

Advisor

FOSTER FAMILIES MONTH



CELEBRATING FOSTER FAMILIES MONTH

POSITIVE THINGS YOU CAN SAY TO YOUR CHILD

CHILD AND FAMILY MENTAL WELLNESS

FOSTERING CULTURAL VALUES

KEEPING SIBLINGS TOGETHER

HELPING KIDS GET USED TO MASKS

CLEANING TIPS

FACTS ABOUT FOSTER KIDS

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE A BIRTH CHILD IN A FOSTER FAMILY

HYGIENE TIPS TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

PROTECTING YOUR FOSTER CHILD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

STOP ARGUING ABOUT SCREEN TIME

SIGNS OF FRAUD

Advisor

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OUR MISSION

The Saskatchewan Foster Families Association exists to support and encourage Foster families through education and advocacy, helping create healthy homes, positive environments, and brighter futures for children and youth across the province.

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OCTOBER IS

FOSTER FAMILIES MONTH

IT'S A TIME TO CELEBRATE

You!



In light of current circumstances, we cannot meet in person to say thank you for all that you do in supporting families.

As a token of our appreciation, the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association is offering a \$25 gift card to each Foster Family. You can select your gift from a wide range of retailers.



To receive your gift, use your web browser to visit this link, saskfosterfamilies.ca/october2020 then enter your SFFA Member Number and click submit.

You'll receive an email to the address that we have on file. Click on the link found in that email and you'll be given the opportunity to set up your account in the new SFFA Member Portal, and select your gift card.

If our membership database does not have an email address on file, a message will appear to call the SFFA at **1-888-276-2880** and a representative will assist you with updating your information and sending your personalized link.

Families are required to select their gift card by October 31st, 2020

Thank you again for the commitment you make, each and every day, to foster children and families. Our warmest thanks from the entire SFFA team.

Deb Davies,
Executive Director, Saskatchewan Foster Families Association

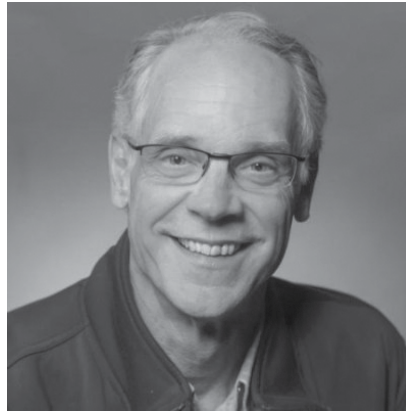


Message from the Chairman of the Board

On behalf of the board of directors, I want to bring you greetings and best wishes.

We all have been through interesting times these last 6 months or so. You have been inundated with COVID-19 updates, issues, briefings etc., so nothing I can say on that topic will make much difference. However, I want to commend many of you for tireless efforts to care for the children entrusted to you, but also your willingness to keep the children and youth connected to their families in these trying times. You are not alone in this, as I have heard from the SFFA, the number of homes that the office staff have been supporting. My thanks to the SFFA office staff for all your assistance.

The board did have an abbreviated board planning session early in 2020 and we are pleased with the efforts and actions of the SFFA organization. We had to



relook at our bylaws and make some adjustments so that we can have a virtual AGM this year. The provincial government has also granted all Community Based Organizations some latitude in holding meetings.

You would have received information from the SFFA regarding this year's virtual AGM coming this November.

As I look towards the end of this year, I am encouraged by the continued partnership with the Ministry in recruiting new foster

families and training them as well as for our existing homes. We lead the country in our ability to adapt our training so that we could go 100% virtual, so training continues. Our Video Conferencing technology has been critical in accomplishing this task.

I wish I had a crystal ball to know what will happen next, but rest assured our organization has proved to be nimble and flexible. We will continue to advocate for our foster parents as well our in-home support program will continue to assist families wherever we are called to go.

Stay safe and enjoy perhaps a slower pace.

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Kevin Harris".

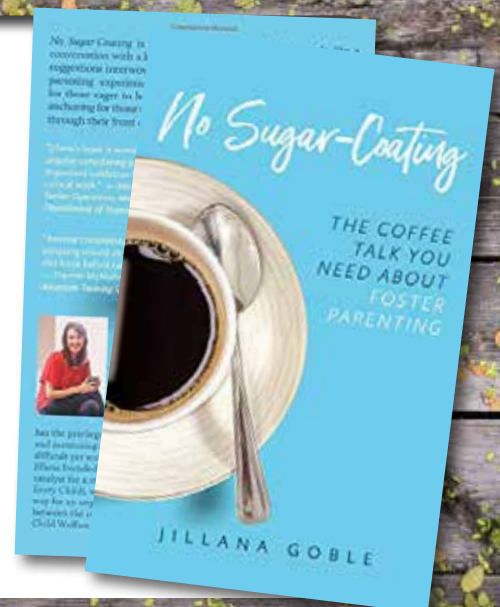
Regards
Kevin Harris

Good Reads...

No Sugar Coating: The Coffee Talk You Need About Foster Parenting by Jillana Goble (Released Sept 22, 2019)

No Sugar-Coating is a warm, straight-up guide that reads like a conversation with a knowledgeable friend. It is filled with practical suggestions interwoven with compelling narrative rooted in foster parenting experience. No Sugar-Coating offers valuable insight for those eager to learn more about foster parenting as well as an anchoring for those who have already welcomed vulnerable children through their front door.

