



OKANAGAN FOSTER PARENTS ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT - 2007

*This document is meant to be a companion document to Attachment 1.1
Support to Family Care Network- 2006
Quarterly Summary Report of Services Provided- Okanagan Foster Parents Association*

Background

The Okanagan Foster Parents Association (OFPA) was formed in 2002 in response to the need to restructure support services to Family Care Homes in the Okanagan. OFPA is funded by Ministry of Children and Family Development to provide support services to foster parents in the Okanagan. The Okanagan Foster Parents Association is a consumer-driven, community based organization and is cross-cultural. In June 2007, support services in the Shuswap area was added to our contract.

The Okanagan Foster Parents Association

- Provides support services to caregivers in the Okanagan, Shuswap and Similkameen who have a family care home agreement with MCFD
- Develops and facilitates support groups for family caregivers in the Okanagan, Shuswap and Similkameen
- Assists MCFD in recruitment and retention of family care home caregivers
- Provides education and training for family caregivers in the Okanagan, Shuswap and Similkameen
- Provides an avenue for identification and resolution of issues common to caregivers, in partnership with MCFD

The philosophy of the Okanagan Foster Parents Association is:

Foster Families are a key component of the Family Care Home system in British Columbia. Caregivers need a variety of support services and educational opportunities in order to meet the physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual needs of children and youth in care. As an organization of caregivers the Okanagan Foster Parents Association recognizes the need to be flexible in meeting the ever-changing needs of caregivers, the children/youth who they care for, and their families.

Board of Directors- Okanagan Foster Parents Association:

- President- Bonnie Thompson- Oliver, BC
- Vice President- Jessica Macfarlane- Kelowna, BC
- Treasurer- Gerry Schalm- Penticton, BC
- Secretary- John Musgrave- Oliver, BC
- Melanie Filiatrault- Kelowna, BC
- Joy Caulien- Vernon, BC (May-July)
- Pat Monahan, Oliver, BC

- Grant Smith-Shuswap area, BC (July-Dec)

Coordinators;

- North Okanagan -Noelle Typusiak
- Central Okanagan -Joan Kirkbride
- South Okanagan/ Similkameen -Betty Bogyo
- Aboriginal Services – Sheila Ridden (January-October 2007)
- Shuswap- Kathi Fischer (June to December 2007)

The Coordinators, with the Team Leaders from the respective Resources offices, developed and coordinated services to suit the needs of each area. This report will provide a brief summary of the activities in each area. In June 2007, the Okanagan Foster Parents Association contracted to provide support services for the Shuswap area. Kathi Fischer was hired to fill this position. Sheila Ridden left the position of Aboriginal Coordinator in October.

Communication-

Times per year	N. Okanagan	C. Okanagan	S. Okanagan	Aboriginal	Shuswap	Totals
Newsletters	9 (~ 1200)	6 (~1187)	7 (715)	2 (660)	1(55)	25 newsletters (3817 copies)
Group E-mail news	194	150	138	(through other coordinators)	4	486 group emails sent
Social Events	10	4	8	~12 Potluck lunches 2-Sweat lodges 2- National Aboriginal Days	3	41 social events where caregivers could interact with each other
Web site use						1st quarter: average 127 unique visitors Sept - Dec: average 225 unique visitors 80% increase
FP local meetings	1 meeting – Vernon-organized several of the social events	8 meetings Kelowna planning several social events	2 meetings Penticton planning for social events		6 meetings Salmon Arm/ Shuswap	17 meetings We attended locals to provide information and assistance
Information / support	Average 36 homes/month	Average 32 homes /month	Average 25 homes/month	Data not available	Average 15 homes /month	Average of 108 homes /month served plus those who received services from the Aboriginal Coordinator

