

Advisor

WINTER 2023

INCLUSIVE Foster Care

Family Wellness

Tear Art Bookmark Craft

HEAD LICE 101

PREVENT A FIRE
in Your Home

Social Media Q&A

Healthy **SNACK IDEAS**



SASKATCHEWAN
FOSTER FAMILIES

www.saskfosterfamilies.ca

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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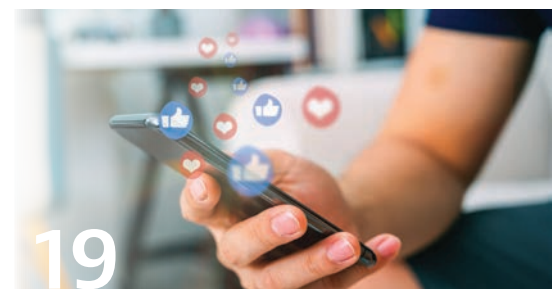
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Message from the Chairman of the Board

On behalf of the SFFA Board of Directors, (Kallie Wood, Tim Adams, John Quong, Justin Reeves), I would like to extend to all Foster Families our best wishes for 2023. A highlight for me was seeing in person a number of you at the SFFA Mini-Conference this past fall. It felt so good to be in the same room with a number of amazing people celebrating together. It was a nice addition to Foster Family Appreciation month.

I also want to congratulate Deb Davies for being awarded the Platinum Jubilee Medal and Certificate. Prior to Queen Elizabeth II passing this medal was created in honour of the 70th anniversary of Her Majesty's accession to the throne as Queen of Canada. This medal is awarded to 7,000 residents of Saskatchewan who have



“ I also want to congratulate Deb Davies for being awarded the Platinum Jubilee Medal and Certificate.

made a significant contribution to Canada, Saskatchewan and

our communities. Deb's is being recognized for her significant contribution through her important work in the social services sector for her dedication and service.

I am certainly proud of the work that Deb has been doing on behalf of the children and families in this province. All of you should also be proud of the contributions you make to the province of Saskatchewan.

All the best for whatever 2023 holds.

Kevin Harris

Kevin Harris
Board Chair

GOODS & SERVICES VOUCHERS

The Ministry of Social Services issues Requisitions for Goods and Services Vouchers to citizens to help with the purchase of goods and services. Foster families may receive requisition forms (vouchers) for immediate purchases children or youth need when coming into or while in their care. Required items may include clothing, diapers, formula, car seats or other special needs requests that are approved by the child's Caseworker.

For a list of community retailers accepting vouchers along with things to remember when using a Requisition (voucher)... visit the following online link: <https://www.saskfosterfamilies.ca/resources-for-foster-parents/goods-and-services-vouchers>



LOVE
makes a
FAMILY



HOME SAFETY



- Every child placed in a Foster Home will be provided with a safe, healthy and nurturing environment.
- Children in Foster Homes will not be exposed to second hand smoke; either from tobacco or cannabis.
- Foster Parents must test and maintain smoke and carbon monoxide detector(s)/ alarm(s) according to the manufacturer's instructions and tested a minimum of once every three months by the Foster Parent(s) and documented.
- Homes that have furnaces, wood burning stoves and/or fireplaces require an annual inspection by a qualified individual.
- Homes that have trampolines must be enclosed and equipped with a safety net.
- Homes that have a pool or hot tub must reach out to their Child and Caregiver Support Worker to ensure they met safety requirements.
- Homes that have circulating above ground and in ground swimming pools or a hot tub must adhere to local bylaws and must complete the Lifesaving Society's "Parent Lifeguard" Program.
- Homes that have hot tubs must ensure the hot tub has a hard cover that can support weight, and is maintained in place and always locked when the hot tub is not in use.



Family Wellness

With our world becoming busier by the day, many families fail to recognize the value and benefit of slowing down to develop a wellness routine. A wellness routine for the family is not only desirable, but very necessary. But even for those families who may see the value in having routines around family wellness, the struggle is real. Developing a consistent wellness routine in the midst of a busy family calendar, non-stop schedules, and school activities is not easy.

What you need to remember is that creating goals and healthy wellness routines for the family is not an overnight process. Nor does it have to be a task that feels out of your reach. Building routines to improve family wellness can be a slow, steady process. View it as a set of baby steps that you and your family can take to improve wellness over time and start living a life of better health and happiness. Let's look at what wellness is in the first place.



What is Wellness?

Although there are many views on the meaning of the term "wellness," one common definition is that wellness is "a conscious, self-directed and evolving process of achieving full potential." Let's look at what they're actually trying to say here.

- Wellness is self-directed.
- Wellness is an evolving process.
- Wellness leads to achieving full potential.

Another definition offered by the National Wellness Institute (NWI) is: *Wellness is an active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward, a more successful existence.*

So, both of these definitions have something in common here. You can see that they both emphasize that wellness is a self-directed or autonomous process. They say that it is an evolving process. And both of the definitions also emphasize the end result and this is defined as either achieving full potential or having a more successful existence.