Available in both paperback (ISBN-10: 1734058404, ISBN-13: 978-1734058406) and Kindle edition (ASIN: B07Y7PKTX7)



Ways to Support Child & Family Mental Wellness

The COVID-19 pandemic is extremely challenging as it is disrupting school and work life, daily routines, activities all the elements of normalcy that solidify our lives. Children especially will find this time confusing and scary. They may also sense the anxiousness and fear in adults. It is important to recognize and acknowledge that it is normal to experience some level of anxiety and fear. It is also essential to express this to children.

How can I help children manage stress?

- Keep informed but be mindful of information overload.
- Look for accurate and credible sources and avoid unfamiliar websites and social media sources that sensationalize information.
- Try to deal with problems in a structured way to avoid becoming overwhelmed. Identify concerns and divide the problems into more manageable parts such as, things that need to be done today, ones that can wait until another day and ones that can be dropped.
- Seek out positive connections with others who will not increase your anxiety and fears.
- Foster resilience (ability to overcome or recover from significant challenges) in yourself and in children and try to avoid worst case scenarios.

What can families do to maintain normalcy during this stressful time?

- Seek balance and involve children when establishing a healthy home routine that includes exercise, planning times for unplugging from the media and keeping regular sleeping schedules.
- Routines do not need to mirror a day at school.
- Blend learning with daily chores, tasks and projects.
- Build relaxation and physical activities into daily routines.
- Engage children in empowering activities:



Involve younger children in daily chores that give them responsibility and feel they are contributing to the family well-being, such as helping with the dishes, planning meals, playing games or reading to younger siblings.

Involve older children with home projects such as, preparing healthy meals, organizing and leading family physical activities, meditation and relaxation sessions, or board game sessions.

What can be done if further support is needed?

Sometimes a family member may still continue to struggle to cope. If you feel someone is experiencing symptoms of intense or excessive anxiety encourage them to consult with a health expert.

There are also other community supports available such as, family doctors, clergy, psychologist and community mental health facilities.

Source: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca>

Thank you!

To all of our current and past Saskatchewan Foster Families. Thank you so much for your continued support. 2020 to date has been certainly a challenging time, we want to wish everyone well and are proud to celebrate our achievements together. – SFFA

First Aid Training

First Aid Training is back up and running with smaller class sizes and increased precautions. Foster Parents needing to enroll in First Aid/CPR are to contact the Provincial Office to do so. **Phone (306) 975-1580, call toll free 1-888-276-2880 or email: sffa@sffa.sk.ca.**



NOTE: Programs & services may have changed due to health & safety guidelines. Date changes, postponements, and cancellations may occur without notice.

Did you know...

Your family doctor can now see you without you leaving your home?



The care you know and trust is now available virtually.

Call your family doctor. SMA

66 POSITIVE THINGS YOU CAN SAY TO YOUR CHILD

1. I'm grateful for you.
2. You make me proud.
3. Your words are meaningful.
4. You have great ideas.
5. I love being your parent.
6. You don't have to be perfect to be great.
7. Your opinions matter.
8. You are important.
9. You are loved.
10. I believe you.
11. I believe in you.
12. This family wouldn't be the same without you.
13. You are valuable.
14. You can say no.
15. You can say yes.
16. I know you did your best.
17. You were right.
18. I accept who you are.
19. We can try your way.
20. You are helpful.
21. You are worth it.
22. You make me happy.
23. I love your creativity.
24. Being around you is fun.
25. I can't wait to hear about it.
26. Don't be afraid to be you.
27. You're making a difference.
28. I'm excited to spend time with you.
29. You are interesting.
30. I love seeing the world your way.
31. It's good to be curious.
32. I love the way you tell stories.
33. What you did was awesome.
34. I admire you.
35. That's a great question.
36. Your friends are lucky to have you.
37. I trust you.
38. That was a really good choice.
39. Seeing you happy makes me happy.
40. Being your parent is my favorite job.
41. I learn new things from you every day.
42. You make me better.
43. You are a good boy/girl.
44. Thank you for being you.
45. I'm so glad you're here.
46. You look great.
47. I understand you.
48. Watching you grow up is the best.
49. That was really brave.
50. I forgive you.
51. I appreciate you.
52. We all make mistakes.
53. Yes, me too.
54. You are very good at that!
55. You can try again tomorrow.
56. Nobody is perfect.
57. I love how you said that.
58. Not everyone will like you, and that's OK.
59. You did that so well.
60. I'm listening.
61. That's a very fair point.
62. You are beautiful inside and out.
63. I love you.
64. I could never stop loving you.
65. You are enough.
66. You make my heart full.



Fostering CULTURAL VALUES

In addition to understanding what it means to be in foster care or to be adopted, children in transracial homes need to know what it means to be a member of their own minority group. Having positive experiences within their own cultures creates a strong racial identity and sense of belonging, along with a resiliency against negative stereotypes that are portrayed in the media and that are experienced in society through racism and discrimination.

Children in transracial homes will also need to learn what it means to be a member of a minority group while living in a family of the majority culture. These children have the additional challenge of learning how to live “bi-culturally,” walking in two worlds; the world of their own culture and the world of the culture they are living in. Parents who make it a priority to become a bicultural home will help their children develop a strong sense of racial identity and self-esteem.