Peer groups	CLBC Caregivers Lumby Foster Parents Vernon FPA Safe Babies	Kelowna Foster Parents meetings	Penticton FP meetings Safe Babies	Caregivers of Aboriginal Children- Vernon and Kelowna	Salmon Arm FPA	10 Peer groups are operating within the area
Meetings with MCFD (Resource team meetings)	Attended whenever available – usually 3 per month	Attended team meetings every second week and as requested	Attended team meetings twice each month	Attended some team meetings with Resources and Aboriginal offices	Attended 4 MCFD meetings	All Coordinators attended team meetings in their areas
Partnership meetings	MCFD Partnership CIC Committee Guardianship Action Team CLBC Partnership FP Meeting with SD 22	Working on re-instituting MCFD/FP Partnership meetings System of Care meetings	MCFD Partnership meetings	Aboriginal Partnership committee- Kelowna		Attended and participated in Partnership meetings where they exist and other relevant meetings
Aboriginal				~12 Potluck meetings held in Vernon and Kelowna		

Web site- www.okfosterparents.ca

The website has been continually updated and more features have been added.

January - March- average 127 unique visitors per month

September – December- average 225 unique visitors per month - an 80% increase in visits!

Community liaison

Foster Parent Coordinators work closely with community partners in their areas, especially:

South Okanagan-FASD Family Support Worker, ARC Programs, Child & Youth Mental Health, Youth Probation, Penticton & District Community Resource Society, South Okanagan Boys & Girls Club, CLS/CLBC, OSNS Child Development Centre, Infant development Centre, En'owkin Centre, BCFFPA, Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents Association, Adoptive Families Association, Oonakane Friendship Centre, Penticton Indian Band Youth worker, Penticton Public Health.

Central Okanagan- Child and Youth Mental Health, Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP), Ki-low-na Friendship Society, Okanagan Metis Children & Family Services, Building Healthy Families, Lake Country Native Association, Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents Association, Okanagan Families Society(now called The Bridge), Okanagan Boys and Girls Club, Community Living BC and Community Connections, BCFFPA, System of Care committee, Adoptive Families

Association, Central Okanagan Child Development Association, Interior Health Authority- Public Health Unit, CATCH Community Network, ARC Programs, Aboriginal Partnership Committee.

North Okanagan- FASD Community Team; North Okanagan Child, Youth and Family Committee; Lumby Child Youth and Family Committee; Children in Care Committee; North Okanagan Youth and Family Services Society; Adoptive Parents Association; Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents; BCFFPA; Family Resource Centre; Mental Illness Family Support; Interior Health Authority, Public Health; Community Volunteer Coordinators Group; CLBC Community Council;

Aboriginal- Westbank First Nations, Ki-Low-Na Friendship Center, Vernon First Nations Friendship Center, Metis Child and Family Services, Lake Country Native Association, Okanagan Nation Alliance, Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents, ROOTS program-MCFD, School district 22 and 23 aboriginal advocates, Okanagan Indian Band, Spallumcheen Band, MCFD Aboriginal Services-Vernon and Kelowna, Children In Care Committee

Shuswap- Shuswap Family Resource & Referral Centre, Intensive Family Support Workers, Shuswap Children’s Association, CLBC, Public Health Nursing, Drug & Alcohol Services, Mental Health Services

Education & Training

B.C. Foster Care Education Program

Contracted trainers 2007:

South Okanagan- Daniel Pitman

Central Okanagan- Sue Foisy

North Okanagan- Julie Russett and Alison Dennis

	North OK	Central OK	South OK	Aboriginal	Shuswap	Totals
BC Education Program	225 modules 17 completions	135 modules 4 completions	202 modules 14 completions		2 completions online	562 modules 37 completions
Library materials borrowed	29 borrowed 15 new resources added	37 borrowed 14 new resources added	23 borrowed 28 new resources added		4 new resources added	89 borrowed 61 new resources added

All libraries are listed on our website: www.okfosterparents.ca

Workshops/ training offered

North Okanagan

Training available as individual workshops, at foster parent meetings, or for peer support groups.

- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention – core – offered twice
- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention – refresher – offered twice
- Safe Babies – core training
- Safe Babies- 6 Training sessions – oral care, Speech and Language, Importance of Play, Car Seats & Self Care, Speech & Hearing, car seats

- Basic Training –8 training sessions- Contracts – offered twice, Life Books, Support Workers & Protocols, Rights & Resources, Integrated Case Management, Alternate Care, Record Keeping, Placement Considerations & Questions,
- Mental Illness - BCSS Partnership Presentation
- Nathan Ory: Day 2 of 2 day training- loss of self control in children and youth with developmental disabilities and significant behavior challenges
- Grief & Loss in Foster Families
- “Planning” for Children and Youth with Developmental Disabilities

Joint Training:

- Caregiver Support Service Standards (MCFD) – offered daytime & evening session
- Team Building Day (MCFD, GAT)
- BCFFPA Idea Forum – offered daytime & evening session
- Mental Illness First Aid -Vernon FPA
- Epilepsy & Seizures in Children Vernon FPA

Caregivers were encouraged to attend relevant training offered in the community.

Central Okanagan-

Training is offered in the Central Okanagan through MCFD Resources office, the Local Foster Parent Association and the Okanagan Foster Parents Association. The Coordinator also advertises workshops available through other community agencies and encourages Foster Parents to attend.

- Mental Health Training Series (partnership with MCFD)
Topics included Resiliency, Suicide intervention, Attachment and Parent/child Therapy, Concurrent Disorders
- Log Book training- 2 training sessions
- CPI- Non Violent Crisis Intervention
- Safe Babies Training (partnership with MCFD)- program offered twice
- Nathan Ory: Day 1 of 2 day training –“Sometimes Trying Harder is not Enough”
- St John Ambulance CPR and Emergency First Aid

We also advertised and encouraged foster parents to attend local and regional workshops

- National Aboriginal Day- feast and festivities
- POW WOW- Lake Country Native Association
- Autism Workshop
- FASD training
- BCFFPA AGM-Richmond -variety of workshops offered
- BCFFPA Ideas forum
- Sexually Intrusive Behaviors workshop
- True Colors mentoring training
- Barbara Coloroso workshop
- Fire department car seat instruction
- Supporting Families with Parental Mental Illness
- Parenting With Pizzazz

South Okanagan-

Workshops organized or assisted with planning

- Drug Use and Paraphernalia- Penticton
- Non Violent Crisis Intervention Foster Parent Training
- Safe Babies Support Group- Baby Signing
- Caregiver Support Services Standards Training- MCFD, BCFFPA
- Safe Baby Program Training- core training-3 days
- Safe Babies Group, Car Seat Inspection and Instruction (ICBC, BCAA)
- Safe Babies Group training on Toys and Play IDP- Penticton

Workshops Advertised in and out of the South Okanagan

- Divorce Education for Parents-Helping children deal with children’s reactions to Divorce
- Crystal Meth Forum- Oliver
- Partners in Parenting Workshop, Rock Creek
- Addictions Presentation in Osoyoos
- Parenting with Pizzazz Workshop- Kelowna
- Building Skills for Trans-racial Parenting AFABC
- FASD Workshop- Strategies for Positive Outcomes- Kamloops
- BCFFPA AGM- Richmond
- Connecting the Circles- Together Today For Our Children and Youth-Vernon
- Empowering our Communities Forum- Okanagan Nation/ Aboriginal Peoples Accord, Youth Justice and MCFD- Penticton
- Nathan Ory – Sometimes Trying Harder is Just Not Enough; 2-day workshop Vernon and Kelowna
- Barbara Coloroso-Parenting- Penticton
- Pat Buckley, Preparing and Facilitating Children to Move Forward in Transition- Salmon Arm
- Fed. Of Aboriginal Foster Parents Assoc. AGM
- Supporting Families with Parental Mental Illness- Kelowna
- Parenting Conference-Communities for Kids- Osoyoos
- Is Your Child or Teen Affected by Anxiety- Anxiety BC- Penticton

Shuswap

Training is offered in the Shuswap through MCFD Resources office, the Local Foster Parent Association and the Okanagan Foster Parents Association. The Coordinator also advertised workshops available through other community agencies and encourages Foster Parents to attend

