

Opening Doors to Education for Children and Youth in Care



TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
First People's Principles of Learning	2
Defining Education	3
Introduction	4
Key Messages	4
Maslow 101	5
Building Relationships and Connections	6
The Importance of Stability	9
Age Specific Strategies	12
Providing Support	14
The Effects of Trauma	17
Balancing Expectations	19
Graduation Options in BC	21
Alternate Ways of Obtaining Credit towards Graduation	22
Alternatives to Regular Public Schools	22
Education Planner BC	23
Exploring Career Development	24
Financial Supports for Youth in and from Care	25
In Their Own Words	26
Overview of MCFD Social Worker Opportunities	27
Advocating for Children and Youth in Care	27
FAQs	28
Glossary	29
References	30

FIRST PEOPLES PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.

Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).

Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.

Learning recognizes the role of indigenous knowledge.

Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.

Learning involves patience and time.

Learning requires exploration of one's identity.

Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.

For First Peoples classroom resources visit: www.fnescc.ca

<https://www.setbc.org/2018/07/classroom-technologies-and-first-peoples-principles-of-learning/>

Every child deserves a champion: an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connections and insists they become the best they can possibly be.
 Rita Pierson, Educator

The purpose of school should be to prepare kids for the rest of their lives, but too often what kids need to be prepared for is surviving the school day itself.
 Susan Cain, Quiet

DEFINING EDUCATION

This Guide will help caregivers recognize, understand, and address the unique challenges faced by children and youth in and from care as they move through the education system. Much of the material here will apply equally to children and youth being cared for under Kinship Agreements.

The first step in reducing or eliminating the barriers that prevent children and youth in care from achieving educational success is understanding what we mean by “education.” The English word “Education” comes from two different Latin roots. Yes, Latin. Stay with me now, don’t panic. We’re going to learn.

Educare

(Latin) Bring up, train, or mold. Knowledge transfers from teacher to student. Encourages passing down of knowledge and ways of doing things. Prepares students to fit into the existing world. Teaches the students the answers.

Educere

(Latin) Lead out. Brings out knowledge that is already there. Encourages questioning, critical thinking. Prepares students to create solutions to problems that do not yet exist. Teaches the student to see the questions.

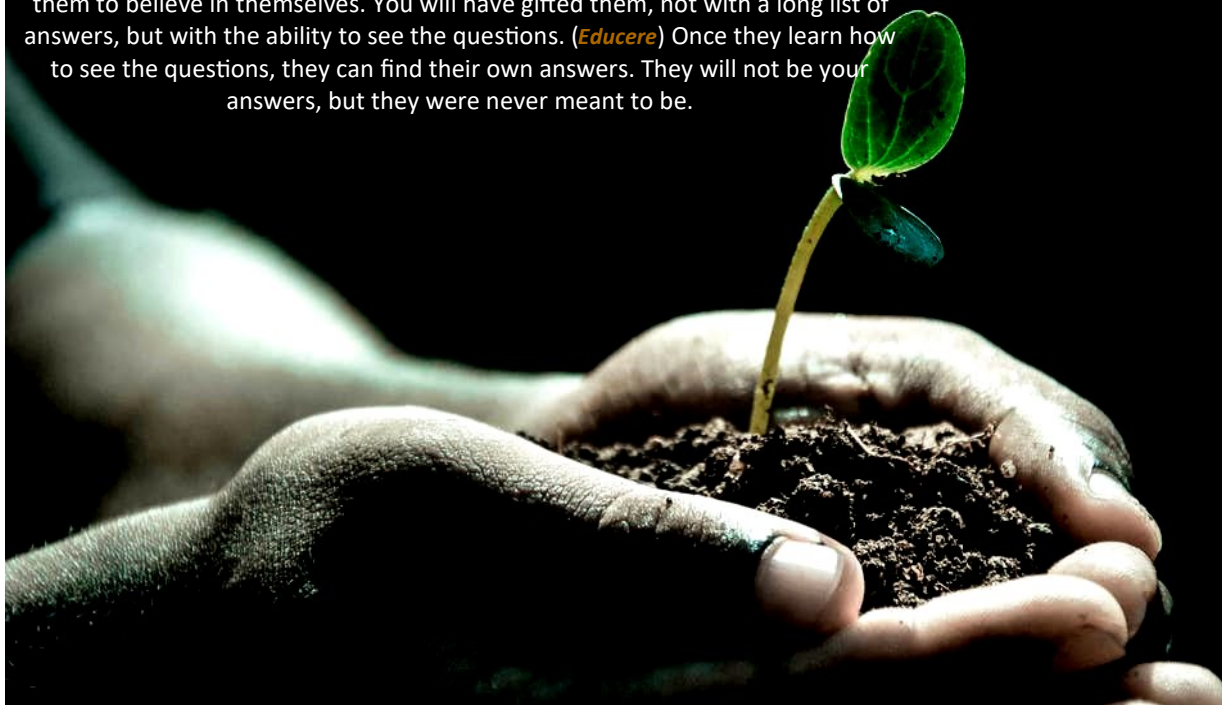
Pretty simple, right? Two ideas of what education should be, different approaches, different goals, different results. The traditional education system in BC emphasizes *educare* (standardized tests, standard curriculum, mandatory courses). Alternative schools often emphasize *educere*. The important word is emphasize. Rarely do you find a school or program that relies solely on one approach. This Guide uses both. Which is better? That depends on the student, the subject, the situation, and the goals. We need both *educare* and *educere*. We need a balance. The *balance* word is one we’ll be reminded of several times throughout this Guide.

BALANCE

The other word we will come back to several times is *Ask*. If you don’t know, ask. How is the student doing in school? Ask. What are the options for graduating in BC? Ask. How much does the youth want teachers to know about their situation? Ask. How can you support the children and youth in your home? Ask. Want to know why there is no IEP? Ask. See the pattern?

ASK

Ultimately, the job of the teacher, parent, or leader is the same: to become obsolete. If you do your job well, you will no longer be needed. You will have established a solid foundation of knowledge under the feet of your children/students that grounds them and allows them to recognize the difference between what they know and what they don’t know. It’s the only way they can learn what they don’t know. You will have supported to them, believed in them, and taught them to believe in themselves. You will have gifted them, not with a long list of answers, but with the ability to see the questions. (**Educere**) Once they learn how to see the questions, they can find their own answers. They will not be your answers, but they were never meant to be.



INTRODUCTION AND KEY MESSAGES

There's no denying it, fostering is a tough gig. Worthwhile, but tough. Courage, patience, and a sense of humour are essential survival skills. There's also no denying there's one thing that is even tougher...being a child or youth in care. Through no fault of their own, these young people find themselves in circumstances that would leave the bravest, strongest adult feeling lost and afraid. It's no wonder that something most of us consider a normal part of a teenager's life, like going to school and graduating, can be a monumental undertaking for youth in care.

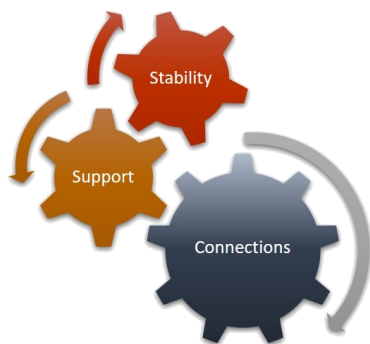
Here's a statistic you won't often hear...

About one in seven students in B.C. with a CCO graduated with honours in 2014/15. As this report states, students in continuing care are not naturally "underperformers."

P4, Room for Improvement

Over the past few years, there have been numerous studies, reports, and guides that research the experiences of children and youth in care in British Columbia. Many of these have focussed on the trauma, homelessness, substance misuse, poor economic outcomes, incarceration, and lack of education common as youth age into community (usually referred to as *Aging Out of Care*). Education is consistently recognized as a key component in successful/positive employment, health, housing, relationships, and economic outcomes. The statistics are not promising. An unacceptable number of youth in care do not complete high school. Can we change this? Can caregivers support the youth in their homes to not only complete high school, but go beyond to post-secondary education, advanced training, and meaningful employment? Absolutely!

A reading of more two than or three of these resources quickly reveals that there are a few key messages that are reported over and over. Factors that make school harder, factors that make it easier. These key messages are clues as to how caregivers can help reduce barriers and provide affective support and guidance to the children and youth in their home. We'll introduce them here and get to know them as we go on.



Key messages

Relationships and Connections: One caring relationship makes all the difference

Stability: Stability is key (in home, school, and community)

Support: Emotional, practical, consistent, and ongoing support changes lives

Expectations: Realistic, balanced expectations are vital

Critical Period: 15 years old/Grade 10 is a critical period

Research for this Guide began with reviewing a range of reports, research, and other resources. The resources can be loosely divided into three categories. Some provide insights into the experiences of children and youth in care through their own words, and others provide practical information (Graduation requirements, Career exploration tools). The third group contains information on issues often interwoven with the educational experiences of children and youth in care. The original documents provide in-depth reading for those who want information/understanding beyond what this Guide can provide. You will find links to most of them at the end of this Guide. Caregivers are encouraged to take a closer look at any of the documents that interest them or apply to their particular situation.

The following resources rely heavily on the input of youth themselves and provide valuable insight into the barriers that make success in school seemingly impossible and what strengthens and supports the youth in overcoming these barriers.

Fostering Success Improving Education Outcomes for Youth in/from Care, Deborah Rutman, PhD and Carol Hubberstey, MA. School of Social Work, University of Victoria.

More than Grades Redefining Success for BC Youth in Government, McCreary Centre Society.

Room for Improvement Toward Better Education Outcomes for Children in Care, BC Representative for Children and Youth.

Relationships First Creating Connections that Help Young People Thrive, Search Institute®.

"We Don't Feel That Love" Retrospective on the Experiences of Removal, Transitions and Trauma from Former Youth in Care, Angela Scott, M.A. and James P. Anglin, PhD.

These resources offer more in the way of provincial guidelines, policies, statistics, and practical tools

B.C. Graduation Program Policy Guide Grades 10 to 12 (Effective July 2019), Ministry of Education.

Education Pathways of High School Graduates and Non-Graduates A Longitudinal Study from the Student Transitions Project, Prepared by Joanne Heslop, STP Manager.

A Guide to: Scholarships, Bursaries, Tuition Waivers and Awards Available to Children in and From Government Care in British Columbia, Foster Parent Support Services Society.

Joint Educational Planning and Support for Children and Youth in Care Cross Ministry Guidelines, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Making The Grade: A Review of Alternative Education Programs in BC, McCreary Centre Society.
WorkBC Parents' Guide A Career Development Resource for Parents to Support Youth, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction.

Other materials referenced in this Guideline cover a wider range of topics that have important implications for caregivers as they work to support and guide youth as they move through high school and on to post-secondary education, advanced training, or meaningful employment.

Aboriginal Policy and Practice Framework in British Columbia A Pathway towards Restorative Policy and Practice that Supports and Honours Aboriginal Peoples' Systems of Caring, Nurturing Children and Resiliency, Delegated Aboriginal Agencies and the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Balance and Connection in BC The Health and Well-Being of Our Youth, McCreary Centre Society.

Educare and Educere: Is a Balance Possible in the Educational System? The Educational Forum, Randall V. Bass and J.W. Good.

Fostering Education A Foster Parent Handbook for Supporting the Education of Youth in Care, Natalie Smith.

Healing Families Helping Systems A Trauma-Informed Practice Guide for Working with Children, Youth and Families, Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Planting Seeds for Success: Foster parents creating an environment for academic achievement, Karen Charlebois, Foster Parent Support Services Society. (Literature Review)

Time Out III a Profile of BC Youth in Custody, McCreary Centre Society.

Useful Tips for Youth and Youth Adults A Guide to Independent Living, Ministry of Children and Family Development.

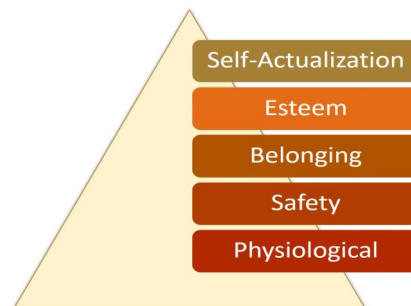
Cultural Agility

Due to the disproportionate number of Indigenous children and youth in care, it is crucial that foster parents understand the importance of ensuring the children and youth in their home are connected to the people and practices of their ancestral families. In *Aboriginal Policy and Practice Framework in British Columbia A Pathway towards Restorative Policy and Practice that Supports and Honours Aboriginal Peoples' Systems of Caring, Nurturing Children and Resiliency*, the authors speak of five key cultural values that are needed to support the process of reconciliation: **Respect, Inclusion, Truth Telling, Wisdom, and Belonging**. They provide a brief description of each value and practical ways to facilitate/demonstrate each one. (see page 8 for more details)

A Word about Maslow

Most foster parents are familiar with Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. If you aren't, don't fret. You don't need to understand the whole theory, just remember the fundamental message: It's hard to ponder the choice between being a doctor or a fireman if you are cold, hungry, and hearing the sounds of a dragon somewhere in the darkness around you. In other words, there are priorities in life, and, to some degree, you need to secure the simple things like food and shelter before you have time to worry about the complicated things like iambic pentameter, quadratic equations, or the citric acid cycle.

- Self-actualization** includes morality, creativity, problem solving
- Esteem** includes confidence, self-esteem, achievement, respect
- Belonging** includes culture, love, friendship, intimacy, family
- Safety** includes security of environment, employment, resources, health
- Physiological** includes air, food, water, sleep, other factors towards homeostasis



*We need free school lunches!
 We need free school buses! How
 are we supposed to learn when
 our shoes are SOAKING WET?!*
 P67, *Balance and Connections*

This isn't an all-or-none situation, you can have a need in one level while having met a need in a higher level. It's more of an awareness of how much time and energy you have to devote to certain areas of your life. Children and youth in care may not have had their basic needs met on a regular basis, they may never have felt safe, or a sense of belonging. As a caregiver, you can provide this.

When a child or youth comes into your home for the first time, remember Maslow. Start with the basics. Assure them they are safe, and welcome. Make sure they are warm and have had something to eat today. If a child is brought into care in the midst of a crisis, they may be in shock. The social workers and police have probably been more concerned with protection and where they are going to place the child than whether or not the child is hungry. Ask what they like. Show them there is food in the fridge and in the cupboards. This too may be new. Offer something familiar, something comforting. Now is not the time to worry about Canada's food guide. Think about the worst day of your life. Would a nice salad, lightly tossed in vinaigrette have provided the comfort you craved?