Six Components of Wellness

1. Physical wellness: diet, exercise, medical care
2. Intellectual wellness: problem solving, creativity, learning
3. Occupational wellness: personal satisfaction, achievement, ambition
4. Social wellness: personal relationships, community, connection with nature
5. Emotional wellness: awareness and acceptance of feelings, trust, respect
6. Spiritual wellness: meaning and purpose, beliefs, values

These six dimensions of wellness are each equally important. They are distinct areas of our lives that we can control and enhance through our daily behaviors and habits.

Many people equate wellness with diet and exercise. But as you can see, this is only one dimension of wellness that needs our attention. Of course, having a balanced diet and consistent exercise routine are very important for wellness – especially, to prevent chronic health conditions such as type 2 diabetes – but these are not the only areas to focus on.

Continued...

So, now you have a better understanding of wellness, you may wonder, “What is Family Wellness?” Let’s look at that now.

What is Family Wellness?

Family wellness can be interpreted in various ways depending on what lens you’re looking through. But in general, it means that a family unit – whether biological or not – is able to work well together in many (or preferably, all) of the wellness areas mentioned above.

“Family wellness means that everyone in the family has healthy mental functioning, productive activities, and fulfilling relationships with one another and people outside the family. It allows everyone in the family to adapt and bond together to help one another through change and difficult times.”

But that’s not all. Wellness within the family also means that a family has a sense of belonging, shared traditions, and regular routines that foster stability and security. These may all sound like elusive goals, but you’re probably already making strides in many of these areas of family wellness within your own home. For instance, ensuring that the family feels a sense of security means that you may be gainfully employed and being responsible with the family budget in order to maintain your household. But there are many less obvious things that families can do together to create an environment of family wellness.

In the next section, we’ll look at other simple and effective ways to start building a plan and create healthy routines at home with 12 tips to improve family wellness.

12 IDEAS TO IMPROVE Family Wellness

Create new routines that help you and your family to live a healthy, more fulfilled lifestyle.

Getting into healthy routines is a struggle for many people today. And it can be even more challenging when your goals involve getting the entire family on board with a new, healthy lifestyle. Most families say they want to work on setting healthy family goals but simply don’t know how to improve family wellness with all of the everyday stress and distractions.

Whether it’s the demands of a busy work schedule, school activities, or social media, family wellness can sometimes end up towards the bottom of the list of priorities.

If creating a plan to improve family wellness has been a struggle for you and your family, here are 12 ways to start improving your family wellness today. Focus on one tip at a time until you have new routines in place that help you and your family to create and maintain a healthy, more fulfilled lifestyle.

1 EAT MEALS TOGETHER

Having a regular routine around either preparing or eating meals together is a great way to improve family wellness and bonding. But does it seem that your busy family schedule makes it difficult to eat together regularly? While an official sit-down dinner every single night at 6 p.m. may be unrealistic, it’s quite possible to still connect with the family over mealtime several times per week.



Make the commitment to put mealtime as a priority. You may not be able to sit down every single night for dinner, but work towards breaking bread with family on a regular basis so this becomes the norm, not the exception. Open the conversation by enlightening your family members about your



desired goals around preparing meals and eating together as a family. Ask for their input and involvement.

If everyone is usually scattered at mealtime, it may be time to adjust your strategy. Corral your family members ahead of time so they know that dinnertime is approaching. Oftentimes, we assume that everyone is “too busy” but really, it’s just a lack of planning and communication.

And dinner is not the only meal that can be enjoyed together with family. Designate enough time in the mornings to eat breakfast together, or plan leisurely weekend brunches to get everyone together and connected.

Establishing these routines around meals can also help your children to establish healthy eating habits of their own as they grow up. In addition, they learn the value of having structure and routines, as well as table manners.

2 SIMPLIFY YOUR FAMILY SCHEDULE

There’s a lot of talk nowadays about how families have “hectic” schedules. Everyone is so “busy” all the time, including kids. On any given day, I am sure to have a conversation with someone who says, “Oh, I’ve been so busy” when I ask, “How have you been?”

It seems like the majority of families have accepted chaos and confusion as the norm. And despite how much we complain about packed schedules and being “busy,” nothing will really change unless we do. Because, think about it: who is creating the busy schedule or making life hectic? It might not be easy to admit, but oftentimes much of the chaos is self-imposed.

As a person and a parent, you have a choice in how busy you become. You have control over how many things fill your schedule and infringe on family time. If you find yourself busy most of the time, engrossed in activities that undermine family wellness, it may be time to overhaul your personal and family schedule.