- BCFFPA Ideas Forum
- Nathan Ory – Sometimes Trying Harder is Just Not Enough; 2-day workshop Vernon and Kelowna
- Review of Pat Buckley Workshop – Journey That Lasts a Lifetime; 2-morning video training
- We also advertised and encouraged foster parents to attend local and regional workshops
- Pat Buckley – Journey that Lasts a Lifetime
- Barbara Coloroso – Kids are Worth It, and Bullying, Cyber Bullying, & Ethics

Crisis Support

	N OK	C OK	S OK	Aboriginal	Shuswap	Total
Crisis training provided	NVCI – 17 Refresher-6 3 courses	NVCI-6	NVCI- 10 2 courses			6 NVCI sessions offered
Support pamphlets distributed	Updated and distributed to all Foster Parents	Updated and distributed to new Foster Parents	Updated and sent out to all Foster Parents in August	No data available		Support pamphlets were distributed to Foster Parents
Crisis support provided	3	8	4			15 cases

Support to Caregivers involved in Protocols

	North OK	Central OK	South OK	Aboriginal	Shuswap	Total
Number of trained support workers	8	7	3		2	20 support workers are available
Number of Protocol cases where support was provided	1	8	3	0	0	12
Support provided in Conflict Resolution	Protocol: 1 Non-protocol: 6	Protocol: 1 Non-Protocol:6	Protocol: 1 Non-protocol: 3	0	0	Protocol 3 Non-protocol 15

Support & Mutual Aid

	North OK	Central OK	South OK	Aboriginal	Shuswap	Total
Number of peer / networking groups	4	1	2	2	1	9 groups
Home Visits	5	20	13	No data available	2	40+ home visits
Information / support from Coordinator	Average of 36 FP's per month accessing services	Average of 32 FP's per month accessing services	Average of 25 FP's per month accessing services	No data avail	Average 15 of FP's per month accessing services	108 Foster Families per month accessing Coordinator services

Identification of Common Issues

Common issues are identified in a number of ways.

- Partnership meetings are held in North OK and the South OK, no Partnership meetings held in COK or Shuswap
- Local meetings- Vernon, Kelowna, Penticton, Oliver, Princeton, Salmon Arm
- Team Meetings- Coordinators in each area attend team meetings with the Resources unit to discuss any issues identified in the network.
- Children in Care committee-(Vernon), System of Care committee (Kelowna)

Issues, once identified are worked on with MCFD to find a solution

Recruitment

	North OK	Central OK	South OK	Aboriginal	Shuswap	Total
Number of Pre-services offered	2	4	1		1	8 Pre-Service Orientations offered
Number of participants	54	Tracked by MCFD	13		10	77+ Tracked by MCFD in COK
Number of completions	25	Tracked by MCFD	8		Tracked by MCFD	33+ numbers tracked by MCFD in COK and Shuswap
Number of Info sessions	10	5 group, 8 individual	1 group Others done by MCFD individually	*See note below		16 group info sessions + individually

The Aboriginal Coordinator position was developed to do recruitment within the Aboriginal Community.

- Recruitment drives- We have been assisting MCFD with recruitment drives
- Enquiries were taken from interested people in the community. Answered questions and referred to MCFD worker
- Foster Parent appreciation letter to the editor in all three areas
- Booth at Volunteer fairs, pamphlets distributed, attended regional Recruitment, Banners up, "Interested in Fostering?" page added to web site, advertise Info Sessions, pens distributed, press release
- Info package developed for restricted homes
- Participated in Provincial forums and committees

Satisfaction Survey 2007 Results Summary

Okanagan Foster Parents Association – Support to Family Care Network

Okanagan Foster Parents Association sent surveys to 445 Foster Parents in the North, Central, and South Okanagan. 126 Foster Parents (28.3%) responded either on-line or by mail-in, between November 27 and December 24, 2007.

Communication: Surveys showed an overall satisfaction (94%) with the newsletters, emails, website, information and consultation.

Education and training: Overall satisfaction with the Foster Care Education program and training events offered. Barriers to attending training were listed as cost, travel and child care. Also, parents working outside the home listed daytime workshops were impossible to attend.

Libraries: Half of the respondents noted that they do not use the libraries. We will continue to find a way to make them more accessible and relevant.