A child’s self-esteem and racial identity are strengthened when his or her cultural differences are valued. In general, it is important to celebrate similarities and differences. Sharing similarities creates bonding and a feeling of belonging. Celebrating differences acknowledges that a child is valued because of their uniqueness and that having differences is positive.

In general, children in transracial placements need to:

- Live in a home that provides positive experiences with the children’s culture.
- Remain connected to same-race relationships, with peers and mentors.
- Live in a home that allows them to feel racial and ethnic pride; and provides the children with survival skills.
- Have parents who allow the children to explore their culture in many different ways; and who recognize the differences between the children’s birth families’ culture and their own family culture.
- Have parents who recognize and understand what the children will experience in a race-conscious society.
- Have the right to feel a belonging to their current family culture as well as to their culture of origin.



“Positive racial identity depends on our ability to identify fully with our ethnic roots, yet remain confident that race or ethnicity does not limit our opportunities in life.”

Source: https://www.adoptontario.ca/uploads/File/SNS/Transracial_Adoption/IFAPA_Article.pdf

Support for Caregivers During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The SFFA has prepared detailed information regarding Caregiver support during the COVID-19 pandemic. To read this item on our website please access the following online link.

<https://www.sffa.sk.ca/news-items/support-for-caregivers-during-covid-19-pandemic>

The Importance of KEEPING SIBLINGS TOGETHER

Sibling relationships are emotionally powerful and critically important not only in childhood but over the course of a lifetime. As children, siblings form a child's first peer group, and they typically spend more time with each other than with anyone else. Children learn social skills, particularly in sharing and managing conflict, from negotiating with brothers and sisters. Sibling relationships can provide a significant source of continuity throughout a child's lifetime and are likely to be the longest relationships that most people experience.

The nature and importance of sibling relationships vary for individuals, depending on their own circumstances and developmental stage. Typically,

there is rivalry in the preschool years, variability in closeness during middle childhood (depending on the level of warmth in the relationship), and less sibling closeness in adolescence when teens are focused on peers.

Children's Perspective

Many children report experiencing a great deal of pain, anxiety, guilt, grief, and "lost identity" when they enter the foster care system. Uprooted from their homes and families, a sense of detachment from their community, culture, and identity is common among these children. All too often, children in the child welfare system are also separated from their siblings. Many sibling groups are separated upon entry into the foster care system; less frequently, siblings are placed together in out-of-

“ The relationships people share with siblings are often the longest-lasting they will ever have. Siblings are there from the beginning, and they are often still around after parents, and even spouses and children, are gone.”



home care initially and later separated. Some siblings are adopted by different families. Sadly, many of these separated brothers and sisters lose contact with one another.

It is essential that professionals be able to understand children's experiences from the child's perspective in order to be able to grasp the critical importance of maintaining sibling connections whenever possible. Studies that directly seek the perspective of foster children are relatively rare, but those that have done so consistently underscore the overwhelming importance of protecting sibling relationships.

Benefits of Placing Siblings Together

Sibling relationships help children achieve developmental milestones as well as provide emotional support, companionship, and comfort in times of change. When children are separated from their siblings, the research indicates that a number of children feel "they have lost a part of themselves," which compounds the anxiety and pain they feel over separation from their parents and transition to a new home. Siblings placed together use their relationships to understand who they are. Not only do siblings help children to adapt to such new and frightening situations, but also they remain important figures throughout their lives.

For many years, the sibling relationship was largely ignored in social science research and child welfare laws. In recent decades, however, both research scientists and policymakers have come to acknowledge the importance of the sibling bond, leading to a flurry of research, policymaking, litigation, and development of innovative programs directing attention to these relationships.



For children entering care, being with their siblings can enhance their sense of safety and well-being and provide natural, mutual support. This benefit is in contrast to the traumatic consequences of separation, which may include additional loss, grief, and anxiety over their siblings' well-being. Siblings have a shared history, and maintaining their bond provides continuity of identity and belonging. Not only is the support of siblings helpful in the immediate adjustment to the trauma of placement, but this contact continues to offer support to the child over the course of their time in care and into adulthood.

For some siblings in care, their separation or infrequent visiting can cause their relationships to wither, sometimes to the point of permanent estrangement. Maintaining these relationships is important for the future as well as the present.

Source: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/siblingissues.pdf>;
<https://youthlaw.org/publication/keeping-siblings-together-past-present-and-future/>



Check out our
"Family Stories"
video series online at:
www.sffa.sk.ca/family-stories

Reach our provincial
office staff by calling
toll free 1-888-276-2880
or by emailing:
sffa@sffa.sk.ca

Helping Kids Get Used to

FACE MASKS

An illustration of two children, a girl on the left and a boy on the right, both wearing white face masks. The girl has brown hair in a ponytail and is wearing a red shirt and blue overalls. The boy has brown hair and is wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt. They are positioned between the letters 'F' and 'S' of the word 'FACE MASKS'.

In many places, people are wearing masks or cloth face coverings when they're in public because of coronavirus (COVID-19). It's an important way to help slow the spread of the virus. At first, it was mostly doctors, nurses, and others in health care settings who wore masks. But now, as other people wear them, more and more kids are seeing something they're not used to seeing. For them, it can be strange or a little scary, especially if they need to put on masks too.

Most kids can feel comfortable seeing people in masks, as long as adults:

- Use simple words to explain why people are wearing masks.
- Give kids time to look, watch, and get used to what's new.
- Answer kids' questions.
- Give support.