Here are a few tips for creating a schedule that fosters family wellness:

- Take a few minutes at the beginning of each week to plan the week ahead.
- Keep a master family calendar somewhere visible, like the refrigerator, and update it weekly.
- Create a regular weekly schedule for regular tasks like laundry, cooking, and cleaning.
- Save time by performing certain tasks in advance such as ironing clothes, packing lunches and snacks, and prepping meals.

Investing time to create a schedule, and committing to planning ahead, can have a huge positive impact to lower stress during the week.

Simplifying your schedule may take some work, but over time you can get to a place where your days are filled with activities that bring fulfillment, relaxation and connection, rather than stress.

Making one change at a time can help you to develop a schedule that brings your family closer together. In addition to changing your schedule, consider boosting your family wellness by adding these routines to simplify family life.



Continued...

3 DESIGNATE A FAMILY FUN NIGHT

Designate one night a week as “family night” and plan to do an activity together. One idea is to play a board game as a family. Board games can teach children life skills and will provide opportunities for problem solving, learning how to deal appropriately with losing (and winning), relieving stress, and building creative thinking.

Other ideas include having a family talent show, celebrating family achievements with an awards ceremony, working on puzzles, camping in the back yard, or even just stargazing. The possibilities are endless!



4 HOLD REGULAR FAMILY MEETINGS

Communication is an essential ingredient for family wellness. And that communication needs to involve all members of the household. Although parents ultimately have the final say in major decisions, children should be involved in decision-making on a regular basis where appropriate. Children like to feel that they have a voice in the family’s affairs. They enjoy giving their input, and should be encouraged to do so regularly. Even younger children can be involved.

During family meetings, encourage children to share their thoughts on decisions around regular routines like meals, chores, or family outings. They can also contribute when larger decisions are being made such as family vacations and even how to handle some of the family’s finances.

Give your children age-appropriate ways to contribute that allow them to feel empowered and ultimately, more invested in the home. Holding regular family meetings opens up doors for everyone in the family to feel that their contribution counts.

5 REDUCE TOXINS AT HOME

Your home is your castle. But it could also be making your family sick rather than supporting your goals for family wellness. Consider your home environment as you look for ways to improve family wellness.

Reducing exposure to toxins can start with what we eat on a regular basis. But in addition to the food we eat, the products we use can be a source of toxicity, too, so it’s important to evaluate what items we are bringing into our homes. Let’s face it, many of the products you purchase regularly because either that’s what your family or friends use, or that just “what I’ve always bought.” You may have never given these products much thought as you pluck them off the shelves at the store on auto-pilot and toss them into your shopping cart.

But toxins may be closer than you think. Between the billions of pounds of pesticides used in agriculture every year, and the chemicals in cleaning supplies, paints, beauty products and other substances, toxins are all around us. And over time, these toxins can build up in our homes and our bodies causing detrimental health effects on everyone in the family.

While it would be impossible to eliminate all toxins from our homes, it is possible to lower the toxin load to improve family wellness. You want to develop a plan that allows you to decrease the amount of toxins you bring into your home or put into the bodies of your family members, and increase the amount of toxins you eliminate.

Here are a few ways to start reducing toxins at home:

- Switch to natural cleaning products.
- Change or clean furnace and A/C filters regularly.
- Keep your home well-ventilated.
- Leave shoes at the door.

Remember, everything that your family members come in contact with – whether through inhalation or skin contact – is likely to get into the body. And many of these substances can remain in our systems for years despite how diligently our liver, gut, skin, lungs, and kidneys work to filter them out. So, lower the risk of a toxic household and improve your family’s wellness by reducing exposure to indoor toxin

6 DEVELOP HEALTHY SLEEP HABITS FOR ALL FAMILY MEMBERS

Vitamin “S” or Sleep is critical for family wellness. Sleep is just as important to your family’s wellness routine as eating healthy and getting adequate amounts of physical activity. Yet a significant percentage of adults in North America report not getting enough sleep at least 15 out of every 30 days period that’s having poor sleep 50% of the time. But adequate sleep is a must for the entire family. Adequate sleep can support positive family wellness outcomes like fighting off infection, enhancing school performance, supporting the metabolism, preventing diabetes, and keeping us focused to work safely.

As you work to improve family wellness and build healthy routines, don’t overlook sleep. Cultivate an atmosphere that promotes healthy sleep habits for everyone in the home.



7 ORGANIZE YOUR HOME TO LOWER STRESS

A disorganized home can cause much unnecessary stress that can undermine your family wellness. So, in addition to organizing your schedule as mentioned before, it’s also important to organize your physical home environment. Are bills and junk mail creating a mountain on your kitchen countertops? Do you have closets that can barely close, or laundry that has been sitting in piles for a week?

Disorganized, cluttered spaces can cause a feeling of anxiety, overwhelm, and lack of focus. All of these can take a toll on the overall atmosphere at home and leave you less than successful in working towards family wellness. Getting organized and clearing physical space within your home can create more mental space to focus on what’s important for the family.