ASK

As the caregiver, you can meet some of the basic needs immediately. Seek a balance between asking what the child or youth needs and interrogating them. Ask if there is anything they need. Ask yourself how you might feel if you were in their place. If strangers took you from your home or from a foster home that you had begun to feel safe in, what emotions do you think you would experience? Would you feel grateful, protected, and treasured? Or would you feel rejected, defensive, and afraid? This is where the new child or youth in your home can be starting from.

A = I **A**CCEPT YOU **A**S YOU **A**RE
S = I **S**EE YOU
K = I **W**ANT TO **K**NOW YOU

See page 9 for tips on welcoming a new child or youth into your home.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS

One Caring Relationship makes all the difference.

She was the first person to say ‘you made a mistake, we forgive mistakes, you know where your room is and you can go cool down, and we would prefer you go and cool down and then we can talk about what happened and figure out a solution’...

P86, We Don’t Know

The key factor most often reported by children and youth in care and from care as being helpful to them is the formation of positive, reliable relationships. Having someone they can go to for support and guidance, someone who cares about them, makes a profound impact. One caring teacher or coach can be a reason to stay in school. One good friend who would be disappointed in them if they missed school, used drugs, or got into a fight is motivation to not do these things.

Apart from (healthy) biological family members, caregivers are often in the next-best position to build stable, and life-changing relationships with children and youth in care. They can nurture relationships with extended family, friends, and other important people in the youth’s life.

“The Search Institute bridges research and practice to help young people be and become their best selves.” <https://www.search-institute.org/>. This website provides resources and tools for parents and caregivers looking for ways to build stronger relationships with the children and youth in their lives.

Relationships First Creating Connections to Help Young People Thrive

Search Institute’s [Developmental Relationships Framework](#) (P4). This framework provides simple, easy to use strategies to build connections.

ELEMENTS	ACTIONS	DEFINITIONS
EXPRESS CARE	Be dependable Listen Believe in me Be warm Encourage	Be someone I can trust. Really pay attention when we are together. Make me feel known and valued. Show me you enjoy being with me. Praise me for my efforts and achievements.
CHALLENGE GROWTH	Expect my best Stretch Hold me accountable Reflect on failures	Expect me to live up to my potential. Push me to go further. Insist I take responsibility for my actions. Help me learn from mistakes and setbacks.
PROVIDE SUPPORT	Navigate Empower Advocate Set boundaries	Guide me through hard situations and systems. Build my confidence to take charge of my life. Defend me when I need it. Put in place limits to keep me on track.
SHARE POWER	Respect me Include me Collaborate Let me lead	Take me seriously and treat me fairly. Involve me in decisions that affect me. Work with me to solve problems and reach goals. Create opportunities for me to take action and lead.
EXPAND POSSIBILITIES	Inspire Broaden Horizons Connect	Inspire me to see possibilities for my future. Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places. Introduce me to more people who can help me grow.

The Developmental Relationships Framework may be reproduced for educational, non commercial uses only. Copyright © 2017 Search Institute®, 3001 Broadway Street NE, Suite 310, Minneapolis, MN 55413; 800-888-7828; www.search-institute.org. All rights reserved.

Connecting to Caregivers

Throughout *We Don’t Feel that Love*, youth from care reported a greater sense of grief and loss than of positive life experience. The exception to this is the section on the *Relational fragmenting of kinship: Foster Parents and the creation of a sense of family*.

The young people interviewed shared several stories of the creation of positive relationships with foster parents and foster families. In these homes, these young people felt a sense of unconditional care, love, acceptance, and a devoted sense of caring reciprocity.

P84-85, We Don’t Know

How do you build a connection with the children and youth in your home?

Don’t just tell them you are there for them, *show* them. Then get up tomorrow and show them again. And the next day. And the next. Trust takes time, especially when it has been broken in the past.

Talk to them and listen when they talk to you. Put your cell phone down and give them your full attention. (Express Care)

BALANCE

Build self-esteem by providing opportunities for successes. They know how it feels to fail; teach them how it feels to succeed. Be authentic; don't condescend by creating token wins. Balance is key.

Let youth overhear you praising them to others.

Celebrate successes, even the small ones. For some youth, this means something as simple as making it through an entire day in school without an incident. For others it's an "A" in Math 10.

Raise the bar as the youth becomes more confident. (Challenge Growth)

Spend time together. Go to the beach, watch a movie, paint a bedroom, rake leaves, ride bikes, do nothing at all. Think about how much time you spend with family doing nothing more than *being* together. Sometimes it's the mundane things we remember best.

Eat meals together. Research shows that young people who live in families that eat meals together feel more connected and are less likely to smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs. (Express Care)

Establish routines. Children and youth who come from chaos find safety in knowing what to expect. (Provide Support)

Model desired behaviour through your words and actions.

Be a 'possibility model' in the lives of youth. Show them the possibilities around them. (Expand Possibilities)

Share your own stories of difficult times. What helped you get through? (Share Power)

Encourage children and youth to participate in creating/updating their Life Book. The Life Book acts as a witness to their time in care and creates a permanent record they can look back on if and when they are ready. (Share Power)

Understand there's a difference between being in control and being controlling.

Ensure behaviour management, redirection, and correction is done without shaming. (Provide Support)

Connecting to school

Did you ever have a job you disliked? It is not surprising that youth who feel connected to school are more likely to attend regularly. For children and youth experiencing changes in homes, caregivers, and social workers, school can be a place of stability and belonging. Students who have been at a school for enough time have established relationships with friends, teachers, and support staff that remain stable while almost everything else around them has changed. Caregivers show they are interested and supportive by attending events and parent-teacher meetings, and by communicating with teachers regularly rather than only when there is a problem. Ensure that teachers know what they need to know in order to fully support the youth while respecting the youth's privacy. Provide relevant information about the child or youth's needs, interests, and strengths when discussing educational planning. Involve the youth in any planning that affects them. Ensure their voice is heard.

Disruptive behaviour can result in students being suspended or expelled, further deteriorating already tenuous school connections. Children and youth in care need caregivers to advocate on their behalf to ensure their rights are respected and that actions which undermine school connections are used only as a very last resort. Regulations regarding suspensions or expulsions vary from one school district to another. Caregivers should be aware of the policy regarding suspensions at the school youth in their care attend. Caregivers are advised to contact the school district in their area for the correct information. <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/schools/bcmap.htm>

Questions to ask the youth

How do you want me to introduce myself at your school (or in the community)? Parent? Foster parent? (Share Power)

How much do you want teachers to know about your situation? (Youth do not have full control over this but they should have the opportunity to provide input.) (Share Power)

Do you feel safe at school? If not, why?

Who are your favourite teachers? Do you have a friend at school?

What can I do to make school easier for you? (Provide Support)

What subjects do you find difficult? What subjects are your favourites? (Express Care)

Is there anything you need for school (school supplies, gym clothes, bus pass, clothing with school logo, year book)?

ASK**School provides a connection to**

Friends

Siblings who have been separated upon coming into care

A caring teacher or mentor

A supportive coach or team members

A physical space that feels safe and familiar

Clubs, teams, extracurricular activities

Artistic expression (art class, band, theatre, wood work, welding)

Discovering new interests and exploring career possibilities through field trips and electives

Life skills

Learning assistance or counselling

A world of books and learning

There is nothing someone in care wants more than to feel 'normal.' I want to make mistakes and know that I will still be able to stay with you and that you will help me learn how to deal with things in a different way

P33, Joint Educational

Caregivers can encourage school connections by attending games, performances, science fairs, and other events. Provide transportation to practises, rehearsals, or meetings so that getting there does not become the deciding factor in whether or not a youth can participate. Allow youth to invite friends over or go to with you to movies, swimming, or skating. Find out what the youth is good at, or interested in and encourage them to try out for teams, theatre, or science clubs. Consider asking someone to mentor, or allow the youth to job shadow. Borrow or buy a book on the student's favourite subject or drop by the nearest college or university to look around. A book can be a permanent reminder of a passion and a possibility. Watch a documentary together. Take a class together.

Connecting to Social Workers

Like foster parents, social workers are not usually drawn to the work for the glamor and financial rewards. They choose the work, or it chooses them, because they genuinely want to make a difference. Most workers would be grateful to have smaller case loads that allow them to spend more time with each child and build deeper, more long-term connections. However, good intentions and noble aims do not add more hours to the day. Caregivers can help strengthen connections between workers and youth by facilitating communication and interactions, encouraging youth to be open with workers, encouraging workers to be open and honest with youth, and speaking positively about all involved. When the youth does well at something, take the time to connect with their worker to praise them, or have them call their worker to share the news. Invite the child's worker to celebrations involving the child (birthday parties etc.).

The connection a child/youth in care has with their worker is important for the child/youth's development and future outcomes. As much as possible, provide opportunities to spend meaningful time together.

P20, Children and Youth

Connecting to Culture and Community

Culture: A broad and expansive term that refers to the way of life of a group of people, including systems of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours, values, experiences, meanings and modes of communication.

P27, Aboriginal Framework

In addition to being trauma-informed, caregivers also need to demonstrate cultural agility by not only accepting, but promoting the cultural connections for children and youth in care. Maintaining cultural connection and continuity can make a tremendous difference in the outcomes for youth in care, especially for Indigenous youth.

[The Aboriginal Policies and Practice Framework in British Columbia](#) identifies five values that are needed to support the process of reconciliation.

Respect: To hold esteem, recognition and regard for the knowledge, traditions, distinct cultures, languages and processes of Aboriginal children, youth, families and communities, and to be informed of Aboriginal histories and current experiences.

Inclusion: To involve and engage Aboriginal peoples, including working with families and communities in partnership, with an emphasis on a spirit and practice of collaborative and inclusive decision making.

Truth Telling: To listen and share in an honest and open way, beginning with Aboriginal children, youth and families.

Wisdom: To know that culturally significant knowledge, the teaching of histories and experiences are relevant and must guide choices, actions and decisions.

Belonging: To support caring and nurturing relationships where Aboriginal children, youth and families have a positive sense of family and community, feel valued and safe and have a positive sense of place and belonging.

Circle of Courage

Indigenous children and youth in care must be connected to their cultural community. Dr Martin Brokenleg's [Circle of Courage](#) identifies four essential growth needs of Indigenous youth that must be met for them to thrive.

Dancing pow-wow really helped me cope with everything growing up. And now I work with youth to be able to pass down the teachings of our ways...so when they do come to those crossroads in their life, that they have a choice for a better life, they know something other than just negativity.

P1340, I Have Hopes

Belonging: being socially connected (Relationships)

Mastery: competence of culturally important skills and abilities (Expand Possibilities)

Independence: ability to make decisions, solve problems and demonstrate personal responsibility

Generosity: service to others, self-sacrifice, altruistic helping behaviour (community connections)

"These four dimensions of the Circle of Courage model are inextricably intertwined, each one responding to and affecting the others and the whole " <https://www.presentlearning.com/circle-of-courage.html>

BALANCE

We have seen ideas similar to these in Maslow, The Search Institutes' Elements for building relationships, and in the Aboriginal Policies and Practice Framework. As traditions vary from Nation to Nation, caregivers of Indigenous youth should speak to the youth's community leaders to get practical tips for daily implementation of these concepts.

Building community connections

Connections to community take limitless forms. Communities can be as small as a neighbourhood or as large as a Nation. They contain a number of elements, each of them a possible way to connect youth to community. (Expand Possibilities)

Culture (Cultural Societies, public celebrations, Delegated Agencies, Friendship Centres, Band offices, faith-based groups)

Recreation centres (take part in skating, swimming, classes, camps, youth groups, public events)

Sports (support local teams, participate in fun or competitive community sports, volunteer at sporting events, fundraisers)

Arts (visit museums, art shows, concerts, theatres; take community classes)

Clubs (become a member of Cadets, Guides/Scouts, youth groups, school clubs, faith-based groups)

Volunteering (find out what the youth is interested in and encourage them to volunteer for events and celebrations. Show your own commitment to community and the youth by volunteering yourself)

Peer support; Former youth in care make effective mentors for youth currently in care

THE IMPORTANCE OF STABILITY

Before you became a foster parent, how much did you know about what foster care is? Did you know why children are removed? By whom? Who made decisions about where they were placed? Where did you get information? Friends? Child welfare workers? The media? Think about the stories you have heard in the media about foster kids. How many tv shows feature serial killers who were former foster children? How many news stories have you seen about former youth in care who are homeless, addicted, and involved in the criminal justice system? How many stories about children being abused in foster care by foster parents who are only in it for the money? Here's something to think about...Children and youth in care, and their families, have heard some of those same stories. These are some of thoughts they carry with them when they come into care and into your home.

Cuz, like I had no clue, like I never knew what foster care was, like...I had been to respite care – that was a weekend thing, right? So I thought that was kinda like the thing the, like, I have never actually officially found out why they moved me into foster care.
P45, We Don't Know

Don't assume someone else has explained everything to the child or youth in your home. If they are coming into care for the first time, ask if they know what foster care is, and what foster parents do. Ensure they know their rights ([CFCS Act Section 70](#)) and what to do when they feel their rights have been violated. Keep explanations age and situation appropriate. Even if they are coming from another foster home, ask if they have any questions. At the same time, don't overwhelm them with information or questions they are not ready for. Timing is important. Take your cue from the child or youth.