Some toddlers and young children may feel uneasy about masks. They may need extra support and comfort from parents. Parents also can help kids understand why they might need to wear a mask, and make them more comfortable and even fun to wear. Kids under 2 years old should not wear a mask.



Are face masks safe for kids to wear?

The short answer, according to experts: Yes, with some caveats.

Kids under 2, those who have difficulty breathing and those who aren't able to take their mask off by themselves (ex. because they're asleep) shouldn't wear one because there's a risk they could suffocate. Likewise, masks shouldn't be used if a child has a developmental delay, has trouble breathing (such as through vigorous exercise), has serious sensory processing disorders or anxiety around face coverings or is more likely to touch their face repeatedly while wearing it, effectively increasing their chances of getting infected.

How do kids react to masks?

How kids react to seeing masks partly depends on their age. Older kids might not react much at all. To them, masks might seem like no big deal. Most are able to adjust pretty quickly.

Some kids may even be eager to wear a mask. They might embrace their new look as a medical superhero.

But for babies, toddlers, and young kids, seeing people in masks might take some getting used to. At first, they may feel cautious. They may need a few minutes to look and watch. That can help them get used to what's new. They may need a parent to gently say, "It's OK." That can help them relax.

Some babies, toddlers, and young kids may feel upset or afraid. They might cry, hide their face, or cling to a parent. Soothing words, comfort, and the safety of a parent's lap can help calm them. Masks hide part of a person's face. Young children rely on faces. From the time they are babies, young children look at faces for the signals they need to feel safe. When faces are partly hidden by masks, kids can't see the friendly smile or familiar look that usually puts them at ease. When kids can't see the person's whole face, it's harder to feel safe. It's natural to feel scared. But slowly and gently, parents can help kids feel more comfortable. Even very young kids can learn that something that seemed too scary at first is not so scary after all.

How to talk to kids about face masks

Explaining why and when we should cover our face is an important step to get kids to wear masks — and it's more effective when you use age-appropriate messages. What you say and how you say it will depend on the age and maturity level of your child, but here are some general guidelines.

Preschoolers: Keep the conversation simple and concrete, such as... “We are washing our hands, wearing masks and not getting too close to others so that we can keep the germs away.”

Grade-schoolers: For grade-school- and middle-school-aged kids, you might want to use a more visual medium. For example, you could show them videos of how respiratory droplets leave the mouth and spread through the air to demonstrate how masks protect people.

High schoolers: For older kids and teens, parents and caregivers can be a little more direct and detailed, saying, for example, “People can spread the virus without feeling sick. Wearing a mask helps ensure we don't spread the virus to other people who could get seriously sick or die from it.” And if teens want to learn more, tell them where they can find more information. Their cognitive development is more advanced, and

they are very internet savvy, so directing them to reputable resource may be helpful.

Have a few masks handy while kids play. This lets them use their imagination about how to use them during playtime. It also helps make masks a more normal part of their everyday world. You can ask your child to put a mask on a stuffed animal, and then ask follow-up questions about why the stuffed animal is wearing the mask. Depending on your child's response, you can clear up any confusion and offer reassurance.

Tips for helping kids wear masks when they don't want to

Some children won't want to wear a mask at first. When that happens, giving them a chance to practice at home, letting them pick out or decorate their own masks and making mask-wearing fun can all help encourage them to wear a mask when the time comes.

MODEL THE BEHAVIOR

Be consistent, and incorporate wearing a mask into your family's routine. Seeing other people wearing masks can help make it seem less scary or strange, especially for young children. In addition to wearing a mask yourself, you could try putting a face covering on your child's favorite stuffed animal or showing them pictures of other kids their age wearing them. ▶



PRACTICE WEARING MASKS PROPERLY AT HOME

Younger children might need a little practice wearing a mask before they feel comfortable wearing them outside the home. Give them a chance to master how to wear the mask properly — completely covering the nose and mouth — without fiddling with it, as well as taking the mask on and off correctly (by the loops or ties) and washing your hands before and after handling the covering.

INVOLVE THEM IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Kids and teens might be more likely to wear the mask if they help choose or make the design. For younger children, let them decorate their masks with fabric paint or markers, or choose designs they like. There are no-sew masks that are easy to make, often with materials you probably already have (T-shirts, bandanas, etc). If you sew masks, maybe kids can select the fabric or patterns for the masks they'll wear.

USE SHARED DECISION-MAKING

Older kids and teens might be resistant to wearing masks because they feel like they don't need them or that they're invincible. It's not that they're selfish, the fact is that the parts of the brain involved in higher level reasoning have not developed fully for them yet.

If that's the case for your teen, they might be more willing to wear a mask if you involve them in the decision-making process by asking them questions like, "Do you agree it's important to help other people not get sick?" or "When do you think you should wear a mask to protect other people?"

MAKE IT FUN

Kids being kids, they might be more likely to wear a mask if they think it's cool. Find ways to make it a game. Race to see who can put on their mask (correctly) the fastest or go the longest without touching it.



APPEAL TO THEIR VALUES AND INTERESTS

Try to tie wearing a mask to things your child enjoys or thinks of as important. Many young children, for example, love superheroes and being big helpers, so play up the similarities.... Like telling them that every time they wear their masks "they are saving someone's life" [just like superheroes]. The same goes for when they wash their hands and practice social distancing.