Key areas to focus on might include bedrooms, living spaces, the pantry and cupboards, closets, laundry room and even your family vehicles. Take it one area at a time until you have an organized, clutter-free home that your family can look forward to spending time in and supports your family’s health and wellness.

8 VOLUNTEER FOR A CAUSE TOGETHER

Helping other individuals, families or animals – or working for a special cause – is a great way to spend family time. Search out opportunities to help out in your local community and volunteer as a family.

This could be helping with projects at schools, cleaning up streets or parks, or reading to elders in assisted living facilities. The ways that you and your family can help others is endless.

Volunteering helps your family to bond over helping others, and also helps all family members to feel a sense of purpose and belonging to your community. For kids, this can also lead to feeling a sense of pride and accomplishment.

When your family gathers for a cause, it promotes your family’s emotional and spiritual wellness. Volunteering as a family can also impart healthy values to your kids such as kindness, gratitude, and selflessness.

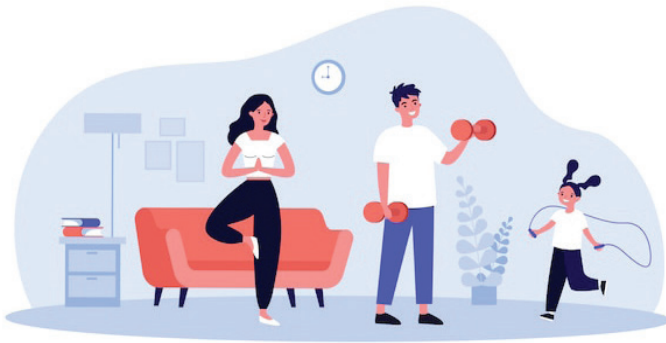
9 PRESERVE FAMILY MEMORIES

There are many ways to preserve your family’s memories. One great tool is photo albums that capture your family’s special moments. Having a way to preserve your family’s special occasions or milestones can aid your family wellness as family members gather to look at albums, go through scrapbooks, reflect on memories and share stories.

If you choose to create family photo albums, getting started or maintaining photo albums can be a challenge. Nowadays, it’s common to see many families keeping digital albums, but also having physical photo albums and scrapbooks are a great way to preserve your family’s memories and foster emotional wellness in the family.

Continued...

Choose the right method for you and your family. Working on this together as a family is a wonderful way to increase bonding, preserve your family history, and create a sense of togetherness for everyone in the family.



10 GET ACTIVE AS A FAMILY

Everyone knows that exercise is a good habit for a healthy lifestyle. And it's a great way to meet your individual health goals and improve family wellness. But does your family have an activity plan that includes everyone? Creating a fitness plan for the whole family is another key to help improve family wellness.

When everyone in the family is involved in exercises and activities together, not only are you improving your family's physical wellness but you're improving many other areas of family wellness, too!

Being active – and doing so as a family – can do wonders to improve mood, increase energy, help everyone to sleep better, and it is fun!

Get outside together. After a long day at work or school, the first thing your family may want to do when they get home is crash on the couch and snuggle in for hours of screen time. You may be so relieved to have some down time on the weekends that going outdoors is the furthest thing from your mind. But being outside can do wonders for bringing your family closer and managing day-to-day stress.

Whether it's a regular evening walk in the neighborhood, bike-riding, gardening, or going out to parks, going outdoors as a family is a great way to get away from the daily grind, have fun, and reconnect as a family.

When it's colder, try these physical activities for families:

- Ice skating
- Touring museums
- Skiing
- Sledding
- Indoor walks (like at the mall)
- Bowling
- Dancing
- Swimming in indoor or heated pool

For the warmer times of year, here are a few ideas for outdoor activities:

- Hiking
- Bike-riding
- Rollerblading
- Play catch
- Tennis
- Fishing
- Walk the dog
- Gardening

Another way to be more active as a family is to join a family health and wellness center. Most of these offer year-round activities for all members of the family. Regardless of the time of year, there are many activities your family can do together to stay active and moving.

Being physically active will improve health, keep everyone in shape, and is a great routine to add to your family's wellness plan.

11 VISIT RELATIVES

We now have technology that enables us to connect with people whenever, wherever. From family members that live around the corner to those that live around the globe, we can see our relatives in real time with a simple connection over the internet.

But virtual video calls are not the same as an in-person connection. Making the effort to visit relatives in other cities or towns, will help your family to maintain healthy relationships with grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and distant relatives.

Spending time with family and visiting loved ones has great benefits for all family members including

boosting emotional wellness and happiness. A few more benefits of visiting relatives include:

Gives all family members a sense of belonging.

- Reinforces family traditions.
- Educates family members on the family's heritage.
- Brings back positive memories.
- Reminds everyone that they are loved by more than just the immediate family.
- Keeps everyone emotionally engaged with the family.
- Creates new, lasting memories to be treasured by all.



