



**Q. *What is the total increase in the foster family care maintenance rate for foster parents?***

- There will be incremental increases from March 1, 2007 to April 1, 2009.
- By April 2009, foster parents caring for children age 11 years and under will see a full maintenance rate increase of \$102.27.
- Foster parents caring for children age 12 to 19 years will see a full maintenance rate increase of \$104.27 by April 2009.
- The first increase on March 1, 2007 will increase the average monthly rate from \$754 to \$812. The second increase on April 1, 2008 will increase the average monthly payment to \$834. The third increase on April 1, 2009 will increase the average monthly payment to \$857.

**Q. *When will I see the increase in the maintenance rate payments?***

The first incremental change to the monthly maintenance rates will be effective March 1, 2007. The April payment will be retroactive to include the new maintenance rate for March.

The maintenance rate increase will be paid incrementally over three fiscal years. Starting March 1, 2007, foster families will receive the first increase. On April 1, 2008 and again on April 1, 2009, the additional increases will be provided, resulting in the full increase for each age group of children in care.

**Q. *What is the total increase in the Specialized Level 1 - 3 service payment rates for foster homes?***

All three levels of specialized foster homes will receive an increase over the next three years that is based on the type of service payment. The total increase will be dependant on the type of Family Care Home Agreement and the number of children in each home with a minimum total increase of \$100 to the service payment. Like the increase to the maintenance payments, this increase will be paid incrementally over three fiscal years.

**Q. When will the new Specialized Level 1 - 3 service payment rates come into effect?**

The first incremental change increase to the Specialized Level 1 – 3 service payment rates will be effective March 1, 2007. The March service payment will be based on this new rate.

On April 1, 2008 and again on April 1, 2009, the additional increase will be provided resulting in the full increase on the service payment based on the level of the home and the number of beds.

Home Type	Base Rate	'2007/08		'2008/09		'2009/10		Total 0.00%
		Increase.	07/08 Rate	Increase.	08/09 Rate	Increase.	09/10 Rate	
Level 1	358.02	38.54	396.56	30.55	427.11	30.91	458.02	100.00
Level 2/1 bed	1,040.40	38.54	1078.94	30.55	1109.49	30.91	1140.40	100.00
Level 2/2 bed	1,768.68	77.08	1845.76	61.10	1906.86	61.82	1968.68	200.00
Level 2/3 bed	2,392.92	115.62	2508.54	91.65	2600.19	92.73	2692.92	300.00
Level 3/1 bed	1,716.66	38.54	1755.20	30.55	1785.75	30.91	1816.66	100.00
Level 3/2 bed	2,913.12	77.08	2990.20	61.10	3051.30	61.82	3113.12	200.00

**Q. What is the difference between maintenance payments and service payments?**

Every foster parent receives **maintenance payments** to cover the day to day costs of caring for a child in care. The maintenance rate increase is intended to provide foster parents with funds to cover the cost of meeting the day-to-day needs of their foster child. These costs include food, clothing, household supplies, transportation, personal needs, recreation, equipment, child’s allowance, babysitting, gifts, activities and educational components related to each child’s individual plan of care.

**Service payments** are made *in addition* to the maintenance payments to foster parents who operate three different levels of specialized family care homes – those that care for children and youth with special, physical, mental, emotional or behavioural needs of varying complexity.

**Q. How was the amount of the increase determined?**

The amount was determined using the British Columbia Consumer Price Index, the B.C. Cost of Living, the federal transfer payments for children in care and in consultation with the British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations and the Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents.

**Q. Does this increase mean that payments for 'out of the ordinary' expenses will not be available?**

The new rate should cover most of the costs required to implement the child's plan of care.

Other payments are possible if it is clear that additional funds are needed to comply with the plan of care and to ensure the stability of the placement. It is expected that additional payments will only be necessary in exceptional or anticipated circumstances. Foster parents are expected to manage foster parent payments over a period of time to allow for months where expenses might exceed payments.

**Q. Are all foster parents getting an increase?**

The rate increase does not apply to negotiated contracts as they have a separate process to request increased funds (i.e. annual contract negotiations).

**Q. Will rates for post-adoption assistance and kith and kin agreements also see an increase?**

No, not at this time. That said, this is certainly under consideration.

**Q. Will foster homes that provide care for children in the care of delegated Aboriginal agencies also receive the increase?**

There are **three** situations where Aboriginal agency children are placed with foster homes:

1. Ministry approved and funded homes. These homes will automatically receive the increase.
2. Ministry-funded delegated Aboriginal agencies. These agencies have their own foster homes and set their own payment rates. The Ministry will provide funds to delegated Aboriginal agencies to support an equivalent increase in maintenance and service payments to their foster homes.
3. The federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) also fund some Aboriginal agencies. Any increases in payments to these agencies' foster homes will be a matter for consideration between DIAND and the Aboriginal agencies. In the past DIAND has increased funding when the Ministry has increased foster home rates.

**Q. *How much will the increases cost the Province?***

The increase for foster families adds up to \$31 million over three years.

**Background Questions**

**Q. *How many foster parents are there in the province?***

B.C. currently has more than 3,200 foster families however, like many professions that number can fluctuate due to attrition and other factors.

Foster parents stop fostering for different reasons. These include:

- foster parents deciding they are past the parenting stage of life -- our current foster parents are an aging population, in some communities the majority of foster parents are over 55 yrs;
- the cost of housing and the downsizing of the family home;
- changing economic factors in communities, leading to two parent families moving from one working parent to two working parents; and
- biological children who reach the age of majority.

**Q. *How many children and youth in care live with foster families in B.C.?***

More than 6,400 children and youth currently live with foster families in B.C.

**Q. *Of the 6,400 foster children, how many have specialized needs?***

While more than 4,700 children and youth are placed in specialized family care homes in order to best meet their individual assessed needs, it would be accurate to say that, to varying degrees, all children in foster care could be included in this category.

Foster children are in care because of abuse or because their parents have been unable or unwilling to provide appropriate care and parenting. Many suffer the effects of early childhood abuse or neglect; many were born drug or alcohol addicted and suffer on-going serious physical and psychological problems. Some children are developmentally challenged and cannot be cared for by their own parents. Regardless of their background, all children need special attention to adjust to a new, unfamiliar home, no matter how caring that home might be.

**Q. *Is there a foster parent shortage in B.C.?***

We always need more foster parents, however in some communities the need is greater than in others.

Children and youth are best served when they are placed in a foster home within, or close to, their home community. They need to be able to maintain family and social contacts and attend their own schools.

**Q. *Where is the greatest shortage of foster homes?***

- A. In most B.C. communities, there continues to be a need for experienced and skilled foster parents willing to care for teenagers and children with serious challenges.

Most new foster homes begin as Regular or Level 1 – depending on the experience and knowledge of the foster parents – and then, with experience, begin serving those children with greater needs. Once those foster parents have ‘moved up’, we then need to look at recruiting new parents.

**Q. **Who can people contact if they are interested in becoming foster parents?****

- A. There is always a need for skilled foster parents. If you’re interested in finding out more, please call the B.C. Federation of Foster Parent Associations (BCFFPA) toll-free at 1-800-663-9999; or visit the web site at [www.fosterbc.ca](http://www.fosterbc.ca); or the Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents Association at 1-866-291-7091; or a local Ministry of Children and Family Development resource office.