With pre-teens and older kids, however, you might want to appeal to their sense of social responsibility. Remind them that even though kids their age typically don't get seriously ill from coronavirus, they can certainly pass the infection unknowingly to others in higher-risk groups.

And for young children, you can't go wrong with playing make-believe. Kids can pretend to be a doctor or nurse while wearing their masks. They might want to use a doctor kit and "take care" of a stuffed animal or doll, and then ask follow-up questions about why the stuffed animal is wearing the mask. Depending on your child's response, you can clear up any confusion and offer reassurance.

You can even encourage kids to pretend to be superheroes when they wear their masks, noting, "Whenever we go outside, they have to wear those masks in order to protect their secret identities." ►

What to do when mask-wearing doesn't go 100%

Keep in mind that wearing a mask is an important strategy to prevent the spread of coronavirus, but it's also one of several mitigation techniques.

"There are certain children for whom wearing a mask is just not going to be possible, and that's okay. Rather than force the issue and cause unnecessary stress or anxiety for both kids and parents, focus instead on other prevention strategies like social distancing and hand-washing.

Do what you can to encourage them, but in the end, getting kids to wear masks even some of the time while out in public can be helpful. In the medical experts opinion... "any mask-wearing is better than no mask-wearing."



Sources: <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/coronavirus-masks.html> ; <https://www.care.com/c/stories/16850/talking-to-kids-face-masks/>

8 HYGIENE TIPS to help prevent the spread of COVID-19

There is currently no vaccine to prevent illness from coronavirus disease (COVID-19), so the best way to prevent infection and illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus. The human coronavirus is commonly spread from an infected person through respiratory droplets generated when coughing or sneezing, or close personal contact such as touching or shaking hands, according to the Government of Canada.

Here are steps you can take to protect yourself and your loved ones and prevent the spread of coronavirus:

1. **CLEAN YOUR HANDS OFTEN.** Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cleaning your hands often helps to lower your risk of infection and reduce the spread of infection to others.
2. **AVOID TOUCHING YOUR FACE.** Take special care not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands, since these are the most likely ways for the virus to enter your body.
3. **CLEAN AND DISINFECT FREQUENTLY TOUCHED SURFACES.** Potentially contaminated surfaces may include tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets and sinks.
4. **KEEP A SAFE DISTANCE FROM SICK PEOPLE.** Maintain a safe distance of at least two metres between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing since the virus is thought to spread between people who are within that distance.
5. **AVOID SHARING PERSONAL ITEMS WITH OTHERS.** Don't share food, drinks, glasses, utensils, towels and other household items with others.
6. **PRACTICE GOOD RESPIRATORY HYGIENE.** Cover your mouth and nose with your elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of the used tissue and immediately wash your hands for at least 20 seconds.
7. **GREET WITHOUT PHYSICAL CONTACT.** Greet people with a friendly wave, smile, nod, or bow.
8. **STAY IN, IF YOU FEEL SICK.** Avoid close contact with others if you feel unwell. If you have a cough or fever, seek medical attention.

Protecting your Foster Child on Social Media

Is your foster child on social media? Social media is defined as a form of electronic communication that allows users to create online communities where information, ideas, personal messages and other forms of content can be shared. Some of the more popular examples of this platform are:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Twitter
- Pinterest
- YouTube

Because it's one of the most common ways to interact online, many people and businesses are utilizing social media on a more consistent basis. It can be a great tool but can cause more harm than good if it's used in an improper manner.

Can I post pictures of my child in care on social media?

Children in care cannot be photographed for newspaper articles, Facebook or any publication where their identities would become known to the public.

In practice, this means that foster parents cannot post any picture of a foster child on social media that might allow the child in question to be identified. Likewise, it's also important to never reveal personal information about your child in care on the internet. Doing so jeopardizes his safety and violates his right to privacy. However, as social media has become an ingrained piece of everyday life for most people, including foster children, many parents have found ways to share their photos and memories without violating the rights of the children in care.

When photographing their children for social media, foster parents:

Use a digital sticker, like those

found in Instagram and Snapchat, to cover any identifying features of the child. Crop the picture to remove identifying features from the frame.

In addition to the above, if you refer to the children in text, use nicknames or just their first initial.



“Respecting the confidentiality of your child in care is vital.”

Can I talk about my child in care to another resource parent who is seeking advice online?

Even forums and messageboards are considered a form of social media. You can share advice, but refrain from discussing confidential information about your child in care.

When you need input from other resource parents, or vice versa, you are allowed to only describe the situation in general terms. Discussing information beyond that is a breach of the child's confidentiality and could put him at risk. Be careful when asking for or seeking advice about a foster child on social media.

How can I protect my child in care's privacy if I have to send an email to his teacher, for example?

Respecting the confidentiality of your child in care is vital. If you need to send an email to his teacher, only discuss what is important to the specific situation. This way,

his teacher can address his immediate needs and your child in care's confidential information remains that way.

Why should I monitor my child in care's activities on the internet?

While the internet is a great source of information and an integral part of your child in care's education, it also has many risks. As a parent, being aware of the dangers of the internet is necessary. Getting involved with your foster child on social media will help you to protect your family and avoid complications in the future.

How do I help my child in care use the internet safely?