There is only so much that can be shared by retelling stories or looking through albums. Giving family members the opportunity to meet and bond in person with extended family is an invaluable way for family members – especially children – to know where they “came from.”

In-between visits, there are other ways to stay connected. Consider sending cards, emails, photos, letters, and calling those who you love and encourage the whole family to be part of that process. When these routines and traditions are established early, they can become a natural part of your family wellness plan, and may affect how children interact with family members (including their own children) later in life.

12 DRINK MORE WATER

The human body is made up of roughly 60 - 70% water, and nearly all of our body's functions need water to work properly. Water helps to detoxify the body. We pick up toxins from our environment, air, and even our food every day. Drinking water can help flush toxins and waste from the body through sweat, urination, and defecation.

Water helps maintain a healthy weight or lose weight. Water can be a tool in maintaining a healthy weight. It fills you up before or in-between meals, helping to curb appetite naturally and raises your metabolism. And replacing sugary beverages with water is a great decision since water has zero calories!

Drinking water can help to prevent or alleviate headaches. Dehydration could be at the core of headaches and migraines in some people. And drinking more water can be a way to relieve or prevent headaches.

Water assists with digestion. Dealing with digestive problems like constipation is no fun. Inadequate amounts of water could be the problem as the bowel needs water to do its job! Drinking more water can help keep things moving along.

Water fights fatigue and boosts productivity. Dehydration could be the culprit behind low energy, poor concentration and memory problems. And dehydration can undermine the energy and productivity of your family members whether that's at school, work, or sports. Although drinking more water may mean more trips to the bathroom, these brief breaks may actually help you to remain more focused and alert, and encourage you to move more throughout the day.

Drinking more water is a great way to improve your family's physical and mental wellness. And it's low cost. If you or your family find water “boring,” squeeze a few drops of lemon and add some mint leaves to your glass. It's a drink that even kids will love.

The key to improving family wellness is taking it one step at a time. Use these 12 tips for family wellness to make simple changes. Each one will help you to create new, sustainable wellness habits in your home that can become part of everyone's daily routine for life.

Source: <https://www.wholefamilyliving.com/improve-family-wellness/#respond>

Message from a Foster Caregiver

I have chosen to write about what I believe are the fundamental things that I have had to change about myself... I have had to learn to open my heart and my mind more than I would have thought possible, to put aside all of the judgements that I have had and to most importantly work with the well part of the family (myself included).

When I began to foster I had a notion that I was somehow a better parent than these children's birth parents. I hid my judgements behind many good intentions and behaviour that I believed was "right" or "best". Thank goodness I learned better. I now believe that I have been given the privilege of looking after these children for parents who for whatever reasons are unable to do so. I have found that trust has developed between the children's parents and me because of the inclusiveness - the trust

built from honest, direct and non-judgmental communication - and as a result, the children feel free to express themselves, their love for their parents, their feelings of loyalty to both their parents and myself, without feeling that somehow they "should" be behaving differently.

For my part I had to work really hard at letting go of my "martyr" stand that I was taking and forget about the "after all I've done for you's" that were running through my mind and look at this woman - their mother - with compassion; to find an honest way to tell her how her behaviour affects her children, how it affects me and listen to her feelings and to what she wants for our future relationship as a family. The important thing is that it is and will continue to be an important part of their lives and it is my responsibility, because I have agreed to help raise these children, to make the very best



of all the relationships in the children's lives.

Our job, however difficult it may be, is to help and nurture these families, to work with the well part of the family and build on the strengths that are there. It is my hope that all of us who care for children other than our own are able to look beyond what may be familiar to us and find new ways of opening up one another and redefining "family" for the benefit of these wonderful children whose care we have been entrusted with.

– Debbie H.

In our "FOSTER CORNER" we would like to highlight anything from foster inspired stories to artwork submitted by foster parents on behalf of children in their homes. If you have a foster story, poem, artwork or some other foster related experience or information to share with our readers, please send it in! All communication or submissions for "Foster Corner" can be sent by email to taylor@sffa.sk.ca



Have you ever considered being a foster parent and don't know how to get started?

SEARCH FOR...

"Six Steps to Fostering In Saskatchewan" on YouTube, or visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAuyG4UXSkM>



INCLUSIVE Foster Care

Inclusive foster care is about keeping children safe, connected and loved. It was identified as a step to begin transforming the foster care system to include the on-going participation of parents and extended family in caring for their children.

It is about forming relationships which develop and change, as parents and foster caregivers work together to care for the child. It is an intense relationship, demanding co-operation to resolve differences and to work in true partnership.

The focus is the best interest of the child; the goal is preserving the family ties. It is a partnership where parents and foster caregivers teach and support each other to care for the child.

Inclusive Foster Care helps to connect the child with their Indigenous community and culture, supporting their Indigenous identity by helping them learn about, and be proud of, who they are.