ASK

BALANCE

Placement Stability

Research consistently shows that as the number of placement changes increases, the likelihood of a new placement being successful decreases. Moving from one home to another requires that children and youth in care make physical and psychological shifts. This is true whether the move is from their home to the care of an unknown foster family or from the home of one relative to another. Small changes in house rules, routines, and foods can have a large impact. A change in placement may also require a change in schools. While caregivers often have little input into when and why placement changes take place, they do have the opportunity to minimize the physical and psychological discomfort these changes create for children and youth. (Express Care, Provide Support, Share Power)

<http://www.oacas.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/PARTicle-Placement-Stability-in-Child-Welfare-FINAL.pdf>

PHYSICAL	PSYCHOLOGICAL
Be welcoming; speak softly Meet at eye level Give the child or youth a tour of the house and property Help them unpack if appropriate Offer comfort food; show them there is food in the fridge/cupboards Put photos of youth's family and friends where they can see them Incorporate items that are important to the child or youth into your home Encourage youth to add touches to their bedroom to make it theirs Include artwork and report cards on the refrigerator along with those of other family members Eat meals together; include food they like Have a selection of books that tell stories from a variety of cultures Buy a soft blanket or wrap that the child can take with them when they leave Have a new teddy bear or other stuffed friend waiting on the bed...Even older youth can find comfort in hugging it (when no one is looking) Let them keep the teddy bear	Reassure the child they are in a safe space; they may have come from an unsafe place Ensure they know they have rights and how to access these rights Assure the child you are glad they could come a stay with you while their family heals Enlist other children in the home to welcome the new child; other children and pets often feel less threatening than a new foster parent Take your cue from the child regarding personal space; some need a hug or a pat on the back, others need space Never patronize or make promises you can't keep Let the child tell their story at their own pace If the child has traditions different from your family, encourage them to share with and teach you (where appropriate, not all traditions are meant to be shared) Establish a routine and house rules so the child knows what to expect Have them help with chores like other family members Let them help choose family activities Help them find words for their feelings Offer overwhelmed children and youth simple, closed choices

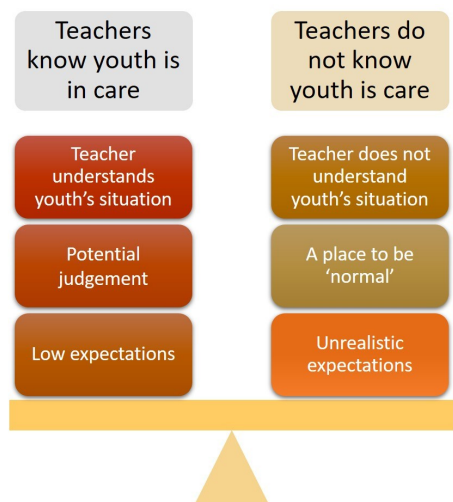
Children/youth in care who have a number of changes in placement can experience a lack of consistency and predictability, as well as feelings of rejection. The likelihood of a child/youth being placed in a permanent living arrangement decreases with each change of placement that they experience. This could be related to the fact that there is a marked increase in disruptive behaviours in children/youth who experience multiple placement moves.

P40, Children and Youth

The best home situation I had got ripped out from under me, so school became the constant in my life.
Pviii, Fostering Success

School Stability

- Siblings might be at same school along with positive and supportive friends
- Student may have connection to teachers and support staff; staff understand student’s history
- Current Plan of Care or IEP might be working successfully in the current school
- Tour the school prior to the first day of class; make time to meet teachers; practise the route if walking or traveling by bus,
- Foster parents can encourage positive peer relationships and offer better options to those that are detrimental



The hardest thing about going to school is that people don't understand anything you've gone through and people tell you to toughen up, but they've never walked in your shoes.

P15, More Than Grades

School was the only place where there was normalcy. There was safety in coming to school...I felt empowered. If I studied, I'd do well. It gave me a sense of control in an environment where, otherwise, there wasn't that much control.
Pviii, Fostering Success

When is it not in the youth’s best interest to stay in the same school?

There are times when it is not in the best interest of the child to remain at the same school. If there is a safety concern, if the child does not feel connected to school, or needs or wants a fresh start, a change can be beneficial. Another school might offer better program options or distance from negative influences. Foster parents can advocate for the youth in their care, and provide transportation and other supports either to eliminate the need for a school change or to facilitate a change if it will benefit the youth. Include the youth as part of the team when making these decisions. (Share Power)

ASK

My Education BC

“My Education BC is currently being used by 56 of the 60 public school districts in B.C. to manage student records. My Education BC allows schools to identify students with either a CCO or Temporary Custody Order (TCO), giving administrators and teachers the ability to generate lists of all students on either a CCO or TCO as well as view contact information for their social worker and caregiver (provided up-to-date information has been given to the school and updated in the system). My Education BC also includes a parent portal that gives social workers and foster parents the ability to access information on children and youth in their care – as long as an individual school is using this portal and individual teachers have entered this information into the system. The information that could be available includes attendance, grades or details about assignments.” <https://www.myeducationbc.info/>

P24, Room for Improvement

Changing Schools

A change of schools can be the reason youth stop attending school altogether. Students are frustrated, discouraged, and embarrassed when they have to repeat courses due to a school change. Each change can result in the loss of 3-4 months of work. Students are reluctant to build relationships with teachers or peers when they know they will be moved again. While much of the planning and paperwork needed for a youth in care to transfer from one school to another is the responsibility of the child’s worker and the school, foster parents can facilitate the process. As we have discussed before, relationships are the key. *Knowing who does what is far more helpful than knowing who is supposed to do what.* Recruit someone in the school to be a member of your team, your inside connection. It could be a teacher, a vice principal, or a counsellor. Build a relationship with someone who can make things happen when they are not happening. Whether it is creating an IEP, having records transferred, scheduling assessments, or accessing supports, a little help can go a long way. Know what the youth in your care needs, what they have a right to, and don’t ask for things they don’t need. Make the transition as easy as possible.

A change in school is only considered when there is no other reasonable option or when the Care Team or Circle determines that the child/youth will benefit from a change in school environment.
P55, Children and Youth

Challenges to changing schools

- Avoid a change of schools if possible
- Changing at the end of the school year is the next best choice
- Changing at the end of term should be a last resort
- Unplanned school changes mean there is no opportunity to say goodbye

Student can lose a large amount of work by changing in the middle of term (a half completed course might not be available at the new school); student can lose a mandatory course completely and be behind a year (course is offered in the first term in one school and the second term in another school; and student misses both)

Students will experience a delay in attending a new school if necessary paperwork is lost or delayed. Delays of 20 days are not unheard of
Changing schools can create transportation issues for students

A change of schools may require reassessment to continue to quality for services, especially if changing districts

Elements of IEP may be school-specific requiring a revision to the IEP

A Care Plan meeting is a meeting arranged by the placing child welfare worker or probation officer, held to establish the viability and coordination of services for a placement of a child in a new school district or community, other than their own.

P27, Joint Educational

When transitions of placement and school occur at the same time, there is a decline in the student's academic performance. (P26, Planting Seeds)

Reading down 3.7%

Writing down 3.0%

Math down 3.5%

The Joint Educational Planning and Support for Children and Youth in Care: Cross-Ministry Guidelines provide a checklist to assist with the process of changing schools. *The checklist outlines the roles and responsibilities of team members involved in the process of transitioning a child or youth to a new school.* (see 6C: [Collaborative Planning and Information Sharing Checklist](#): Change in School, P22)

Communicating, Sharing Information, and Working Together

All members of youth's care team should work together in the best interest of children and youth in care. Team members might include: the youth, school personnel, Guardianship Worker, biological family, current caregivers, support professionals (therapists, learning assistants). Foster parents often find themselves, along with youth, at the centre of this circle. As a caregiver, you are in a position to coordinate/facilitate communication between other team members. Ensure the school, social workers, and other team members know you are available to talk about ways to meet youth's needs and participate in planning. If you are submitting a report, make sure it is edited for proper spelling and grammar. Your reports are official documents, treat them as such.

While it is essential to use procedures to protect children and youth against the risk of unauthorized access, collection, use or disposal of their personal information, joint planning requires clear and honest discussion about the needs and strengths of the child/youth.

P7, Joint Educational

There are a few simple things to remember that will help you communicate more effectively regardless of whether you are communicating face-to-face, sending an email, or talking on the phone.

BALANCE

Talking at people is not the same as talking to them.

Listen. Listen. Listen.

Be open to feedback.

Think before you speak.

When sending an email, always fill in the address line last to avoid accidentally sending something before it's ready.

*Remember three words: **Audience, Message, Objective.** Who do you need to talk to? What message do you need to communicate? What's your objective? (What do you need that person to do?)*

Be professional but persistent.

Be respectful.

Be aware of differing roles and responsibilities.

Remember that some people know more than you do, and some people know less; respect both.

In those meetings, teachers and social workers talk first.

They don't ask me.

P37, More than Grades

Include the youth in planning, meetings, and decision-making whenever appropriate. Ensure you spend more time talking to them than about them. Choose your words carefully for reports; the youth may one day read them. How would you talk about them, best and worst days, face-to-face? Don't write something that leaves a scar.

Foster parents need to be flexible in the ways they communicate with other team members. Teachers, social workers, and foster parents have huge demands on their time. Trying to get people together in a room at the same time, or playing rounds of telephone tag can be frustrating for everyone. Sometimes, an email or text is the best way to get a quick answer to a simple, time-sensitive question. An in-person meeting is the time to strategize and plan for the youth, not a chance to vent or defuse.

Caregivers are advised to keep a record of dates and times of conversations in person or by phone/text to ensure accurate reporting. There needs to be clear directive/policies on privacy and what information can/must be shared with the various members of care team and *the importance of sharing information in a timely manner.* Decisions should include input from those who interact with the youth on a regular basis and understand what the consequences of certain decisions are likely to be.

AGE-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

(*Strategies and activities must be determined based on the best interest of the individual child/youth and situation)

Age	Building Relationships and Connections	The Importance of Stability
2-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include story time throughout every day; not just at bedtime Play together; be silly together Eat meals together Get to know child's worker Be trustworthy; keep your promises Listen when child speaks; put your cell phone away Make child feel known and valued Show children you enjoy being with them Praise efforts and achievements Explore the outdoors together; meet the bugs in your yard Be respectful and supportive of biological family members Include child's traditions into your home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate placement changes unless necessary Eliminate daycare/pre-school changes unless necessary Establish consistent routines and expectations Arrange play dates with friends Help child maintain healthy connections with extended family Help child identify strengths Maintain emotional connections with important people in the child's life Involve child in updating their Life Book regularly Ask previous caregivers for information on the child's likes, fears, and triggers Ask what items, routines, foods, activities, or physical gestures (Hugs? No hugs?) provide comfort in times of distress Ensure personal items go with the child when they leave your home
6-10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend school functions, games, performances, practises, fairs Eat meals together Read together daily Play together; be silly together Get to know child's worker Get to know teachers Be trustworthy; keep your promises Listen when child speaks; put your cell phone away Make child feel known and valued Show children you enjoy being with them Praise efforts and achievements Enjoy shared activities (movies, sports, video games) Be respectful and supportive of biological family members Include child's traditions into your home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate placement changes unless necessary Eliminate school changes unless necessary Establish consistent routines and expectations Help child maintain connection with positive friends Help child maintain healthy connections with extended family Help child identify their strengths and passions Maintain emotional connections with people in the child's life Involve child in updating their Life Book regularly Ask previous caregivers, family members, and the children themselves for information on their likes, fears, and routines that comfort or trigger Ensure personal items go with the child when they leave your home Be consistent with rules, and the consequences of breaking them Ensure consequences are consistent, reasonable and short term Honour and respect the things that are important to child
11-14 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend school functions, games, performances, practises Eat meals together Get to know youth's worker Get to know teachers Be trustworthy; keep your promises Listen when youth speaks; put your cell phone away Make youth feel known and valued Show youth you enjoy being with them Praise efforts and achievements Enjoyed shared activities (movies, sports, video games) Be respectful and supportive of biological family members Include youth's traditions into your home Welcome youth's friends into your home Spark their sense of humour Give them responsibilities then trust them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate placement changes unless necessary Eliminate school changes unless necessary Establish consistent routines and expectations Help youth maintain connection to positive friends Help youth maintain healthy connections with extended family Help youth identify their strengths Maintain emotional connection with people in the youth's life Involve child in updating their Life Book regularly Encourage youth to journal Ask previous caregivers, family members, and the youth themselves for information on their likes, fears, and routines that comfort or trigger Ensure personal items go with the youth when they leave your home Be consistent with rules, and the consequences of breaking them Ensure consequences are consistent, reasonable and short term Honour and respect the things that are important to youth
15-19 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend school functions, games, performances, practises Eat meals together Get to know youth's worker Get to know teachers Be trustworthy; keep promises Listen when youth speaks; put your cell phone away Make youth feel known and valued Show youth you enjoy being with them Praise efforts and achievements Enjoy shared activities (movies, sports, video games) Be respectful and supportive of biological family members Include youth's traditions into your home Help them plan for the future Welcome youth's friends into your home Spark their sense of humour Give them responsibilities then trust them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate placement changes unless necessary Eliminate school changes unless necessary Establish consistent routines and expectations Help youth maintain connection to friends Help youth maintain healthy connections with extended family Help youth identify their strengths Maintain emotional connection with people in the youth's life Involve child in updating their Life Book regularly Encourage youth to journal Ensure personal items go with the youth when they leave your home Be consistent with rules, and the consequences of breaking them Ensure consequences are consistent, reasonable and short term Honour and respect the things that are important to youth Teach youth the life skills that they will need as they move into community Connect youth to supports that will continue after they age into community Stay in touch after they age into community

AGE-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

(*Strategies and activities must be determined based on the best interest of the individual child/youth and situation)