Support: Foster parents receive support in a variety of ways. We asked where they received their support. Foster parent Coordinator- 75%, other foster parents-70%, friends and family-90%, professionals 70%, Resource Social workers-78%, child's social worker 83%, foster parent support line-22%, Aboriginal Coordinator (NOK, COK only)-11%.

Satisfaction with Foster Parent Coordinator Services: Respondents rated satisfaction with these services at 96% (80% listed as very satisfied). Many positive comments were added about the services received from the Coordinators.

Recruitment/ Retention: Overall satisfaction with the Pre-Service Orientation training (91%)

Training: Overall satisfaction with training and it indicated a need for more/ continued training. There were 27 suggestions for training events. The most requested were:
Working with MCFD – policies, relationships, etc, Attachment/RAD , Working with birth families, Self-care for caregivers, FASD, Contracts, Mental Illness, First Aid & CPR, Caring for children with specific needs/ specific age groups, Transition planning, Autism/Aspergers, ADHD

**Detailed summary of survey available on request*

Year End Summary

The Okanagan Foster Parents Association supports caregivers through a wide range of services. The primary goals are to provide information, education, as well as opportunities to build and strengthen relationships and to develop skills. Foster Parents in our region continue to be committed to meeting the difficult needs of the children in their care. We have been honored to provide support services to foster parents in our area. Foster families are committed to improving the lives of children and youth of our community. We commend them for their steadfastness in their 24-7, co-parenting job!

Communication was provided to caregivers through regular newsletters and group emails. These newsletters and emails provide information about upcoming educational and social events. Relevant information on community events was also advertised. We liaised with a wide number of community groups to keep updated about what is available in the community. Peer groups, foster parent meetings, workshops and social events provided opportunities for caregivers to meet and network amongst themselves

The BC Foster Care Education Program was offered 3 times in our region in 2007. Caregivers are very satisfied with the classes and the presenters according to the evaluations completed each module. In Vernon and Kelowna, the program was divided and offered in two parts. Series one in

the Fall or Spring and series two offered at the opposite time. This allowed caregivers to have a break between sessions.

We will be offering the full program three times in 2008, once in each of our areas. It is also available to foster parents online.

Other educational opportunities and workshops were presented in each area on a variety of topics. Attendance at training events continues to be unpredictable. Evaluation of foster parent's training and support needs is a continuous process. Training topics reflect the priorities of each area.

Our website, (www.okfosterparents.ca) has a vast amount of information and links available to foster parents to allow them to access information online. We have seen the use double over the past year, from 127 average visits per month by unique visitors (separate visitors, not including repeat visits) to a high of 225 unique visitors per month in September through December.

Our contract required an Aboriginal Coordinator, which was filled from January through October, 2007. This position will not be filled and will not be part of the contract next year.

In June, we assumed the contract for the Salmon Arm/ Shuswap area. A Coordinator was hired in a part time position. She has been busy familiarizing herself with the Ministry and the foster parents in the area.

Recruitment of new foster homes has been a high priority with the local MCFD offices. We were pleased to assist them by submitting articles to newspapers, letters to the editor, mall displays, information sessions, volunteer fairs, and by displaying banners, which acknowledge foster parents. We continue to present the Pre-Service Orientation Program in the North and South Okanagan and assist with the New Foster Parent training being offered in the Central Okanagan.

We sent out a Satisfaction survey to all foster parents in order to have feedback on how foster parents rate our services. The results were very good and are summarized in this report.

Volunteers have again been a crucial part of our organization. The Board of Directors of the Okanagan Foster Parents Association are volunteers and put in many hours to ensure the smooth delivery of services. The local foster parent associations, to whom we provide support, are all volunteers. Our Foster Parent Support Workers, who provide services to other foster parents during Protocols are all volunteers. Volunteers have also assisted with providing training to other caregivers and assisting in others ways too numerous to mention. Thank you to all of these wonderful dedicated volunteers!

Respectfully Submitted
January 14, 2008
Okanagan Foster Parents Association

Questions or comments may be addressed to:
Board of Directors - Board@okfosterparents.ca 250-535-0399 or
Administrator- COKsupport@okfosterparents.ca 250-868-9285