It is important to engage in community and home-based cultural activities. Home-based activities can include: learning how to make food, reading educational books, learning about cultures and territories online, and bringing in Elders/Knowledge Keepers. Community-based activities could include: powwows, cultural nights for specific nations and, National Indigenous Day celebrations.

Continued...

"The child already has a family — it is right that she knows them." – Foster Caregiver

Foster Caregivers...

Come into relationship with the child's parents and family by...

- Taking it one step at a time: take a step-by-step approach to building the relationship over time. Try starting with short conversations during visit pick-ups and drop-offs.
- Being clear about boundaries while remaining open: some kind of relationship is always possible, even if it is temporarily limited to ensure safety. Talk to your worker about this.
- Managing inconsistency: this requires flexibility and perseverance but is worth it. Do not require consistency. When it comes to family contact, always have a Plan B in case a visit does not happen.
- Communicating directly and electronically as soon as possible: relationships are easier to maintain when you have direct communication, and regular short texts can really help.

Understand the family's stories by ...

- Finding common ground in shared life experiences.
- Participating in training and self-study: learn more about the challenges faced by the family, and the resilience of Indigenous communities.

It is particularly helpful to understand how the following impact adult behavior in ways that are beyond individual blame:

- Parental mental illness, substance use and/or disability
- Separation and loss
- Colonization and intergenerational trauma

Develop a shared vision by...

- Committing to the child being with family: reflect on your personal responsibility to strengthen child's relational and cultural connections: how do your values support this?
- Seeing that family and cultural connections meet a core developmental need: hold a vision of the child's future where they are not 'independent' but interdependent; connected to their family and culture.
- Talking about the shared vision for the child: discuss the plan for the child at Inclusive Foster Care Meetings, Care Plan Meetings and with the social workers.
- Seeing Inclusive Foster Care as part of your role: Fostering a child means actively strengthening their connections.

"I should have introduced the kids to their biological cousins who were here because now I see...they flock to each other... I should have when they were younger, I should have put more people in their lives."

– Foster Caregiver



Foster Caregivers...

- Let the parent(s) know that you emphasize – say to yourself “If I had to visit my child in someone else’s home I’d feel...”; help the parent(s) feel welcome.
- Share your ‘About Us’ information to help the circle get to know you.
- If you are asked to document visits, avoid feelings of betrayal by ensuring the parent(s) know you are doing this.
- Convey to the child and parent(s) that you want visits to happen.
- Involve the child in preparing for the visits: plan an activity, make something for mom/dad etc.
- Schedule visits to include parents in activities in the foster home, school, and community, e.g. school meetings, clothes shopping, etc.
- Take pictures during the visits and give these and other mementos to the parent; make a place for the parent(s) in the home by putting up pictures of the parent(s)/extended family.
- Ask the parent for advice and their wisdom about their child; make no assumptions and always check with the parent(s) before changing the child’s appearance in any way, e.g. cutting hair
- Encourage the child to talk about their parent(s) and family.
- Help the child express their feelings after visits; see behavioural/emotional upset as a healthy response to grief and loss.

“Indigenous foster caregivers often draw on their own extended family as a cultural resource for children.”

Resources:

The VACFSS Inclusive Foster Care website
http://www.vacfss.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Inclusive-Foster-Care_How-do-we-do-it_Aug-4-2019-1.pdf

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
<http://nctr.ca/reports.php>

CBC Indigenous
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous>

Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN)
<https://aptn.ca/>

Prevent a fire in your home

When you think of home security... keep fire safety in mind. Take care of your smoke alarms and clean your clothes dryer, to prevent fires. And, are you aware of what you need to know to protect your family from a 9-volt battery fire?

Smoke Alarms Save Lives!

Smoke alarms that are properly installed and maintained play a vital role in reducing fire deaths and injuries. If there is a fire in your home, smoke spreads fast and you need smoke alarms to give you time to get out. Having a working smoke alarm cuts the chances of dying in a reported fire in half. Almost two-thirds of home fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.

Here's what you need to know:

- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of your home.
- Test your smoke alarms every month.
- When a smoke alarm sounds, get outside and stay outside.
- Replace all smoke alarms in your home every 10 years

Smoke alarms by the numbers

In a four year period, 3/5 home fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.

9-Volt Battery Safety

9-volt batteries power our smoke alarms, household items and toys. They can be found in most homes, but these batteries can be a fire hazard if not stored safely or disposed of with care.

The problem

- 9-volt batteries can be dangerous. The positive and negative posts are close together. If a metal object touches the two posts of a 9-volt battery, it can cause a short circuit. This can make enough heat to start a fire.
- It is unsafe to store 9-volt batteries in a drawer near paper clips, coins, pens, or other batteries. Do not store common household items such as steel wool, aluminum foil, and keys near 9-volt batteries. If these items touch the two posts, there is a greater risk of a fire starting.
- Weak batteries may have enough charge to cause a fire. Some fires have started in trash when 9-volt batteries were thrown away with other metal items.