Age	Providing Support	The Effects of Trauma
2-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen when child speaks; put your cell phone away Advocate to ensure child has all required services Teach Life Skills (putting away toys, manners, sharing, dressing, taking turns, apologizing when you hurt someone, personal hygiene) Connect to culture Prepare child for transitions Help children name their feelings Spend quiet time together Know what to do/how to respond if a child discloses abuse Guide/correct behaviour without shaming Be aware of the effects of visitations Let them be little 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulties with Attachment Language delay Cognitive delay Social skills delay Anxiety/reactivity Sleep disturbances Gastrointestinal upset Impaired memory Impaired attention Lower motivation Withholding emotions Low self-esteem
6-10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen when child speaks; put your cell phone away Help with homework Advocate to ensure child has all required services Ensure IEP and Care Plan are up-to-date Teach accountability Explore interests (sports, arts, music) Setting and working towards goals Teach Life Skills (setting the table, feeding pets, putting clothes in laundry hamper, doing homework, resolving conflicts, apologizing when you hurt someone, personal hygiene) Connect to culture Prepare child for transitions Attend foster family events where children and youth can be with others in care Know what to do/how to respond if a child discloses abuse Understand the effects of visitations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulties with Attachment Anxiety/reactivity Depression Self harming behaviour Sleep disturbances Gastrointestinal upset Substance misuse Social skills delay Sexually intrusive behaviour Impaired memory Impaired attention Lower motivation Withholding emotions Low self-esteem
11-14 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen when youth speaks; put your cell phone away Help with homework Advocate to ensure youth has all required services Ensure IEP is up-to-date Teach accountability Explore interests (sports, arts, music, volunteer) Help with identifying, setting, and working towards goals Plan for the future Explore WorkBC Career Compass https://www.workbc.ca/CareerCompass/Career-Quiz.aspx Teach Life Skills (laundry, cooking, help grocery shopping, provide leadership opportunities, self-advocacy, personal hygiene) Connect to culture Prepare youth for transitions Attend foster family events where children and youth can be with others in care Know what to do/how to respond if a youth discloses abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulties with Attachment Anxiety/reactivity Depression Self harming behaviour Suicide Sleep disturbances Gastrointestinal upset Substance misuse Unsafe sex Sexually intrusive behaviour Running away Criminal behaviour Impaired memory Impaired attention Lower motivation
15-19 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen when youth speaks; put your cell phone away Help with homework Advocate to ensure youth has all required services and supports Ensure IEP is up-to-date Teach accountability and restitution Explore interests (sports, arts, music, volunteer, employment, job shadow) Help with identifying, setting, and working towards short-term and long-term goals Explore WorkBC Career Compass https://www.workbc.ca/CareerCompass/Career-Quiz.aspx Teach Life Skills (part-time job, resume, budgeting, meal planning, driver's licence, making appointments, self advocacy, asking for and finding appropriate support, resolving conflict) Connect to culture Prepare youth for transitions Assist youth in acquiring ID (birth certificate, passport, social insurance number, BC Services card, Secure Certificate of Indian Status (SCIS) issued by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)) Connect youth with other youth in care or youth formerly in care Know what to do/how to respond if a youth discloses abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulties with Attachment Anxiety/reactivity Depression Self harming behaviour Suicide Sleep disturbances Gastrointestinal upset Substance misuse Unsafe sex Running away Criminal behaviour Impaired memory Impaired attention Lower motivation Withholding emotions Low self-esteem

PROVIDING SUPPORT

Believing children and youth in care can succeed in school, university, apprentice programs, and make their biggest dreams come true isn't just wishful thinking. Even though over half of children in care have an identified special need, with the proper support, stability, resources and at least one person who is connected and committed to them, every one of them can succeed. In some situations, we need to redefine what success looks like. *This does not diminish the accomplishment!*

Older youth were also more likely to identify not getting enough support with homework...not getting enough encouragement to stay in school...and teachers not understanding youth's situation...as challenges to graduating from high school.

P15, More than Grades

When children and youth in your home are struggling in school, the most important thing to remember is that *they are people first and students second*. Remember Maslow? Sometimes problems at school have little to do with school. Is the outburst at school related to an upcoming family visit? A missed visit? Does the youth need help with long division or something else? Helping with homework is about more than sitting beside a youth and reminding him to carry the one.

It's a way of saying, "This matters," "You can do this," and "I am here to help."

The benefits of a caregiver helping a child or youth with homework go beyond better grades. The time spent together builds a relationship. It's a time to talk about the day, about what happened at school, good and not-so-good. Getting help at home is less stigmatizing. The youth does not need to stay after school or be singled out to leave the classroom for 'special' assistance.

ASK

Caregiver Practices

D.5.4 The caregiver encourages assists and supports the child to achieve educational performance that matches their abilities.

D.5.5 The caregiver ensures the child has the necessary materials and an appropriate setting for study and homework.

D.5.6 Within the context of the child's care plan, the caregiver takes an interest in the child's education, including:

- .providing the child with help with homework when necessary; and*
- .participating in the child's school events and meetings.*

P33, Standards for Foster Homes

The Power of Praise

Research consistently shows the benefits of offering *Process Praise* over *Intelligence Praise*. (Sometimes known as *Encouragement* and *Praise*) Process praise celebrates the process of learning. Success is the result of the effort the student put in, the focus they demonstrated, the strategies they applied, and their persistence. The effort matters more than the result. Because Process Praise emphasizes success as a product of effort, students are more likely put effort into future work. When the work is challenging, they work harder. Process praise empowers. Intelligence praise celebrates how intelligent the student is. Students who believe their success is due solely to their intelligence never equate work and success. When the work becomes challenging, they doubt their intelligence. One failed test brings their intelligence into question and their self-confidence drops. This is not to say that praising the student's intelligence dooms them to failure, just that emphasizing effort helps students believe they can succeed if they work hard enough.

Offer six praises for every correction. Or five. Or seven. The point is the praises should easily outweigh the corrections.

Nyet. Replace "not" with "not yet". You didn't get the answer...yet. You didn't get the home run...yet. You didn't sit quietly at reading time...yet. Let children and youth overhear you praising them to others.

Be specific. "You were a good girl today," is vague and doesn't tell her what she did right. "You were very kind when you helped your brother after he fell down," tells him what he did right that he can do again.

BALANCE

Creating a Learning Environment (*Educare*)

Offer comfort food. Never underestimate the power of a cookie.

Consider the senses. Does your youth work better in a silent space or with quiet music or noise in the background? Sometimes quiet is to too quiet.

Introverts and extroverts have different sensory needs. How much stimulation is right for your child?

Is the desk or table the right height for the student? Is the chair adjusted so it supports the back?

Ensure the desk/computer and light set up matches the student's left/right handedness.

Make time for homework; keep it a calm and stress-free time. Make it a playground not a battlefield.

Be aware of timing. Some students need a break after school, others prefer to finish homework before dinner.

Involve youth in creating the space and time for homework.

Agree on reasonable rewards. Who doesn't love a gold star or an extra five minutes of screen time? Over time, external rewards can be replaced by internal rewards (feelings of success, confidence, pride, and self-esteem). Connect the reward to the effort.

Know when the child is done. Some days the student has the resources for 30 minutes of homework; other days nothing productive is going to happen after the first five minutes. Accept it. Use the time as an opportunity to talk about the best and the worst part of the day.

Read with younger kids *every day*. Reading with a child is both trauma-informed and attachment-building. It involves all the senses.

Make books available, borrow them from the library, buy them second hand, trade them with friends, leave them in every room.

No matter how bad your day is, when you start talking about cookies or cakes or pies, or you bring someone cookies, there's just not bad news. The worst news is, 'Hey, there's sugar in that.'

Christina Tosi, Chef, Author

Deep reading teaches empathy, perspective taking, and critical analysis. Reading onscreen is not the same. Show them education is important. Do they see you reading? Do you attend workshops and training for caregivers? Have you completed your mandatory training? Lead by example. Children will watch and learn. Learning is for a lifetime, not just for kids in school. Let them know you are willing to learn with them and from them. Ask questions about what they are learning. Let them teach you something new. Or something you learned a long time ago but have forgotten. Schedule Unplug Time. No devices for anyone. If you can't find time during the week, try a weekend. It's good for everyone.

ASK

Take learning out into the real world (*Educere*)

Use math to figure out the best deal on oranges at the grocery store.
 Use science to learn the advantages and disadvantages of gas, electric, and hybrid cars.
 Experiment with baking. What happens if you leave the salt out of your cookie dough? The baking soda? The sugar?
 Baseball and basketball are examples of physics having fun. Learn the science behind throwing a curve ball.
 A car ride is a great change to practice reading street signs, ads on vehicles, and all the other words that surround us.
 Plan an errand in the car and let the youth navigate with a paper map. Follow all safe directions and see where you end up.
 Use a bus schedule to plan a trip across town.

Remember everyone has a preferred learning style. Include the visual, text, auditory, and kinesthetic. Use the youth's strengths and interests to their advantage. Retell the history lesson as a video game. Demonstrate multiplication with a bag of rice. Make up a song about what cells do. Tell them what to do, not what not to do.

How to Throw a Football: Don't palm the football. Don't grip the football too tightly. Don't hold the football too high. Don't face the laces towards you.

Great advice. Very helpful. Just one problem. It provides great detail about what not to do, but nothing at all about what to do. This doesn't just work for teaching, it works for managing behaviour too. "Can you speak quietly?" works better than, "Don't yell at me!" (Especially if you yell it.) Acknowledge successes. "Thank you for telling me you were frustrated," or "You did a great job at finishing your project before you went out to play." "You threw that football a long way."

Adults should be aware of how valuable and necessary their support is to you, and should recognize the difference that they can make in a young person's life

P33, Joint Educational

Tips for Caregivers (The Value of Play)

The *Joint Educational Planning and Support for Children and Youth in Care: Cross-Ministry Guidelines* provides [Tips for Caregivers](#) (P32). Many of the tips are similar to the key messages that have been discussed in this Guide. One tip that has not been covered in depth here is the value of play. Playing with the children and youth in your home is a chance to build trust, strengthen relationships, and perhaps most importantly, have fun! Challenges are intrinsic to fostering and there will always be difficult days, but there are also opportunities for everyday moments and the simple enjoyment of being together as a family. Family is powerful, whatever kind of family it is and for however long it lasts.

Sources of support

Children and youth in care often report the overwhelming feeling of being alone. Separated from family, friends, culture, and community, they have a sense of being disconnected and unsupported. Caregivers can be instrumental in creating a web of support for the youth in their home. Teachers, coaches, Elders, mentors, tutors, therapists, counsellors, social workers, biological family, peers, and Aboriginal Education workers can each support the youth in a different way. Learn whom the youth in your care connects with in a positive way, and cultivate that relationship. Are there Elders who stand ready to guide and support? When you know the youth in your care needs a service or support, look for someone who can address that need. Think outside the box. Can a child or youth who gets along with animals walk your dog or the neighbour's dog? Animals are great listeners and they love unconditionally, without judgement. Family and foster family are the same to cats.

Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

IEPs cover the education accommodations that serve a wide range of students with identified special needs. Some students require only minor adaptations to education materials, instruction methods, or assessment processes, others require much more. IEPs can be as simple as a one-page document or a detailed and comprehensive plan involving a team of participants. Potential participants include: teachers, social workers, counsellors, parents or guardians, the student, and community specialists. *An IEP is a living document that should change with the child.*

An IEP should include assessment and collaboration and be reviewed on a regular basis. Caregivers should be aware of existing IEPs and, ideally, should have the opportunity to contribute their observations and awareness of the student's unique strengths and challenges. IEPs are usually developed by teachers (or another designated school representative) in collaboration with other members of the youth's care team. The plan should include SMART Goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable and Action-orientated, Realistic and Relevant, Time-Limited), Objectives, Strategies, and Evaluation tools.

See *A Resource Guide for Teachers, Individual Education Planning for Students with Special Needs*, Appendix 2, Section 2E: [Tips for Parents](#) participation in the IEP Process (P41). <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/teach/teaching-tools/inclusive/iepsn.pdf>

An IEP is a documented plan developed for a student with special needs that summarizes and records the individualization of a student's education program.

P5, IEP

Child and Youth in Care Policies

See Policy 5.7 (Education, P53-57) for information on *Putting the Care Plan into Action*.

Life Skills

Youth in care and youth from care frequently mention the lack of life skills they acquired during their time in the child welfare system. While biological children learn an array of life skills directly, or indirectly from parents, children and youth in care often miss out on this opportunity due to the number of moves they make from home to home. Many of these life skills can determine how well a youth succeeds in post-secondary education or training, or holding a job when they leave care. Working with the youth in your home to teach these skills is an opportunity to build a stronger, deeper relationship. Show them you believe in them by preparing them for a successful future. Some of the life skills that you can share with them include:

- Getting a letter from MCFD stating care status (necessary for certain tuition waivers and grants)
- Cooking (food safety), cleaning (what chemicals not to mix), laundry, ironing
- Budgeting, establishing credit
- Setting up a bank account, writing a cheque, being aware of scams and frauds
- Using public transit (figuring out a route, reading a schedule)
- Obtaining a driver's licence and other forms of government ID (including a social insurance number)
- Registering for medical insurance
- Preparing a resume
- Understanding the importance of being on time
- Setting goals and planning a way to meet them
- Getting references from teachers, employers, mentors etc.
- Dressing and presenting oneself at job and program interviews
- Using appropriate phone manners and email etiquette
- Finding a family doctor and dentist; having a prescription filled
- Filing income tax
- Renting an apartment (rights and responsibilities, being a good tenant and room mate, paying rent)
- Arranging for cable, phone, hydro; reporting problems with services respectively and effectively

Know When to Call in the Professionals

Your job as a caregiver is to provide a safe, nurturing home. You can offer comfort and support, but not specialized counselling. You are required to help with homework, but not to provide expert tutoring. The children and youth in your home have the right to qualified, professional help managing learning disabilities, mental health conditions, effects of trauma and attachment.

BALANCE

Advocate on their behalf to ensure they have the help and healing they need. Consult with members of the youth's care team to access psychologists, tutors, learning assistants, medical doctors, speech and occupational therapists who provide the needed services. Ask who is going to provide the service and when.

For Critical Care Situations contact

Emergency "Centralized Screening" Duty Worker (MCFD) 1-800-663-9122

Foster Parents are encouraged to call this number in the event of an EMERGENCY or CRISIS concerning a child in their care, occurring after regular office hours.

Foster Parent Support Line (MCFD) 1-888-495-4440 Weekdays: 4:00pm to 12:45am Statutory Holidays and Weekends: 8:00am to 12:45am

If you have an immediate concern relating to child in your care we are here to help you and will provide: Fast response for urgent issues outside regular office hours; Professional support, information and consultation.

Suicide: If you are under 30 and in Canada, you can access help at youthspace.ca from 6:00pm to midnight (Pacific Standard Time).

Crisis Line: If you or someone you know is in crisis, please call the 24 hour Vancouver Island Crisis Line

1-888-494-3888 Or the province-wide BC line: **1-800-SUICIDE**

Other Sources of Support for children and youth in care:

Heretohelp: Mental health and substance use information you can trust. This site has excellent resources on a number of mental health topics.

<https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/resource-library>

Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks

If you are in urgent need of help outside our office hours, the youth crisis line is open 24 hours a day and is a friendly, anonymous source of support. 1-866-872-0113 LIVE CHAT: <http://youthinbc.com/> <https://fbcyicn.ca/contact-us>

You can't come out in high school as Trans. You get jumped, called horrible names.
P20, More than Grades

Support for LGBTQ youth

www.qmunity.ca or 604-684-5307; Facebook and Twitter: Qmunity
Prideline BC: 1 800-566-1170
<https://itgetsbetter.org/>

THE EFFECTS OF TRAUMA

In interactions with children and families, trauma-informed practice is about the way of being in the relationship, more than a specific treatment strategy or method.
P10, Healing Families

Children and youth who have experienced trauma often display behaviours that are labelled “inappropriate” or “maladaptive.” It is vital that caregivers consider the behaviour from the child’s perspective and remember that behaviour is communication. While the disruptive behaviours you are seeing are not appropriate for your home, they were effective responses in the world the child has come from. They are adaptive behaviours that helped the child survive in a dysfunctional environment.