Cable and phone service providers offer the option of setting up parental controls. With these, you will be able to restrict the sites your child in care can browse through. This will prohibit him from viewing inappropriate content. Some other methods are:

- Browse the internet with your child in care and teach him about what is and isn't appropriate.
- Talk to your child in care about the various websites, just as you would talk to him about TV shows, video games and movies.
- Establish boundaries by designating a family computer, tablet or smart phone with rules to follow, and schedule times for use.
- Set up computers in common areas where activity can be easily monitored.

<http://foster-adoptive-kinship-family-services-nj.org/how-to-protect-my-foster-child-on-social-media/>

Stop arguing about **SCREEN TIME** and make screen use meaningful instead

In many homes, parents and their kids argue about how much screen time is too much. But, new guidelines from the Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS) say parents should focus more on how screens are used rather than on how much they are used. While a 2017 statement for younger children recommended no screen time for kids under two and less than one hour for those two to five, the new guidelines for school-aged kids and teens don't give a time limit.

Moderation is still important, but the statement says that parents should help their kids choose "meaningful" screen activities—those that are developmentally appropriate as well as educational, social or active. Screen time should not interfere with normal routines such as sleep or mealtimes. The CPS says that parents can model the behaviours they want to see by playing video games or watching shows



with their child to make them social activities, turning off their own devices an hour before bed and not checking phones during meals.

Learn the **SIGNS OF FRAUD** with these tips

As we spend more time online, the rates of scams and fraud are on the rise. Here are some easy ways to help protect your identity and help you from becoming a victim of fraud.

Protect your personal information

- Beware of random solicitations for your personal information such as passwords, date of birth, Social Insurance Number (SIN) or Personal Identification Number (PIN)
- Store your SIN in a safe place at home (not in your wallet or purse)
- Select a PIN that is easy to remember and hard for others to guess
- Do not write down or share your PIN or passwords. Your financial institution uses this information to identify you during financial transactions

Watch for email, text and phone scams

Be savvy to offers that appear too good to be true

Fraudsters entice victims by seemingly providing something for nothing. This makes it more important than ever to be wary of all unexpected solicitation by persons you meet online. Any fraudulent activity should be reported to the authorities as soon as possible.



Review your monthly statements carefully

- Watch for suspicious transactions on your credit card and financial account statements
- If you don't receive your statements, call your financial institution immediately
- Shred all documents and monthly statements that you wish to discard
- If you suspect you may be a victim of identity theft or another financial scam, please contact your bank immediately for assistance.

Making online purchases

When purchasing from a 3rd party website, check the company's homepage for a list of authorized retailers.

If the retailer is not listed you may be buying counterfeit goods or materials that may not be as described.

What's it like to be a **BIRTH CHILD** in a Foster Family?

A birth child of foster carers has shared her experience of living with a foster family. Here is her point of view.

I am constantly asked what it's like to be living with a fostered child in my own home as a birth child. *"Is it like having another sibling?" "Do you get less attention from your parents?" "Is it weird having a stranger live in your home?"* Yes, no, and sometimes.

Living with children in care for the past five years has certainly been a journey and a half. Each child who comes into our home has

completely different needs and personality traits. This is something I think my two younger brothers and I struggle with whenever a new child enters the home, as everything we know and learned from the previous child we cannot apply to the new one.

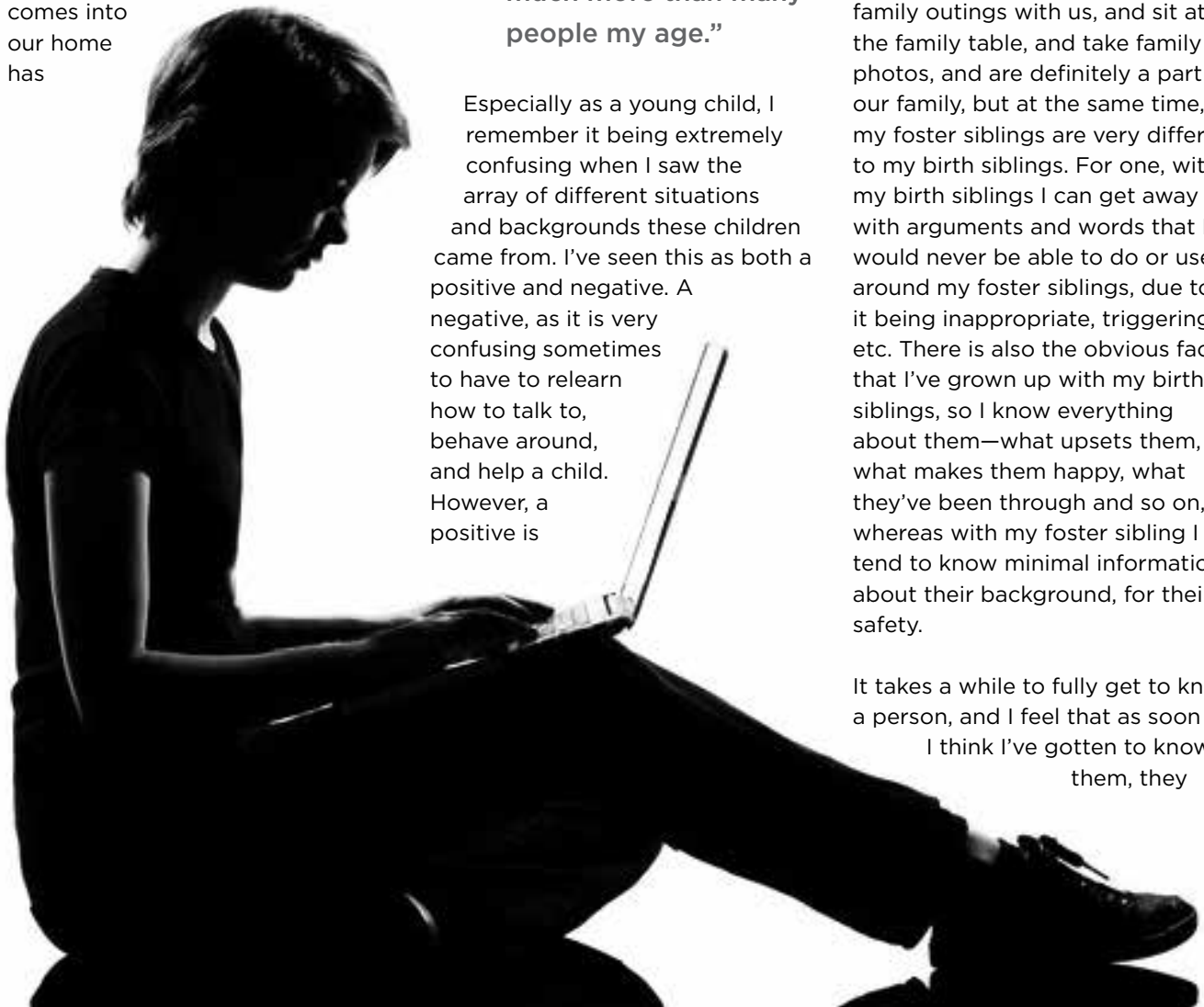
“ For me it has certainly been a good journey, as I've learned so much more than many people my age.”