Storing 9-volt batteries

- Keep batteries in original packaging until you are ready to use them. If loose, keep the posts covered with masking, duct, or electrical tape. Prevent the posts from coming in contact with metal objects.
- Keep them someplace safe where they won't be tossed around.
- Store batteries standing up.
- 9-volt batteries should not be stored loose in a drawer. Do not store them in containers with other batteries.

Disposal

- 9-volt batteries should not be thrown away with trash. They can come in contact with other batteries or pieces of metal.
- 9-volt batteries can be taken to a collection site for household hazardous waste.



9-Volt Battery STORAGE

Keep batteries in original packaging until you are ready to use them.



Clothes Dryer Safety

Doing laundry is most likely part of your every day routine. But did you know how important taking care of your clothes dryer is to the safety of your home? With a few simple safety tips you can help prevent a clothes dryer fire.

- Have your dryer installed and serviced by a professional.
- Do not use the dryer without a lint filter.
- Make sure you clean the lint filter before or after each load of laundry. Remove lint that has collected around the drum.
- Rigid or flexible metal venting material should be used to sustain proper air flow and drying time.
- Make sure the air exhaust vent pipe is not restricted and the outdoor vent flap will open when the dryer is operating. Once a year, or more often if you notice that it is taking longer than normal for your clothes to dry, clean lint out of the vent pipe or have a dryer lint removal service do it for you.
- Keep dryers in good working order. Gas dryers should be inspected by a qualified professional to make sure that the gas line and connection are intact and free of leaks.
- Make sure the right plug and outlet are used and that the machine is connected properly.
- Follow the manufacturer's operating instructions and don't overload your dryer.
- Turn the dryer off if you leave home or when you go to bed.

Source: NFPA Public Education Division

AND DON'T FORGET...

Dryers should be properly **grounded**.

Check the **outdoor vent** flap to make sure it is not covered by snow.

Keep the area around your dryer **clear** of things that can burn, like boxes, cleaning supplies and clothing, etc.

Clothes that have come in contact with **flammable substances**, like gasoline, paint thinner, or similar solvents should be laid outside to dry, then can be washed and dried as usual.

FACT

The leading cause of home clothes dryer fires is failure to clean them.

HEAD LICE 101



Finding lice is tricky, and it gets missed – and misdiagnosed frequently. With sunlight, or a bright light, and a pair of magnifying glasses or magnifying visor, check the crown of the head and the hotspots. These are in the bangs, around the ears, and on the back (or nape) of the neck. Check the whole head, because frankly, lice could be anywhere. If you find something and you can flick it off, it's probably not a nit. Nits—or lice eggs—are cemented to the hair with the bug's special bond. If you can remove it, tape it on a white piece of paper and examine it.

Lice eggs have colour; they're not white. They're teardrop shaped, brownish, and attached to one side of the hair shaft. They're tiny – but visible. Lice bugs – lice (or in the singular, louse) – are unmistakable. They're about the size of a sesame seed, and light to dark brown in colour.

Don't pull your hair out! Lice is a solvable problem, and there are options:

- The RobiComb® zaps live lice.
- Enzyme Shampoo aids in the removal of lice.
- Oil smothers bugs by clogging up their breathing apparatus.

- Reduction combing with a professional quality nit comb.

There's no guaranteed way to avoid lice, just things you can do to prevent it:

- Avoid head to head contact, including selfies.
- Avoid sharing hair items, including brushes.
- Check regularly.
- Scent hair with specially essential oils for relief.
- Watch for scratching. Notify close friends and the school if you find lice.
- Educate kids about lice.

Tear Art

BOOKMARK CRAFT FOR KIDS

This tear art bookmark is a great activity, because you can basically do the whole thing with recycled materials, or scraps from leftover projects.



Material:

- Cardboard for bookmarks (Be sure to punch the holes at the top of the cardboard before creating. They can get quite thick once you start working and will be harder to punch later).
- Some paper to tear (old scrapbooking paper, newspaper or magazines).
- Glue
- Mod Podge (optional)
- Paintbrush
- Scissors
- Ribbon or yarn

Directions:

1. Cut your cardboard into a rectangle and punch a hole in the top.
2. Have your child cover the whole bookmark with glue. We just squirted it out of a glue bottle. If your child squirts too much, you can use a paintbrush or even a paper towel to rub of the excess.
3. Have your child tear little bits of paper and place on the glue-covered cardboard. Keep doing this until it's mostly covered. (Don't worry about it hanging over the edges or covering the hole. You can trim it later).
4. Let it dry.



Source: <https://buggyandbuddy.com/how-to-make-a-bookmark-using-tear-art/>



5. Once it's dry, trim off the paper that's hanging over the edges. If necessary, re-punch the hole at the top.
6. Brush a layer of either Mod Podge or glue over the entire bookmark to keep the paper from coming off later on.
7. Once they have dried, tie some ribbon or yarn through the hole at the top!
8. You can either keep them to use at home, or give them as a gift!