Trauma has been described as having three aspects: exposure to harmful and/or overwhelming event(s) or circumstances, the experiences of these event(s) which will vary from individual to individual, and effects which may be adverse and long-lasting.

P4, Healing Families

Exposure to trauma can alter the parts of the brain involved in processing threats, such as the amygdala. While this can be advantageous in an environment with constant threats, in a safe environment it can be detrimental physically, and psychologically, and hinder attachment and learning. As arousal increases, critical thinking decreases. Some children and youth go into a flight, flight, or freeze response at the sound of a car backfiring, a closed door, or a louder than normal voice. A tendency to withdraw can be an attempt to shelter in place. This can be difficult when the place is constantly changing. A child experiencing multiple episodes of maltreatment over time can develop *learned helplessness*, a condition where they believe that nothing they can do will change their situation for the better. Unlearning this lesson is profoundly difficult and takes time and patience. It takes the relationships and connections we have talked about.

Why not look at WHY the youth isn't going to school, or is having problems at school or whatever. They're doing it for a reason and it's because there is something they are missing and finding through whatever behaviour they're exhibiting.

P15, More than Grades

Effects of Trauma

Emotional: attachment difficulties, anxiety, depression, panic, fear, affect dysregulation, impaired social functioning, feelings of shame and worthlessness, dissociation

Physical: headaches, sleep issues, chronic fatigue, hypervigilance, pain, gastrointestinal upset, worsening of existing health issues (diabetes), changes to hormone levels (cortisol), compromised immune system, self-harming behaviour

Psychological: disrupted perception of time (limited sense of continuing self), learned helplessness, eating disorders, substance misuse, hoarding behaviours, reduced cognitive capacity, language delays, (working) memory impairments, need to control, diminished attention

The Invisible Suitcase http://www.kscourts.org/court-administration/Legal_Institute_on_Adverse_Childhood_Exp/The%20Invisible%20Suitcase.pdf

Children who enter the foster care system typically arrive with at least a few personal belongings: clothes, toys, pictures, etc. But many also arrive with another piece of baggage, one that they are not even aware they have: an “invisible suitcase” filled with the beliefs they have about themselves, the people who care for them, and the world in general.

For children who have experienced trauma—particularly the abuse and neglect that leads to foster care—the invisible suitcase is often filled with overwhelming negative beliefs and expectations. Beliefs not only about themselves...

I am worthless.

I am always in danger of being hurt or overwhelmed.

I am powerless.

But also about you as a caregiver...

You are unresponsive.

You are unreliable.

You are, or will be, threatening, dangerous, rejecting.

You didn't create the invisible suitcase, and the beliefs inside aren't personally about you. But understanding its contents is critical to your helping your child to overcome the effects of trauma and establish healthy relationships...

Provide disconfirming experiences

Preventing the vicious cycle of negative interactions requires patience and self-awareness. Most of all, it requires a concerted effort to respond to the child in ways that challenge the invisible suitcase and provide the child with new, positive messages. Messages that tell the child:

You are worthwhile and wanted.

You are safe.

You are capable.

And messages that say you, as a caregiver:

Are available and won't reject him/her.

Are responsive and won't abuse him/her.

Will protect him/her from danger.

Will listen and understand him/her.

Sometimes a suitcase is just a suitcase...sometimes it's more.

How Trauma Affects Education/Learning

Trauma affects several brain functions important in learning including anxiety/arousal, attention, emotional regulation, relationships, and memory. Professional help is essential. Sometimes merely acknowledging the challenges the student is facing and that their brain has been changed by what they have experienced is enough to help. "I have trouble focussing because my brain needs time to heal" is a different message than "I can't focus because I am stupid and worthless." The first is a call for patience and perseverance, the second is a life sentence. *Hopefulness* versus *hopelessness*.

The presence of a child's developmental disability appears to be associated with increased likelihood of maltreatment, while child maltreatment is shown to increase the risk of developmental disability.
P6, Placement Stability

Trauma can also impact children and youth on a practical level. It's possible they have been too focussed on survival needs (food, safety) to have any energy left over for ABCs, math, or Shakespeare. Living situations may have prevented regular attendance at school (no one to take them, no clean clothes, missing school to keep siblings safe). Books/school supplies might have been unavailable. Lack of encouragement.

Caregivers can...

Maximize children's and young people's sense of safety.

Include the perspectives of children and youth in defining what is triggering for them and what creates safety and learning.

Recognize how age and developmental trends impact the experience and effects of trauma for children and youth.

Recognize how gender affects the types of trauma experienced and the expression of its effects, openness to discussing and truth-telling about trauma.

Recognize how historical trauma affects Aboriginal children and youth.

Support and promote positive and stable relationships in children's and young people's lives.

P20, Healing Families

Special Considerations in Addition to Trauma

The effects of trauma do not exist in isolation. Children and youth in care experience a range of related challenges due to their experiences in care and prior to coming into care. Consider how emotional, cognitive, and social delays impact school performance when creating plans.

Mental health issues such as anxiety disorder/panic attacks, depression, attention deficit, and PTSD are common in children and youth in care.

Caregivers can advocate on behalf of the youth to ensure they are receiving the mental health care they deserve. This care should be included in the youth's Care Plan and in the IEP to ensure continuity across worker, school, and placement changes.

Substance misuse and addiction can be related to genetics, Adverse Childhood Experiences (witnessing parental substance use), or a youth's attempt to self-medicate. Remember that youth from stable, healthy homes also engage in substance use. Focus on safety.

Teen parents will need extra support in the form of child care and building parenting skills. Their child's needs will trump homework.

Indigenous children and youth are more susceptible to bullying and racism. Their feelings of "otherness" are compounded by both being in care and being Indigenous. Curriculums are slowly changing to include culturally agile teaching methods and lessons but attitudes are harder to change than textbooks. Connect them to their culture to build pride in who they are and provide a sense of belongingness.

Learning Disabilities and cognitive and social delays are exacerbated by school changes, frequent absences, lack of early caregiver interaction/support, few learning opportunities, and limited access to books, story time, and social interaction. *Over 50% of children and youth in care have a special needs designation.*

Attachment concerns makes forming trusting, positive relations with teachers and peers difficult.

LGBTQ2 children and youth are frequently the target of bullies and assaults. School can be exponentially more difficult for these students.

Complex Trauma Resources website provides resources "about complex trauma to give you a different perspective, and to offer you practical and proven strategies that will help the kids in your care to heal and grow."

<https://www.complextrauma.ca/> <https://www.complextrauma.ca/parent-caregivers/>

A Critical Period

In [Balance and Connection in BC The Health and Well-Being of Our Youth](#), there is a dizzying array of charts, graphs and statistics that report on various aspects of the lives of youths in BC. Subject areas include Physical Health, Injuries, Mental Health, Sexual Health, Substance Use, Gambling, Violence, Discrimination and more. Integrating the information from this report with that in a number of the other documents referenced in this Guide allows some patterns to emerge. Just as there are critical periods for language and sensory development, there seems to be a critical period for certain behaviours. Reports of first time use/involvement with sexual activity, pornography, smoking, alcohol, marijuana increase until around the age of 15 years or Grade 10. After this, many of these level out or drop. If we can delay these behaviours by even a year or two, youth will be in a position to make safer, better decisions. Convincing students to stay in school through Grade 10 is generally successful; getting them to complete those last two years is much less so. Be prepared to offer additional support and encouragement.

What can you do?

Maintain honest, open communication between caregiver and youth. Listen and support, even when it's not what you want to hear.

Let them know you are available at any time to pick them up from a dangerous situation. Safety before judgement.

If something happens, take a breathe. Respond rather than react. Lectures and punishment are not productive; try communicating.

Keep them busy. Part time jobs, sports, and a group of connected, positive friends can provide youth options to hanging out and partying.

Be vigilant about what's happening in school. A negative experience in Grade 10 increases the likelihood of the student not wanting to go back for Grade 11. Ensure they are getting the academic supports they need.

Become comfortable talking about uncomfortable subjects. Separate facts from myths, social misconceptions, and personal value judgements.

BALANCING EXPECTATIONS

Teachers, caregivers, peers, social workers, family, and others have different expectations of children and youth in care. Some of these expectations are based on personal experiences, some on textbooks, others on stereotypes, others on nothing whatsoever. Some children and youth report that expectations are too low, others that expectations are too high. The challenge for caregivers is to find a balance in the expectations they and others place on the youth that is appropriate for that particular youth at a particular point in time.

BALANCE

	Pros	Cons
High Expectations	Youth believes in potential for success Youth strives to meet expectations Support system works with youth to achieve goals Youth is empowered Youth is prepared for post-secondary, trades, employment Youth sees possibilities Youth sets high goals	Youth feels incapable of meeting expectations in the moment and quits before trying Expectations are unrealistic if they do not take youth's situation into consideration Youth perceives a temporary setback as failure and further proof of worthlessness Expectations must be paired with support
Low Expectations	Youth gains experience with success Youth has time to grow without excessive pressure Youth has room to surpass expectations What appear to be lower expectations are only different expectations more suited to youth's current strengths	Youth believes in limited potential Youth selects courses and work that limit future options Youth does not set goals Youth is never empowered Youth never learns that success is possible with effort
	<i>They expect you to do well but then they set their standards so low. It makes you feel bad about yourself.</i> P26, More than Grades	<i>I got pushed a lot by my foster family. I got pushed too hard and I took offence to it.</i> P16, More than Grades

Communicating Expectations

- Meet them where they are then lead them forward. (Expand Possibilities)
- Say you believe in them. Say it again, and again. Show them you believe in them. (Express Care)
- Say, "When you go to university," not "If you go to university." If university isn't the right goal for them right now (Nyet), replace that expectation with something that is realistic. "When you complete your apprenticeship," "When you have been clean for a while," or "When you find a great job you like."
- Remind them of past successes.
- Maximize their strengths; minimize their difficulties. (Support)
- Hold them accountable (in a supportive way) when they do not do their best. (Challenge Growth)
- Provide support to match expectations. Expectations without support are cruel.
- Teach them to dream big. It's quite possible no one has ever asked them what they want for their future.
- Remember Maslow? They may have come from a home where everyone was focussed on survival and safety and there was little opportunity to dream of happy endings. Ask them what their happy ending looks like.
- Ask them what they expect of themselves

Youth in care do not get told by their foster parent 'when you graduate,' it's not talked about like we were their own child. They say 'if' there's a big difference in treatment there. There's no talk about college.
 P23, More Than Grades

ASK

Setting Goals

Here again, caregivers must consider balance. This time the balance is between dreaming big and starting small. Small successes build the confidence and self-esteem needed for the big dreams. (Expand Possibilities)

The amount of encouragement I received in school was life changing. School staff seemed to see in me a potential I was almost scared to believe existed. They connected me with opportunity after opportunity.
 P27, More than Grades

Think about yourself...

- Big dream:** Run a marathon.
- Small start:** Run to the mailbox and back.
- The further you run, the more confidence you gain.
- This builds self-esteem.
- Start with the marathon and you throw up on somebody after the first block.
- This does *not* build self-esteem.

BALANCE

Some education goals will be defined in the IEP and Care Plan. Are they reasonable? Is the youth being set up for failure? Is the youth being underestimated? Neither are good. Advocate for realistic expectations overall. Short term and long term goals should be a part of every plan. Short term goals allow for the sense of accomplishment when the goals are reached. A chart that shows progress and is updated regularly lets student see how far they have come.

Include the child or youth in setting goals. What do they want to achieve? Leave a door open for an impossible dream or two. Even if they don't work out, sometimes something wonderful is discovered on the way. *Don't let them close doors they don't even know exist.*

Work backwards. Start from where the dream is and work back through the steps needed to get there. What skills do they need for the type of career they want? Do they need a degree? A certificate? What are the requirements to get into the program? What do they need to do to be a professional basketball player or musician? How do they go from writing for fun to writing for pay? What trades are they talented in?

See [WorkBC Parents' Guide](#) for information and interactive tools on career planning.

Redefine Success

Remember Nyet (not yet)? A youth might not be ready for full-time attendance in a busy classroom-yet. Maybe they are ready for one class in person and one or two courses through distance education. That’s trying, not quitting. A youth may not be ready to graduate-yet. That’s not failure, that’s a schedule adjustment. A steady job you love that allows you to support yourself is an achievement, not a defeat. Never define their success solely by graduation, grades, or other comparisons with people who are not in their shoes. It’s not a fair race. Some are running the track in clean clothes and shoes that fit; they are hydrated, they have eaten, and they had a safe, quiet place to sleep last night. Children and youth in your home may be used to running in tattered shoes with missing laces; they have never been taught how to get out of the starting blocks, and they aren’t sure where they will sleep tonight. But today, they made it to the race and they crossed the finish line. Over half of children and youth in care have an identified special need compared with 10% of children and youth not in care. A comparison of graduation rates between the two groups is neither valid nor helpful. It doesn’t consider the strength it took to get where they are.

Credential completion is not always a student’s objective, nor a possible outcome in developmental programs at some institutions.

P21, Educational Pathways

Personal Expectations

Parenting of any kind is about more than ensuring children grow up to graduate from high school. It’s about raising people not students. The things you teach them that make them good people will make them good students. (*Educere*) Show up for your life, do your best, work hard, play fair. Ironically, they’re the same lessons we learned in kindergarten.

These are the things I learned (in Kindergarten):

1. Share everything.
2. Play fair.
3. Don't hit people.
4. Put things back where you found them.
5. Clean up your own mess.
6. Don't take things that aren't yours.
7. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody.
8. Wash your hands before you eat.
9. Flush.
10. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.
11. Live a balanced life - learn some and drink some and draw some and paint some and sing and dance and play and work everyday some.
12. Take a nap every afternoon.
13. When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands, and stick together.
14. Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup: The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.
15. Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the Styrofoam cup - they all die. So do we.
16. And then remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned - the biggest word of all...“LOOK.”