Especially as a young child, I remember it being extremely confusing when I saw the array of different situations and backgrounds these children came from. I've seen this as both a positive and negative. A negative, as it is very confusing sometimes to have to relearn how to talk to, behave around, and help a child. However, a positive is

that it allows me to learn so much about a range of things, from child development to how to calm down a friend when they're stressed. Fostering has definitely given me a range of skills that I use in other aspects of my life, such as my career, and I am now looking to work in the social sector.

I would say I certainly try to treat the fostered children as my own siblings, but it does get hard to do so sometimes. They come on family outings with us, and sit at the family table, and take family photos, and are definitely a part of our family, but at the same time, my foster siblings are very different to my birth siblings. For one, with my birth siblings I can get away with arguments and words that I would never be able to do or use around my foster siblings, due to it being inappropriate, triggering, etc. There is also the obvious fact that I've grown up with my birth siblings, so I know everything about them—what upsets them, what makes them happy, what they've been through and so on, whereas with my foster sibling I tend to know minimal information about their background, for their safety.

It takes a while to fully get to know a person, and I feel that as soon as I think I've gotten to know them, they



grow up and change, or they move on, and I have to begin all over again. I still do refer my current foster sibling as my sister, and I try my best to be like a big sister to her, but it is a little more complex than that.

“Do you get less attention from your parents?” To be honest, not really. I guess as this is all I’ve known for the past five years I’m used to sharing the attention of both my parents with a foster child as well as my two brothers, and I wholly feel that I haven’t been deprived of any attention. Of course there have been times when I have wanted my mum’s help and she hasn’t been available as she’s at a meeting or having a discussion with my foster sibling, but that happens with all families and all siblings – I don’t feel that I’ve received anything less, purely because one of my family members is fostered.

Again, because I’ve spent most my teenage years with foster children, I don’t find it strange when a new child comes into our home. We’ve been fortunate enough to have had pretty long placements, and our current one has been with us for coming up to three years now, so it’s not like we are getting a new child every week. It is always a little awkward at first, depending on the age of the child, as everything is new and unknown, but it is very easy to adapt, especially if we work together as a family. Being a birth child living with foster siblings certainly has its ups and downs, just like any job or life situation, but for me it has certainly been a good journey, as I’ve learned so much more than many people my age.

<https://www.thefca.co.uk/news/blog/a-birth-child-in-a-foster-family-what-does-that-mean/>

TOP 5 | FACTS ABOUT FOSTER KIDS

1. FOSTER KIDS ARE JUST KIDS.

Foster kids want what any other kid wants: to be loved, accepted, and safe. Due to their past trauma they may find it difficult to trust, and act out in ways that say they don’t want to be loved. It takes more work to bond with a child from foster care, but it is worth it. It’s important to listen to a child’s full report and all the child’s needs before accepting a placement.

2. FOSTER KIDS HAVE A PROPENSITY TO BE MORE EMOTIONAL.

They are generally behind in their emotional growth due to neglect, abuse, and substance abuse. It’s important to nurture them at their emotional level and not at their chronological age. That includes going to the extremes to make sure their emotional needs are met. That could mean more holding, carrying, cuddling. It may even go as far as hand feeding, or bottle feeding, your 10-year-old. If the emotional needs were unmet as an infant or toddler, it can be vital to their emotional health to receive that nurturing now.

3. SOME FOSTER KIDS COME WITH HIGHER NEEDS AND MORE DIAGNOSES.

It’s not always easy to parent children from foster care. You will know your limits, and it’s very important to see the whole picture. You’ll want to consider the services that are offered in your area, or in some cases, consider moving to another area to serve your child’s needs.

