



# FAQ

## Frequently Asked Questions about Becoming a Foster Parent

**Is there a need for aboriginal families to become foster parents?** YES! We have many aboriginal children in care (about 53%) that we would prefer to have placed with aboriginal families. Many of our children come from outside of the Okanagan (they are from other Bands).

**My culture is very important to me. Can I share this with the child?** We think culture is very important too and we would hope that you would share your knowledge with the children. Taking children to activities like celebrations and gatherings is a great way for them to learn as well. This is actually an expectation of foster parents.

**I don't know if I have enough room in my home to foster a child?** Each child will need their own bed and a place to keep their own things. Each child's needs may be different so you would discuss this before accepting the placement.

### **Why are children in care?**

Children enter foster care because their parents are unable to care for them for a variety of reasons. They range in age from newborn to 18. They come from all areas of the province and Canada.

### **How long will a foster child be in my home?**

There is no set length of time for a foster placement. It depends on the circumstances of the child and his/her birth family. When a child is placed in your home, you will be given an estimate of how long the child is expected to stay. Some children stay in foster care for a day or two. Others may stay in care for a couple of years.

### **Do I have a choice about which child is placed in my home?**

Yes. Foster parents can specify the age, gender and number of children they wish to care for. There is an expectation that you will foster both aboriginal and non-aboriginal children.

**I like to hunt and I own guns, can I still be a foster parent?** YES! Many of our foster parents enjoy hunting. We ask that they be stored properly and safely. The firing pin is removed and the ammunition is stored separately. We don't want children to be able to access them and get hurt.

**Can I take a foster child hunting with me?** You would need special permission from the child's social worker, but it can be obtained.

**What are the costs of becoming a foster parent?**

There are no fees associated with becoming approved foster or adoptive parents. The home study and required training are provided free of charge.

**Will I receive financial assistance for the children in my care?**

Yes. You will receive a payment designed to cover expenses such as rent, food, clothing, recreation, etc. The basic payment rates (2009) are \$803.81 per month for children under 12 and \$909.95 for children 12 and over. Foster parents with a higher level of skill and experience may be assessed at a higher level and monthly rate.

**Do I have to own my home?**

No. Families who rent must advise their landlord that they are going to become foster parents. You must also carry renter or homeowner insurance.

**I'm single. Can I still be a foster parent?**

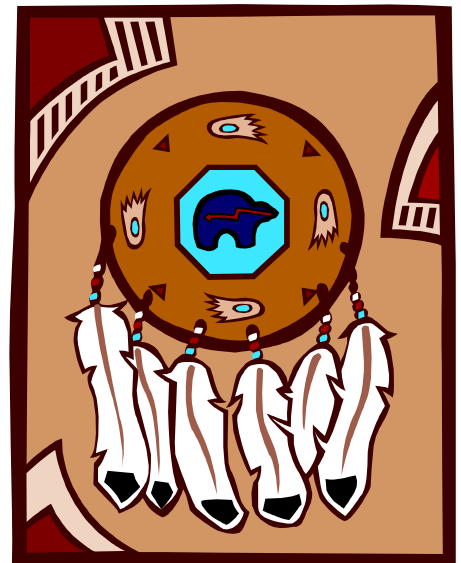
Yes. Foster parents can be single, married, or in a partnership. We need all kinds of families.

**Can I work outside of the home?**

Foster parents can work outside of the home. However, in most cases, having one parent at home, or having a flexible or part-time position often works best for the children.

**What are the Responsibilities of a Foster Parent?**

- Provide a safe home, good food, clothing and accommodation (each child must have their own bed).



- Provide a warm, nurturing environment, guidance and supervision that respond to the child's individual needs and cultural heritage.
- Be a team player- work cooperatively with social workers and other professionals for the best interests of the child.
- Ensure contact between the child and their family and cultural community when appropriate.
- Agree to the MCFD discipline policy. No physical discipline is allowed, ever, for any reason, in your home.
- If anyone in your home smokes, they must smoke outside and never in a vehicle with children.



**Where is the biggest need for foster parents??**

We currently have a need for all homes, especially aboriginal homes. To make good matches, we need homes in all areas.

**Is there training and support available?** Yes, definitely! We have 'New Foster Parent Orientation training' classes as well as specialized training for those wishing to care for babies. You will be part of a team, working with social workers and other team members. There is also lots of ongoing training available to help you meet the child's special needs.

If you would like more information, please call  
 your Foster Parent Coordinator,  
 or MCFD, Resources office