Children must be taught how to think, not what to think.
Margaret Mead, Anthropologist

Robert Fulghum, All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten

If you can teach the children and youth in your home these simple lessons, you will have made a difference. Of course, the key is to remember to follow these rules yourself. Children and youth will see through you if your talk doesn’t match your walk. Help children and youth develop their own set of goals for the kind of person they want to be. Empower them, get them thinking towards a positive future and what it might hold. It is something apart from school and lets them understand there is a difference between what’s happened to them and who they are. On bad days remind them that we all stumble. Remind them that they can *do* better, that they *will do* better, that they *are* better. Work with them to create a list...

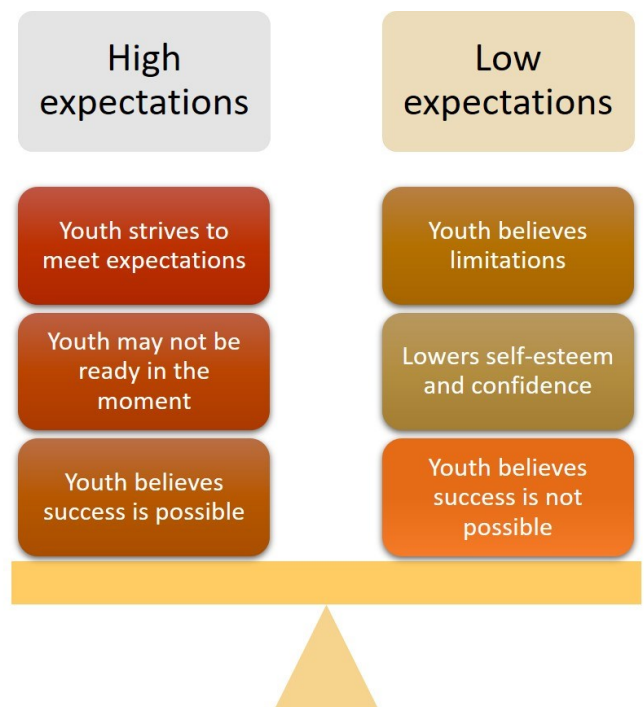
Goals can be small and simple. I want to...

- Be proud of who I am
- Be a good friend
- Be a role model to my younger siblings
- Stay out of jail
- Stay sober

ASK

Or big. I want to...

- Get a Master’s degree in Engineering
- Surpass everyone’s expectations
- Travel the world
- Be a writer
- Be Prime Minister
- Walk on Mars



GRADUATION OPTIONS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

(From [B.C. Graduation Program Policy Guide](#))

Our Mandate – the Educated Citizen

As specified in the Statement of Education Policy Order, the purpose of the B.C. school system is to enable learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy.

To achieve this purpose, we have a collective mandate to develop the “educated citizen,” which is defined as having:

Intellectual Development – to develop the ability of students to analyze critically, reason and think independently, and acquire basic learning skills and bodies of knowledge; to develop in students a lifelong appreciation of learning, a curiosity about the world around them, and a capacity for creative thought and expression.

Human and Social Development – to develop in students a sense of self-worth and personal initiative; to develop an appreciation of the fine arts and an understanding of cultural heritage; to develop an understanding of the importance of physical health and well-being; to develop a sense of social responsibility, acceptance and respect for the ideas and beliefs of others.

Career Development – to prepare students to attain their career and occupational objectives; to assist in the development of effective work habits and the flexibility to deal with change in the workplace.

There are four ways to graduate in BC

1. **BC CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION (DOGWOOD DIPLOMA)**

80 credits; 16 credits at Grade 12 level; 52 Required credits, 28 Elective credits (**Educare**)

2. **FRENCH IMMERSION/FRANCOPHONE DUAL DOGWOOD**

French Immersion students can earn both a British Columbia Certificate of Graduation (Dogwood Diploma) and a *Diplôme de fin d'études secondaires en Colombie-Britannique*.

To graduate with both diplomas, French Immersion students must meet the graduation requirements for the Dogwood Diploma and, of these 80 credits, they must earn:

At least 16 credits at the Grade 12 level (including a *Français langue seconde-immersion* course at the Grade 12 level).

Français langue seconde-immersion 10 (4 credits).

A *Français langue seconde-immersion* course at the Grade 11 level (4 credits) or IB French A2 (SL) 11.

Français langue seconde-immersion 12 (4 credits).

At least 12 credits in Grade 10, 11, or 12 courses that are in French with at least 4 of these credits at the Grade 11 or 12 level.

3. **BC ADULT GRADUATION DIPLOMA (ADULT DIPLOMA)**

For students 18 years of age or older

Language Arts 12 (4 credits)

Math 11 or 12 (4 credits)

At least three additional Grade 12 electives, or a Social Studies 11 and two additional Grade 12 electives (4 credits each)

4. **INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GRADUATION CREDIT**

To earn a Dogwood Diploma, international students must meet all graduation requirements and demonstrate competence in one of Canada’s two official languages.

There are several specific conditions that pertain to international students. They must earn credit for courses from a British Columbia–certified teacher as stated in the International Student Graduation Credit Policy. No equivalency review or challenge process is permitted for these courses.

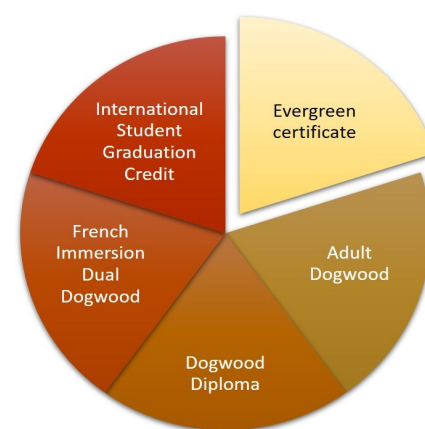
***BC SCHOOL COMPLETION CERTIFICATE (EVERGREEN CERTIFICATE)**

The School Completion Certificate, or Evergreen Certificate, is intended to celebrate success in learning and accomplishments of diverse learners. To be eligible for a School Completion Certificate, the student must have an IEP and be designated in one of the Ministry of Education’s inclusive education categories.

The Evergreen Certificate does not represent graduation and therefore is not equivalent to a B.C. Certificate of Graduation (Dogwood Diploma). It represents the completion of personal learning goals as identified in the student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Through continuing education or college upgrading, students who’ve earned the Evergreen Certificate can acquire credits for postsecondary program attendance.

Graduation Options in BC



<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/support/graduation/graduation-implementation-guide.pdf>

ALTERNATE WAYS OF OBTAINING CREDITS TOWARDS GRADUATION

Flexibility in how students obtain credits towards graduation can determine whether or not they stay in school. This flexibility allows students to make use of individual strengths, passions, and interests and focusses on the inclusion of all students regardless of their abilities.

Board Authority Authorized Courses: are developed by districts, approved by boards of education and independent school authorities, and must align with ministry curriculum and structure.

External Language Certificate: recognize learning in languages other than those noted or grant credit for documented language learning that do not meet the criteria for equivalency.

Challenge: allow students to undertake a free challenge process to assess their prior learning for any ministry-developed Graduation Program course.

Equivalency: allow students equivalency credit for some courses taken outside of BC.

External Challenge: allows students in Grades 10 through 12 an opportunity to earn credit toward graduation for documented learning completed through ministry-accredited external organizations

Post-Secondary Courses for Credit: allow students to earn secondary school and college credits at the same time.

Independent studies: allow students initiate their own area of learning and receive credit toward graduation.

See page 34 of the *Graduation Implementation Guide* for details.
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/childcare-to-grade-12/support/graduation/graduation-implementation-guide.pdf>

Options for Obtaining Credits Toward Graduation



ALTERNATIVES TO REGULAR PUBLIC SCHOOL

The average classroom in the average Canadian school isn't right for everyone. Some children and youth, especially those who have experienced trauma, find the noise, crowded classrooms, and group work highly stressful. If your youth is anxious, over-stimulated, overwhelmed, or needs to work at a different pace, there are options. Alternative schools, Distance Education, and Home Schooling are potential options for youth looking for a path to graduation that best suits their strengths, needs, and circumstances. If a youth is struggling in public school, ask for their ideas for alternative ways to complete their high school education. (Challenge Growth)

ASK

Alternative Schools:

There is a wide range of Alternative Schools in BC, each providing a unique program that address the needs of students with an equally wide range of strengths and challenges. Alternative schools are generally more flexible and student-centred. Due to the diversity of program available on Vancouver Island, caregivers are advised to talk to their youth's worker about Alternative Schools and other options in their area. (*Educere*)

Advantages of Alternative Schools

- Students can work at their own pace
- Childcare is sometimes provided for young parents
- Meals or snacks are sometimes available
- Often include more hands-on learning and practical life skills
- Smaller classes mean students are able to form connections with teachers and peers
- Teachers are more aware of the student's situations and unique challenges
- One-to-one support
- Absences more likely to be noticed and followed up on

http://www.bcaea.com/Directory/Directory_of_BC_Alternate_Programs.pdf

Alternative schools are self-paced, flexible; I can strive for my own goals. That's created more responsibility for me; I get to choose what I want to learn.
P25, *Fostering Success*

Distance Education

Distance Learning (DL) Schools in BC <https://www.learnnowbc.ca/Schools/>.
South Island Distance Education Schools <https://www.sides.ca/en.html>
North Island Distance Education Schools <https://www.navigatenides.com/>

Home Schooling:

Typically, a family member delivers the entire educational program to children at home. Homeschoolers are not eligible to receive a British Columbia Dogwood Graduation Certificate. Often homeschooled learners enroll in public secondary school for Grades 11 and 12. This allows them to earn the BC Dogwood Graduation Certification."

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/classroom-alternatives/homeschooling>

EDUCATION PLANNER BC

EducationPlannerBC helps learners make well informed decisions about their education and career options. Use the Plan section to find articles and information about the different paths along the student journey.

The [EducationPlannerBC](#) website provides an expansive collection of resources and tools to help youth and adults across British Columbia plan their future education. There's something for everyone from youth about to graduate from high school to adults long out of high school who are looking to upgrade their skills or explore a second career.

Planning begins with simple steps:

What's Out There? Search programs available in BC by subject, location, length of time, or keywords.

What fits you? Search 500 career profiles. Consider career goals, access to finances.

What are the entrance requirements? Requirements vary from one institute to another. There will be requirements for General admission and Program admission. Know them. Meet them. Be prepared for application fees. (Ask Guardianship Worker)

What are the deadlines? There are deadlines for application and for financial assistance. Meet them. Apply early.

ASK

Like everyone else, youth in and from care enter post-secondary education with different goals and backgrounds.

Direct university entry (follows high school graduation)

Adult Basic Education Program (upgrade basic skills in reading, writing, computer literacy, and math)

Accessible Learning Programs (for people with disabilities)

Career/Vocational Programs (practical training in specific occupations)

Co-operative Education Programs (paid practical work experience connected to an academic, career, or technical program)

Distance and Online Learning (study and learn from anywhere, anytime)

Employment Preparation Programs (explore career options, self-exploration, skill building)

Foundation Trades Training (pre-apprenticeship programs offering credit towards technical training)

External or Study Abroad (gain international experience)

General Education Development (GED) (Secondary School Equivalency Certificate, fulfills post-secondary program admission requirements)

Parti-time studies (normally considered taking one or two courses per semester)

Technology Entry Programs (academic preparation programs that help you enter technology programs)

Technical Programs (technical programs that use a practical instruction method in the mechanical or scientific areas)

University Transfer Studies (complete first and second-year university level course work at a college or university before transferring to a degree program)

Application Planning Tips

Decide on the institution, program and campus you want to attend

Meet the requirements (general and program)

Confirm the application deadline and have everything ready well before that

Gather information (personal contact information [see FAQs], proof of citizenship, transcripts, Personal Education Number)

Organize supplemental information (references, personal statement about why you would like to take the program, career goal statement, writing sample (project or essay you have done), resume/portfolio)

Submit your application (include Application fee)

Assessing Career Assessment Tools to Career Plan

As you surf the web, you will see many fee-based career planning resources out there and it's common to wonder if paying for a career assessment when planning your education is valuable. Here are a few tips:

1. How can an online career assessment help?

Career assessments are meant to help you confirm aptitudes and interests. They are not meant to uncover your hidden talents. The feedback you receive from different assessment tools may differ depending on the types of questions and answers provided. Results from career assessment tools should not be seen as definitive, as there is no single assessment that will uncover all of your skills and talents. If you are unsure how to interpret the results of a career assessment tool, speak with a parent, advisor, or career counsellor who will be able to provide advice. It can be difficult to pull different threads of information together, therefore it is wise to seek additional feedback from people with experience.

BALANCE

2. Consider free career assessment resources

There are several resources available to offer reliable career assessment tools. There is no one resource that will work for absolutely everyone. You are best to use a couple different resources and compare the results. Career assessments are not meant to tell you what to do, but only to provide you with some insight into your aptitudes and interests.

These resources will help you get started: <https://www.educationplannerbc.ca/>

EXPLORING CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The WorkBC websites provide a variety of resources and tools. There are tools for helping youth identify their interests and skills and translating these into possible career paths. There are descriptions for the types of jobs likely to be needed in the next few years, along with the required skills, and projected earnings.

<https://www.workbc.ca/CareerCompass/>

https://www.workbc.ca/getmedia/1dce90f9-f2f9-4eca-b9e5-c19de9598f32/BC_Labour_Market_Outlook_2018_English.pdf.aspx

[WorkBC: Career Toolkit](#)

[WorkBC: Is self-employment for you?](#)

WorkBC 9 Essential skills

Whether the path chosen by youth leaving high school (before or after graduating) leads to post-secondary education, trade school, or employment, there are essential skills that are needed for all of them.

Focus on developing the Essential Skills needed for work, learning, and life. The nine Essential Skills and some examples of their use are:

Reading text: understanding a lease for an apartment, reading signs and instructions, reviewing a job contract

Document use: reading a blueprint, understanding a bus schedule to plan a trip, following written safety instructions

Numeracy: create budget or schedule, completing personal income tax forms, calculating change

Writing: completing an credit card application, writing a cover letter for a job application

Oral communication: providing or obtaining information, taking messages, attending job interviews

Working with others: working with a partner or on a team, living with roommates

Continuous learning: First Aid, Food Safe, new job position or skill, continuing education classes, professional class driver's license

Thinking skills: identifying and solving problems, making decisions, thinking critically

Computer use: interpreting and analyzing data, sending an email, using ATM, ordering online

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/essential-skills/tools/what-essential-skills.html>

[WorkBC Parent's Guide](#) A Career Development Resource for Parents to Support Youth

The guide includes information on the jobs we expect to be in demand over the coming years, and what education, training and career planning programs are available. It offers ideas and information about programs and services that can help you and your student make some important choices together. P(age)i

The guide offers steps toward the exploration of possibilities, including *Explore and Assess the Options*, *Setting Goals and Creating a Plan*, and *Exploring Learning Paths*.