Healthy & Easy SNACK IDEAS

1

Tortilla chips & salsa



Bake a whole wheat pita and cut it into wedges. Serve with a fruit salsa or tomato salsa for flavourful dipping.

2

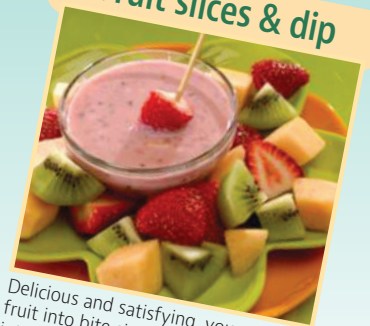
Trail Mix



Mix together nuts, seeds, raisins, dried fruit or cereal such as Chex or Cheerios for a sweet and salty snack.

3

Fruit slices & dip



Delicious and satisfying, you can cut fruit into bite size pieces to be dipped into yogurt.

Social Media Foster Care Concerns

Q & A



Many foster parents have asked if there are any specific things that they should know about social media, networking and texting. There are a few basic principles that foster families should apply. Here are a few frequently asked questions:

Am I allowed to develop or use a "Family Internet Safety Agreement" as a foster parent?

Yes! Parents need to stay educated about social media and have some household rules or guidelines for family members. Ideally, members of the youth's team will be part of the agreement, so that everyone is clear on what is expected.

If a youth in care owns a cell phone and/or portable gaming device before they came to my home, can they use those items all the time in my home?

If a youth owns something like a cell phone or handheld gaming device, those items belong to the youth and may not be damaged or destroyed.

Are youth in care allowed to have e-mail, Facebook accounts, blogs or YouTube accounts?

Yes, youth in care are able to have online accounts as long as they meet the minimum guidelines for the website. However, foster parents don't have to provide accessibility to the internet in their home. Many parents have opted to set up specific rules and guidelines about internet access for youth in their home.

A youth placed in my home is posting pictures and information about himself on a social networking website. Is this allowed?

Yes, youth in care are allowed to post pictures and information about themselves anywhere anytime they want. Youth in care do not have to follow the confidentiality guidelines that licensed foster parents need to, except when it pertains to other youth in care in the home.

How should I maintain confidentiality about the youth placed in my home on social networking websites like Facebook?

As an approved foster parent, you must always maintain confidentiality about any youth placed in your home and their family. This means that pictures and any information about the youth placed in your home and their family should never be posted or written anywhere others have access to that information. This is especially important online for social media and social networking sites like Facebook.

4

Homemade muffins



Easy to make in big batches and freeze, muffins can be made in endless variations and are a convenient snack.

5

Popcorn



Kids will love the fact that they think they are eating "junk food"...but air popped popcorn is surprisingly low fat. And since it is high in fibre, it can keep them satisfied until supper.

6

English Muffin Pizza



A fun personalized mini pizza, using an English muffin for the crust. Bakes quick and easy... even in a toaster oven.

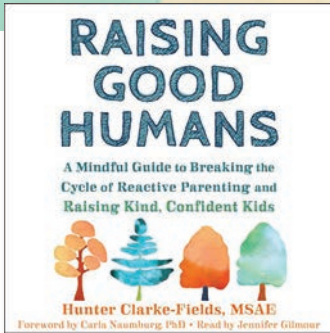
7

Hummus Dip



Hummus is such a fantastic condiment that you can really get creative with! Serve with crackers, veggies and more!

goodreads



Raising Good Humans: A Mindful Guide to Breaking the Cycle of Reactive Parenting and Raising Kind, Confident Kids

A kinder, more compassionate world starts with kind and compassionate kids. In *Raising Good Humans*, you'll find powerful and practical strategies to break free from "reactive parenting" habits and raise kind, cooperative, and confident kids.

Whether you're running late for school, trying to get your child to eat their vegetables, or dealing with an epic meltdown in the checkout line at a grocery store - being a parent is hard work! And, as parents, many of us react in times of stress without thinking - often by yelling. But what if, instead of always reacting on autopilot, you could respond thoughtfully in those moments, keep your cool, and get from A to B on time and in one piece?

With this book, you'll find powerful mindfulness skills for calming your own stress response when difficult emotions arise. You'll also discover strategies for cultivating respectful communication, effective conflict resolution, and reflective listening. In the process, you'll learn to examine your own unhelpful patterns and ingrained reactions that reflect the generational habits shaped by your parents, so you can break the cycle and respond to your children in more skillful ways.

When children experience a parent reacting with kindness and patience, they learn to act with kindness as well - thereby altering generational patterns for a kinder, more compassionate future. With this essential guide, you'll see how changing your own "autopilot reactions" can create a lasting positive impact, not just for your kids, but for generations to come.

"A wise and fresh approach to mindful parenting." – Tara Brach, author of *Radical Acceptance*

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