4. SOMETIMES IT’S JUST NOT POSSIBLE TO PARENT.

There are times that no matter how much you love a child, no matter how much counseling or interventions, it just won’t be possible to parent them in your home. When it becomes unsafe for other members of the family, or themselves, it may be necessary to find other living solutions for a child. While this seems unfathomable, it may be the best thing you can do for your child.

5. IT TAKES TIME TO ADJUST.

And sometimes it means that you need to adjust to meet them, not the other way around. You may feel resistant to changing yourself to accommodate a child, but with time you may learn that not only is it necessary, but it can be a wonderful challenge... learning to accept them where they are.

Source: <https://fostercare.net/top-5-facts-about-foster-kids/>





CLEANING TIPS to help keep the COVID-19 virus out of your home

From doing laundry to preparing meals — every day measures to help protect your family.

Can you catch the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) from food? How should I do laundry now? Mundane household tasks have turned into a source of uncertainty and anxiety as families grapple with getting the basics done all while keeping their loved ones safe and healthy. Widespread misinformation about the virus puts everyone at risk and adds to the stress of having to filter fact from fiction.

While research into the COVID-19 virus is ongoing, we know the virus is transmitted through direct contact with respiratory droplets of an infected person (through coughing and sneezing), and touching surfaces contaminated with the virus. The virus may survive on surfaces for a few hours up to several days. The good news? Simple disinfectants can kill it. Now what does this mean for your home?

CLEANING AROUND THE HOME

Cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces in your home regularly is an important precaution to lower the risk of infection.

Follow cleaning product instructions for safe and effective use, including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation.

High-touch surfaces to clean and disinfect

Every home is different, but common high-touch surfaces include: Door handles, tables, chairs, handrails, kitchen and bathroom surfaces, taps, toilets, light switches, mobile phones, computers, tablets, keyboards, remote controls, game controllers and favourite toys.

What to use to clean and disinfect

If a surface is dirty, first clean it with soap or detergent and water. Then use a disinfectant product containing alcohol (of around 70 per cent) or bleach. Vinegar and other natural products are not recommended.

In many places it can be difficult to find disinfectant sprays and wipes. In such cases, continue to clean with soap and water. Diluted household bleach solutions may also be used on some surfaces.

How to disinfect

It's important not to wipe cleaning solutions off as soon as you've applied it to a surface. Many disinfectant products, such as wipes and sprays, need to stay wet on a surface for several minutes in order to be effective. Always read the directions to make sure you're using the products as recommended and to avoid damaging sensitive items such as mobile phones and other electronic devices. Consider using wipeable covers for electronics.

CLEANING CLOTHES

It is currently unclear how long the COVID-19 virus can survive on fabric, but many items of clothing have plastic and metal elements on which it might live for a few hours to several days.

Exercise caution and common sense. Good practices to consider include removing your shoes when you enter your home and changing into clean clothes when you return home after being in crowded places, and washing your hands with soap and water immediately afterwards.

Doing laundry at home

Clean bed sheets, towels and clothes regularly.

- Don't shake dirty laundry to minimize the possibility of dispersing the virus through the air.
- Launder items with soap or detergent, using the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely — both steps help to kill the virus.
- Wash your hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand rub, immediately afterwards.
- Wash or disinfect your laundry bag and hamper as well. Consider storing laundry in disposable bags.

Doing laundry outside your home

If you need to use laundry facilities outside of your home, take sensible precautions:

- Prepare laundry before leaving your home to help minimize the amount of time you spend outside.
- Try to go at a time when there are fewer people.
- Maintain physical distance to other people.
- Wear disposable gloves if available, disinfect the surfaces of all machines you use and don't touch your face.

- For indoor laundry facilities, wait outside for your laundry to finish if you can.
- Fold your laundry at home.
- Wash your hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand rub, immediately afterwards.
- Wash or disinfect your laundry bag/ hamper as well. Consider storing laundry in disposable bags.

HANDLING AND PREPARING FOOD

While at present there is no evidence of people catching the COVID-19 virus from food or food packaging, it may be possible that people can become infected by touching a surface or object contaminated by the virus and then touching their face.

The greater risk comes from being in close contact with other people while outside food shopping or receiving a food delivery (as receiving any delivery in areas with local transmission). As always, good hygiene is important when handling food to prevent any food-borne illnesses.

Food packaging and handling precautions

- Remove any unnecessary packaging and dispose into a waste bin with a lid.
- Remove food from take-out containers, place on a clean plate and dispose of the container.
- Packaging like cans can be wiped clean with a disinfectant before being opened or stored.
- Wash unpackaged produce, such as fruit and vegetables, thoroughly under running water.
- Wash your hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand rub, immediately afterwards.

General food hygiene tips

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before preparing any food.
- Use separate chopping boards to prepare uncooked meat and fish.
- Cook food to the recommended temperature.
- Where possible, keep perishable items refrigerated or frozen, and pay attention to product expiry dates.
- Aim to recycle or dispose of food waste and packaging in an appropriate and sanitary manner, avoiding build-up of refuse which could attract pests.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before eating and make sure your children do the same.
- Always use clean utensils and plates.

Source: <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/cleaning-and-hygiene-tips-help-keep-coronavirus-covid-19-out-your-home>



PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 41271051
RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:
SASKATCHEWAN FOSTER FAMILIES ASSOCIATION
231 ROBIN CRESCENT
SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN S7L 6M8