One reason students give for returning to school after dropping out is to avoid a lifetime of low paying jobs. Want to give your youth motivation to finish high school and go on to post-secondary education or advanced training? Share the information below that demonstrates the potential financial benefits of post-secondary education. You may consider returning to school yourself after reading it.

Quick Fact

An analysis in 2014 by BC Stats shows that graduates of post-secondary programs earn a higher income over a working lifetime than they would make with a high-school diploma.

BC Stats findings of additional lifetime earnings:

Trades Certificate of Qualification or National Red Seal – **\$524,000.**

Undergraduate degree (all, excluding medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine) – **\$827,000.**

Undergraduate degree in arts or science – **\$577,000.**

Undergraduate degree in engineering, business or health – **more than \$1 million.**

Trade certificate or diploma (e.g., foundation program) – **\$266,000.**

Certificate or diploma – ranges between **\$178,000 and \$370,000** for a certificate or diploma below a bachelor's degree.

Master's degree – **more than \$1 million.**

Medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine – **more than \$2 million.**

By identifying a career they are truly interested in, then getting the right education or training, your youth can reap a lifetime of benefits in additional income. P22, Parent's Guide

<https://www.workbc.ca/Resources-for/Resources-for-Counsellors-Teachers-Parents/2018-WorkBC-Parents-Guide.aspx>

<https://www.workbc.ca/Resources-for/Youth.aspx>

<http://youth.itabc.ca/trade-finder/>

Teacher's Guide to WorkBC Explore Careers Online Resource WorkBC

Although this guide is intended for teachers, many of the ideas and tools can be used by caregivers to help youth explore career opportunities

https://www.workbc.ca/getmedia/999165ca-de1e-4a85-bc65-36452051c887/WorkBC_ExploreCareers_TeachersGuide_Sept182017.aspx

Trades Apprenticeship: <https://www.workbc.ca/Training-Education/Trades-Training/About-Apprenticeship.aspx#anchor1>, <https://www.itabc.ca/overview/discover-apprenticeship-programs>, <https://www.tradetrainingbc.ca/Apprenticeship>

FINANCIAL SUPPORTS FOR YOUTH FROM CARE

Agreements with Young Adults

If you've been in foster care or had a Youth Agreement, you may qualify for the Agreements with a Young Adult (AYA) program to help cover the cost of things like housing, child care, tuition and health care while you go back to school, or attend rehabilitation, vocational or approved life skills program.

Beginning April 1st, 2018:

To apply for an agreement, you must be 19 years old to 26 inclusive, not past the day of your 27th birthday.

The government increased the upper age by one year as part of an announcement in Budget 2018 to make eligibility up to 26 inclusive, until the day of your 27th birthday.

To apply for an agreement, you must be at least 19, and on your 19th birthday were in **one** of the following care arrangements:

The custody of a director or permanent custody of the Superintendent

The guardianship of a director of adoption

The guardianship of a director under the Family Relations Act

A Youth Agreement

If you believe you may be eligible for the program, please contact your local Ministry of Children and Family Development office.

You can reach your local Ministry of Children and Family Development office by calling 250-387-7027 or toll-free: 1-877-387-7027.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/youth-and-family-services/teens-in-foster-care/agreements-with-young-adults>

Youth Agreements

A Youth Agreement is a legal agreement made between you and the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) in cases of extreme need. A thorough assessment of your circumstances will be completed by your local MCFD office, and when appropriate, [who] will work with your family to address your needs.

Depending on what you need to live on your own, you may get help with:

Finding a place to live

Learning life skills like grocery shopping, preparing healthy meals, paying bills and communicating with landlords

Coping with alcohol or drug problems

Managing mental health issues

Managing your money

Getting an education

Qualifying for a Youth Agreement

You may qualify for a Youth Agreement if:

You're 16 to 18 years old

You're in need of assistance and may be in need of protection. This will be thoroughly assessed by an MCFD worker once they have spoken with you.

If you have any questions about your circumstances, and to see if you are eligible to be considered for a Youth Agreement, please contact [MCFD's] Provincial Centralized Screening office at: 1-800-663-9122 or 604-660-4927 (Lower Mainland and outside BC).

Youth Educational Assistance Fund for Former Youth in Care

This program provides grants of up to \$5,500 per program year to former B.C. youth in care students between 19 and 24 years of age. Students may receive a maximum of four grants.

To be eligible for this grant you must meet ONE of the following legal criteria:

You must be a former B.C. youth in continuing custody:

Who was:

In the continuing custody of a director designated under Section 91 of the Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA) pursuant to that act; or

Under the guardianship of a director pursuant to section 51(1)(a) of the Infants Act; or;

Under the guardianship of a director of adoption pursuant to the Adoption Act:

until you turned 19 years of age or for at least five years immediately prior to your adoption or permanent transfer of custody to a person other than a parent under s.54.1 of the CFCSA.

If you don't know if you meet the above legal criteria, please contact your former social worker, any Ministry of Children and Family Development office or any delegated Aboriginal agency for help.

In addition to the above criteria, you must ALSO be:

A full-time student or a student with a permanent disability studying at a 40 percent course load.

Registered to take post-secondary-level courses from a designated post-secondary institution in an eligible program leading to a certificate, diploma or degree that is at least 12 weeks long.

Between 19 and 24 years old.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/public-safety/protecting-children/youth-agreements>

Youth on Youth Agreements need supportive adults who are highly knowledgeable about post-secondary requirements, and who can help them prepare and apply for the necessary funding to transition and get through post-secondary.

P41, More than Grades

YEAF Information. <https://studentaidbc.ca/explore/grants-scholarships/youth-educational-assistance-fund-former-youth-care>

YEAF Application. https://studentaidbc.ca/sites/all/files/form-library/yeaf_application.pdf

Provincial Scholarship Program

The Provincial Scholarships Program recognizes student achievement and encourages students to pursue post-secondary education. Both public and independent school students may be eligible for scholarships.

The program includes the B.C. Excellence Scholarship, the B.C. Achievement Scholarship, the District/Authority Scholarship, and the Pathway to Teacher Education Scholarship. P38, *BC Graduation Program Policy Guide*

FPSS Society Guide to Tuition Waivers, Bursaries, and Scholarships Available to Youth in and from Care

Youth formerly in care have the opportunity to apply for a wide range of grants, bursaries, scholarships, and tuition waivers at colleges, universities, and other education/training program throughout British Columbia. The Foster Parent Support Services Society has compiled these into a guide that is available to caregivers and youth across Vancouver Island.

This document is compiled by FPSS Society from public websites. As organizations change their policies and procedures from time to time, *caregivers and students are advised to contact the educational/training institutes directly* for current bursary/scholarship availability, eligibility requirements, and application deadlines.

Definitions

Bursary A bursary is typically an award for a student with financial need. Bursaries often have academic requirements, but are generally focused on helping students who do not have the resources to pay for school on their own. Applications for bursaries typically require you to show you are in need of the assistance and how great your need is. <http://www.scholarshipscanada.com/News/ArticleProfile.aspx?SectionID=8&ID=2974>

Scholarships Traditionally, scholarships are based on academic merit, such as an entrance scholarship which is awarded based on the grade average from high school. Modern usage of the term, however, is much more liberal, with providers of non-academic awards using the term to describe any financial prize that will be used towards tuition payment. Scholarship application procedures are different for each scholarship, but can include a request for your academic transcripts.

Tuition Waiver A Tuition Waiver is a type of financial award where a university waives all tuition fees.

<https://fpss.com/resources/tuition-guide/>

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

Joint Educational Planning and Support for Children and Youth in Care

- Please make decisions with me when you can; that is MY life in that file folder. I might not always like the decisions you make, even when they are for my safety, but the more involved I am and the more control I have, the better I will feel. P35 (Share Power)
- Make sure every youth has an adult who will support them with college applications or attend their graduation.. P29 (Provide Support)

More than Grades

- People tell you, 'you shouldn't worry' when they don't even know what your life is like. They can go home and relax, watch TV – you can't. P12
- There's too much pressure to graduate the year you are 'supposed to.' P14 (Balance Expectations)
- Being moved from place to place is like 'great, another broken home.' It takes a lot to open up to someone, then it gets taken away so fast. It will crush kids. P16 (Stability)
- Half the reason people don't graduate is it feels like a competition. P19 (Balance Expectations)
- Being in care, when I was in 4th grade this kid was like 'no wonder your mom doesn't want you'. P20
- If a kid comes in angry then don't send them away straight away, try to figure out why they're angry. Don't assume, and give them time. P21
- I'm not here to teach them. They're here to teach me. They should go do some research about youth in care. P22 (Provide Support)
- I focused on my role models—my foster grandparents who were immigrants and my [foster] dad who worked all the way up from the bottom. I don't want to have to say I got carried to the finish line. I want to say I ran the whole race, and I finished! P26 (Build Relationships)
- I had an Aboriginal support worker that balanced culture and work with school. It helped me survive as a student and as a person. Helped me graduate. P29 (Build Relationships)
- Aboriginal youth need to be connected to their culture. Their mind will feel more complete and their bodies will feel more natural when connected to their ancestors. And once you feel like you belong somewhere, you'll succeed. P34 (Connections)
- Should there be more communication between school and home? No! There should be more communication between school and you. P36

We Don't Feel that Kind of Love

- ...that's what we are missing out on as kids in care, we don't feel that love, that community, and family connection. P39 (Build Relationships)
- With them [foster family], I seen the love that they gave to each other and that's what I wanted. P42 (Connections)
- ...she [foster mom] showed me how to love and how to be loved, and I feel like that's when I got grounded, like I found myself, and I was able to be a kid and not be afraid of who's going to be my parent today and the next day. P43 (Express Care)
- Personally, I don't think it's really good moving home to home when you're really young, because you don't deal well with rejection, and you're not old enough to understand what's going on; you just think they don't like you. P52 (Stability)



OVERVIEW OF MCFD SOCIAL WORKER OPPORTUNITIES

Child Protection Social Workers specialize in developing plans with families to ensure the safety of children and youth through assessment and collaboration. They receive, assess and respond to concerns of child abuse and neglect by interviewing parents, children and youth, assessing strengths and needs, working with appropriate agencies, developing safety plans and determining if children or youth are in need of protection.

Guardianship Social Workers are responsible for the day-to-day guardianship decisions for a child throughout a child's stay in care. Guardianship social workers work with the child or youth, their family (when appropriate) and the foster home care provider to develop a plan of care. Guardianship social workers create and support cultural plans for Aboriginal children in care, in consultation with families, children, youth, elders, caregivers and communities.

Adoption Social Workers specialize in developing adoption as a permanency option to meet the needs of children and youth in government care. Adoption social workers work with guardianship social workers to prepare children for adoption and develop adoption plans that meet the unique needs of individual children and youth. They also work with prospective adoptive parents to educate, assess and complete adoption home studies.

Resource Social Workers recruit, develop and maintain a range of options for children's placement in care. Frequently these resources are identified as foster homes, group homes and specialized/staffed residential placements. Resource social workers work in collaboration with child protection social workers when a placement is required to meet the individual needs of the child in care.

Child and Youth Special Needs (CYSN) Social Workers work with children/youth that have been identified with special needs and their families to determine their eligibility for appropriate and available programs and services. Special needs may include brain injuries, deafness, visual impairments, autism, chronic health impairments, moderate to profound intellectual disabilities, or complex health needs/nursing services. CYSN Social Workers provide supports and services to assist with identified needs.

Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) Clinicians provide direct clinical services to children and youth identified with mental health concerns. Clinical services may include intake, assessment, provisional diagnosis, treatment, therapy, and crisis response. CYMH clinicians work with community agencies, schools, hospitals, family doctors and other MCFD programs to provide specific supports, consultation or general information regarding the mental health of children and youth. *(At this time, FASD is not covered under CYMH)*

Team Leaders are experienced social workers who provide clinical and administrative supervision to their teams and ensure that program policies, standards and practices are met. Team leaders support professionalism, collaboration, clear communication and productive working relationships, both in MCFD and with community partners.

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/careers/for-job-seekers/current-bc-government-job-postings/featured-careers/social_worker_roles.pdf

ADVOCATING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CARE

BALANCE

Tips for Successful Advocacy

Understand your role as an advocate: Remember that you are one part of the team. Make it about the best interest of the child, not about "winning" or "losing." Let someone else be the hero if it means the youth's needs are met. Know the difference between what is in the best interest of the child and your personal values and beliefs. Advocating on behalf of the child or youth means advocating for what *they* want or need. Make sure you have included them in the discussion and asked them what they want.

Be prepared: Keep your objective in mind. Keep key documents organized. Know the Standards or policies that apply to the situation and refer to them directly. Know who does what and talk to the right person about the right things. Keep records.

Support Self-advocacy: Empower the child or youth to advocate on their own behalf. Help them use their words and their voice. Be honest with the youth about possible outcomes and never guarantee that asking means getting.

Build positive relationships: It's okay to be passionate, but remember to be professional. Responding is better than reacting. Respect that most people are doing the best they can. Make it easy for them to do the right thing. Say "thank you." Take things professionally not personally.

Model good communication: Louder is not better. Speak clearly. Listen when others are talking. Offensive language is unlikely to be well-received. Make a list of questions or points before you begin. Ensure all written communication is thoroughly edited and proofread.

Get support if you need it: Foster Parents support services provides support to foster parents across Vancouver Island. Mentors are available to provide personal support. Contact your local coordinator or the Regional Office at 1-888-922-8437 or admin@fpsss.com. *All calls are confidential.*

<https://fpsss.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Advocating-for-Children-and-Youth-in-Care.pdf>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

General Tip: When contacting school, ministry, or agency staff to ask about Plans of Care, IEPs, school records, assessments etc. ask “when will this be done?” not “will this be done?”. Consider including Team Leaders in email communications with Resource and Guardian workers.

The child or youth in my care needs an assessment in order to receive support/services. How do I advocate for this?

Contact the Guardianship worker, the child’s teacher, or the child’s doctor or paediatrician. Again, the question is “when can we schedule this?”

Who is responsible for creating the IEP?

According to the School Act , “A board must ensure that an IEP is designed for a student with special needs, as soon as practical after the student is so identified by the board.” Not happening? Talk to the teacher or the school staff member assigned to this. How can I help facilitate this?

