas morning!



The Star: A Story to Help Young Children Understand Foster Care

by Cynthia Miller Lovell

THE STAR: A STORY TO HELP YOUNG CHILDREN UNDERSTAND FOSTER CARE is an easy-to-read, short story with beautiful, watercolor illustrations. The book follows a fictional young girl, Kit, who is taken from her mother to the safety, and different world, of a foster home. On Kit's first night in foster care, she becomes friends with a star outside her bedroom window. The star tells Kit about other foster children it has seen. Through the story, the star is a source of comfort for Kit as she experiences many emotions and adjusts to all the new things in her foster home.

To get the most out of this book, the author recommends also reading **QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES FOR THE STAR: A HANDBOOK FOR FOSTER PARENTS**.

Although I'm not their mother
I care for them each day,
I cuddle, sing and read to them
And watch them as they play.

I see each new accomplishment,
I help them grow and learn.
I understand their language,
I listen with concern.

They come to me for comfort,
And I kiss away their tears,
They proudly show their work to me,
I give the loudest cheers!

No, I'm not their mother,
But my role is just as strong.
I nurture them and keep them safe,
Though maybe not for long.

I know someday the time will come,
When we will have to part.
But I know each child I cared for,
IS FOREVER IN MY HEART!

Author Unknown



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

Please Recycle