A child or youth in my care does not have an up-to-date IEP. How do I advocate for this?

Contact the teacher to ask when this will be done. Ask when the planning meeting is taking place. Request a date be set. Contact the Guardianship worker. Ask the same questions. Where and when are we meeting to review the IEP?

Supports or services included in the IEP or Care Plan are not being provided. How do I advocate for these?

Contact the Guardianship worker. [Child and Youth in Care Policy](#) 6.7 (see Putting the Care Plan into Action, P39). When will this services be provided? Who is providing the service? Is there a wait list? Is the child’s name on the wait list? Can we be on a cancelation list? Contact your Resource Worker. Part of your role is to ensure the Plan of Care is followed.

The child or youth in my care needs a tutor. How do I arrange this and how is payment managed?

Insist that the support of a tutor be part of the Care Plan and/or IEP. Contact the Guardianship worker to ask how they are going to provide this support. Contact the teacher or school for suggestions for possible tutors. Contact your Resource Worker about payment.

The child or youth in my care is changing schools and the records have not been transferred. How do I facilitate this?

Contact the school the student is leaving. Talk to the person who has the authority to transfer the records. This might be the secretary, the principal, vice principal, or another delegated person. Be proactive, don’t wait for someone else to move on this.

I drive a youth in my care a long distance to and from school to avoid a school change. How do I manage this when I have other children in my care?

Ask your Resource Worker to help you problem solve. How you are to drive three different students to three different schools for the same time and pick everyone up at the end of the day? Look for a way to make it work. Can you work with another caregiver to transport students? Have snacks and activities for the car to keep everyone entertained and nourished.

The youth in my care has not been in school due to expulsion, incarceration, rehab, or running away. How do I get the youth back in school?

Contact the youth’s Guardianship worker or probation officer. Determine which school best fits the youth’s needs. If the youth is on probation, mandatory school attendance may included as part of the order. The School District has an obligation to provide education. Has the School District provided a learning plan to be carried out in the least restricted environment for the student?

The child or youth in my care will not attend school, or refuses to participate in class or do homework. What do I do?

Try to find out why youth will not attend. Is there a dispute with a teacher? Is the student being bullied? Is the student unable to do the expected work in the expected time frame? Is the student willing to attend an alternative school or online learning? Contact the Guardianship worker, Elder, or another adult who has a positive connection with the student. Sometimes the same message from a non-parental figure is heard differently.

The youth in my care is about to age into community and is currently filling out applications for colleges and universities. The applications require “Personal Contact Information”. As the youth has no confirmed housing at this point, what address do we provide?

As a caregiver, you might considering continuing to support the youth by using your address for mailing and passing mail along. This would provide practical and emotional support. Support the youth to speak with their worker.

Who can sign permission forms for children and youth in care?

Caregivers can sign permission forms unless the activity is high risk, potential inappropriate for the child in care, or the caregiver has concerns about signing. See Appendix 4 Social and Recreational Activities for Children and Youth in Care: Signing Permission Forms in [Standards for Foster Homes](#) (Pviii).

If you have other questions related to children and youth and their education, contact the Regional Office at 1-888-922-8437 or admin@fpss.com.

ASK

GLOSSARY

Accommodations are the means to facilitate a variety of forms of representation, expression, and/or engagement necessary to help each student in the classroom succeed.

Adaptations are teaching and assessment strategies especially designed to accommodate a student's needs so he or she can achieve the learning outcomes of the subject or course and demonstrate mastery of concepts.

Adult Graduation Diploma is awarded to adults 18+ who complete their education through a combination of work experience and courses.

Attachment is a sense of connectedness and belonging with significant adults and peers.

AYA-Agreements with Young Adults provide financial assistance and support services to former CCOs or youth on a YA age 19 to 24 who want to: finish high school; earn a diploma or certificate; learn a trade; attend college or university; and/or complete a rehabilitation program.

BAA-Board/Authority Authorized.

Bursary is an award for a student with financial need

Care Plan/Plan of Care is an action-based planning tool for children and youth in care that is used to identify specific developmental objectives based on continuous assessments of the child/youth's evolving needs and the outcomes of previous decisions and actions.

Caregiver (MCFD/delegated Aboriginal agency) is a person with whom a child is placed by a director under the CFCSA and who, by agreement with the director, has assumed responsibility for the child's day-to-day care (e.g., a foster parent).

CCO-Continuing Custody Order.

CFCSA-The Child, Family and Community Service Act.

Complex trauma refers to the response to ongoing traumatic events, particularly by interpersonal experiences perpetrated by caregivers.

Culture is a broad and expansive term that refers to the way of life of a group of people, including systems of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours, values, experiences, meanings and modes of communication.

CYIC-Children and Youth in Care; A child or youth who is receiving residential services (e.g., foster care, group home care, independent living or semi-independent living); a child or youth removed from his/her caregivers and placed in residential child welfare care.

DAA-Delegated Aboriginal Agency.

Dogwood Certificate is awarded to students acquiring 80 credits from a combination of required courses, elective courses, and the Graduation Transitions program.

Educare (Latin) to bring up, train, or mold; from one who knows to one who wishes to know.

Educere (Latin) to lead out; from ignorance to knowledge, from darkness to light.

Evergreen Certificate is awarded to students who meet the goals of their educational program other than graduation, for example, their Individual Education Plan.

FASD-Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

FYIC-Former Youth in Care are youth who have aged out of government care upon reaching age of majority.

IEP-Individual Education Plan. An Individual Education Plan is a documented plan developed for a student with special needs that describes individualized goals, adaptations and/or modifications and the support services to be provided, and includes measures for tracking achievement.

Jordan's Principle makes sure all First Nations children living in Canada can access the products, services and supports they need, when they need them. Funding can help with a wide range of health, social and educational needs.

MCFD-Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Post-traumatic growth refers to the positive psychological growth some people report once they have had the opportunity to heal from their negative experience (s).

RCY-Representative for Children and Youth.

Scholarship describes any financial prize that will be used towards tuition payment

TCO-Temporary Custody Order.

YA-Youth Agreement is a legal agreement involving the Ministry of Children and Family Development and a youth (age 16 to 18) who is unable to live safely at home or with a responsible family member. The agreement has provisions for financial support to enable the youth to live independently and provides access to supports and services such as mental health and substance use treatment.

YEAF-Youth Educational Assistance Fund. provides grants of up to \$5,500 to 19-24 year-olds attending college, university, or other post-secondary institution. The grant can be used for tuition, books, and living expenses.

RESOURCES

- Aboriginal Policy and Practice Framework in British Columbia, A Pathway towards Restorative Policy and Practice that Supports and Honours Aboriginal Peoples' Systems of Caring, Nurturing Children and Resiliency.* <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/child-care/aboriginal/abframework.pdf>
- Advocating for Children and Youth in Care: Your Role as a Caregiver*, Ministry of Children and Family Development. <https://fpsss.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Advocating-for-Children-and-Youth-in-Care.pdf>
- All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, Robert Fulghum, 1986.
- Anxiety or Aggression? When Anxiety in Children Looks Like Anger, Tantrums, or Meltdowns*, Karen Young. <https://www.complextrauma.ca/wp-content/uploads/AF8-Anxiety-or-Aggression-.pdf>
- Balance and Connection in BC The Health and Well-Being of Our Youth*, Results of the 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey, McCreary Centre Society, 2019. https://www.mcs.bc.ca/pdf/balance_and_connection.pdf
- BC Graduation Program Policy Guide Grades 10 to 12*, British Columbia Ministry of Education, December 2018. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/support/graduation/graduation-implementation-guide.pdf>
- Calmer Classrooms A Guide to Working with Traumatised Children*, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, Department of Education, Training, and Employment, 2007. <https://www.complextrauma.ca/wp-content/uploads/E9-Calmer-Classrooms-Guide-1.pdf>
- Child, Family and Community Services Act*, Government of BC, October 2019. http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96046_01
- Children and Youth in Care Policies – Chapter 5*, Ministry of Children and Family Development, April 1 2019. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/policies/cf_5_children_youth_in_care.pdf
- Circle of Courage*, Dr. Martin Brokenleg. <https://www.presentlearning.com/circle-of-courage.html>
- Cross Ministry Transition Planning Protocol for Youth with Special Needs*, The Government of British Columbia, November 2009. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/children-teens-with-special-needs/2012_vtpp_protocol.pdf
- Early Childhood Education, Child Rights and You, a Resource for Aboriginal ECE Practitioners*, Society for Children and Youth of BC. <https://www.scyofbc.org/>
- Educare and Educere: is a Balance Possible in the Education System?* Randall V. Bass and J.W. Good, The Education Forum Volume 68 Winter 2004. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ724880>
- Education Pathways of Highschool Graduates and Non-Graduates A Longitudinal Study from the Student Transitions Project*, Joanne Heslop, BC Government Youth Transitions Project, February 2018. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/post-secondary-education/data-research/stp/educ_pathways_of_grads_and_nongrads.pdf
- Every Child Needs a Champion*, TED Talk. May 3rd, 2013. https://www.ted.com/talks/rita_pierson_every_kid_needs_a_champion?language=en
- Fostering Education: A Foster Parent Resource and Handbook for Supporting the Education of Youth in Care.* Natalie Smith
- Fostering Success Improving Educational Outcomes for Youth In/From Care*, Deborah Rutman, Carol Hubberstey, University of Victoria Social Work, Vancouver Foundation, 2016. <https://cwrrp.ca/sites/default/files/publications/FOSTERING-0.pdf>
- A Guide to: Scholarships, Bursaries, Tuition Waivers and Awards Available to Children in and From Government Care in British Columbia*, Foster Parent Support Services Society, 2019. <https://fpsss.com/resources/tuition-guide/>
- Healing Families Helping Systems A Trauma-Informed Practice Guide for Working with Children, Youth and Families*, Ministry of Children and Family Development, 2016. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/child-teen-mental-health/trauma-informed_practice_guide.pdf
- How to Help Every Child Fulfill Their Potential*, Carol Dweck. Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, 2015. <https://www.thersa.org/discover/videos/rsa-animate/2015/how-to-help-every-child-fulfil-their-potential>
- "I Have Strong Hopes for the Future": Time Orientations and Resilience Among Canadian Indigenous Youth*, Andrew R. Hatala, Tamara Pearl, Kelley Bird-Naytowhow, Andrew Judge, Erynne Sjoblom, and Linda Liebenberg. Qualitative Health Research 2017, Vol 27 (9) 1330-1344.
- The Invisible Suitcase: Behavioural Challenges of Traumatized Children*, The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. http://www.kscourts.org/court-administration/Legal_Institute_on_Adverse_Childhood_Exp/The%20Invisible%20Suitcase.pdf
- Joint Educational Planning and Support for Children and Youth in Care*, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Children and Family Development, 2017. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/inclusive/planning-and-support-for-children-youth-in-care.pdf>
- Listen Stories We Carry with Us from House to House*, Removed Film, Edited by K.C. Lynn, and Christina Matanick, Copyright May 2019 . www.removedfilm.com
- Making the Grade: A Review of Alternative Education Programs in BC*, McCreary Centre Society, 2008. https://www.mcs.bc.ca/pdf/AlternateEducationFinal_web.pdf
- More than Grades, Redefining Educational Success for BC Youth in Government Care*, McCreary Centre Society, 2017. <https://www.mcs.bc.ca/pdf/>

[more than grades.pdf](#)

Parent and Family Checklist, BC Children's Hospital. <http://www.bcchildrens.ca/transition-to-adult-care/Documents/ONT-ParentFamily-Checklist.pdf>

Placement Stability in Child Welfare, Practice and Research Together, Julia Wedeles.

Planting Seeds for Success Foster Parents Creating an Environment for Academic Achievement, Karen Charlebois, March 11, 2019

Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that Can't Stop Talking, Susan Cain, 2012.

Reader, Come Home The Reading Brain in a Digital World, Maryanne Wolf, 2018.

Relationships First Creating Connections that Help Young People Thrive, Search Institute®, 2017. <https://www.search-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/2017-Relationships-First-final.pdf>

A Resource Guide for Teachers, Individual Education Planning for Students with Special Needs, Province of British Columbia, November 2009. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/childcare-to-grade-12/teach/teaching-tools/inclusive/iepssn.pdf>

Room for Improvement, BC Representative for Children and Youth, October 2017. <https://www.rcybc.ca/roomforimprovement>

The School Act, [RSBC 1996] Chapter 412, Province of British Columbia, September 11 2019. http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96412_00

School Districts Contact Map. <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/schools/bcmap.htm>

The Search Institute, www.search-institute.org

Special Education Services A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, BC Ministry of Education, April 2016. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/childcare-to-grade-12/inclusive/special_ed_policy_manual.pdf

Standards for Foster Homes, Ministry of Children and Family Development, April 2019. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/foster-parenting/standards_foster_homes.pdf

Supporting Children with Incarcerated Parents A FREE Community Guide, Elizabeth Fry Society,

Teacher's Guide to WorkBC Explore Careers Online Resource, WorkBC, 2017. https://www.workbc.ca/getmedia/999165ca-de1e-4a85-bc65-36452051c887/WorkBC_ExploreCareers_TeachersGuide_Sept182017.aspx

Time Out III a Profile of BC Youth in Custody, McCreary Centre Society, 2005. https://www.mcs.bc.ca/pdf/Time_Out_III.pdf

Useful Tips for Youth and Young Adults A Guide to Independent Living, Ministry of Children and Family Development Government of British Columbia, 2013. Original Authors Brian Hill and Jacqueline McAdams-Crisp 1999. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/foster-parenting/useful_tips_youth_young_adults.pdf

We Don't Feel that Love Retrospective Reflections on the Experiences of Removal, Transitions, and Trauma from Former Youth in Care, Angela Scott, James P. Anglin, School of Child and Youth Care University of Victoria, August 2016. https://dspace.library.uvic.ca/bitstream/handle/1828/7492/Scott_Angela_MA_2016.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Work BC Parent's Guide A Career Development Resource for Parents to Support Youth, WorkBC, 2018. https://www.workbc.ca/getmedia/d2144ffc-560f-45a1-bddd-51a3568edcc0/workbc_parents_guide_2018_web.pdf.aspx

The capacity to learn is a gift,
The ability to learn is a skill,
The willingness to learn is a choice.

Brian Herbert



Foster
Parent
Support
Services
Society

foster parents foster hope