



Children's Services

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CANADIAN FOSTER FAMILY WEEK



This past October 19-25, 2008 was dedicated as Canadian Foster Family Week, honoring the difficult yet rewarding job done by foster families in the Rainy River District. Foster families are essential to the work that takes place at Family and Children's Services of the District of Rainy River (FACS), and without the constant care and commitment that these families provide, we would not be able to offer the protection some children in our district desperately need. These families are meeting a need that is greater than ever before.

Being a foster parent can be an exciting opportunity to make a

difference in the lives of children and adolescents. The role of a foster parent is challenging yet can be extremely rewarding. Many foster parents say the rewards of personal growth and the satisfaction of helping a child and his/her family when they really need it far outweigh all the efforts and hard work that they put into this endeavor.

With close to fifty children and youth already in foster care in the Rainy River District, the numbers continue to grow and FACS finds itself in great need of foster and adoptive families. The foster care program needs families for both short-term and long-term, as well as homes that can provide care for children from infants to adolescents. There are also thousands of children and youth across the province that are in need of permanent adoptive homes. The approval process for becoming a foster parent and adoptive parent has stringent guidelines, but both

single and two-parent families are enthusiastically welcomed.

We thank the dedicated foster parents and their families that give of themselves and their time to share what they have with children in need. These individuals are special and valued people that deserve recognition and thanks for the job they do. FACS commends our foster families and recognizes the invaluable role they play in providing services to the children in our community.

For more information on becoming a foster parent, contact Christa Little at (807) 274-7787 ext. 226.

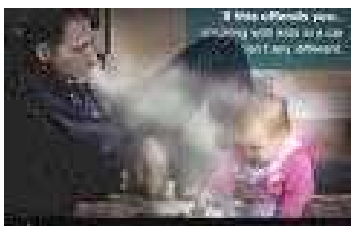


Christa Little,
Foster Care
Coordinator



Child Protection Services

Protecting Children from Second-Hand Smoke in Vehicles



Smoking in Ontario workplaces and public areas, such as bars and restaurants, is already illegal in Ontario, but a new ban will provide an additional level of protection to children under the age of 16. This is about protection of our most vulnerable citizens—children who do not have a voice.

The risks from Second Hand Smoke (SHS) have been well documented. A recent position paper by the Ontario Medical Association indicates that exposure to SHS in a vehicle is 23 times more toxic due to the enclosed space. Children are among the most vulnerable to the damaging health effects of SHS. Children exposed to SHS show a greater likelihood of

respiratory infections, sudden infant death syndrome, ear infections, and severe asthma symptoms due to smaller airways, greater oxygen demand and, hence, higher respiratory rates, as well as less mature immune systems. Exposure to SHS in a car for just ten seconds can cause asthmatic episodes in susceptible children. Further, new evidence implicates SHS in childhood cancer, leukemia and brain cancer. While levels of SHS in vehicles can be far higher than those previously found in smoky bars, children continue to be exposed to smoke in private vehicles in Canada and elsewhere.

On Thursday, December 6, 2007, Sault Ste. Marie MPP David Oraziotti presented a private member's bill (Bill 11) in the Ontario Legislature that would protect children under the age of 16 from SHS when travelling in private vehicles.

On March 5, 2008, Premier Dalton McGuinty announced that in the spring session of the Ontario Legislature, the government will introduce legislation protecting children from SHS in vehicles.



On June 16, 2008 the bill was adopted. The legislation will come into effect January 21, 2009 (Weedless Wednesday).

Under the law any person—driver or passenger—in the motor vehicle, who is smoking while someone under the age of 16 is present, is committing an offence. The person holding the lighted tobacco would be subject to a set fine of \$250.00. This law applies to both moving and stationary vehicles and applies to all vehicles, regardless of whether any window, sunroof, door, or other feature of the vehicle is open.

This legislation is another step to protect the youth of our province. Do your part to protect your children with something as simple as not smoking at all!

Angela Aucoin,
Family Service Worker

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Children's Mental Health Services

Children of Divorce



According to statistics, the divorce rate in Canada was 37% in 2007. Children are impacted by divorce in ways that may be

difficult for their parents to notice in the midst of this stressful period in their own lives.

Children who are experiencing the divorce of their parents may develop problems with anger, or behavioral difficulties. School achievement can also suffer. Other children become sad for prolonged periods of time. They may become depressed, anxious, or sense that it is their duty to assume the role of the missing parent. For example, the child may end up feeling that they have to care for their parent, or be their emotional support person. Many children will express feelings of guilt

connected to a belief that somehow the divorce was their fault.

There are several positive steps that parents can take to promote their children's well-being in the face of the dramatic changes divorce introduces into children's lives. The following are suggestions, excerpt taken from **"Dear Mom and Dad: What Kids of Divorce Really Want to Say to Their Parents"** by Gillian Rothchild

Ten Commandments For Divorced Parents

1. Thou shalt not make derogatory statements about the other parent.
2. Thou shalt not make your child your best friend to confide in.
3. Thou shalt not use your child as a messenger service.
4. Thou shalt not deny your child's feelings or your own.
5. Thou shalt openly give your child permission to love and respect the other parent.

6. Thou shalt not change house rules to compete with the other parent. **CONSISTENCY + DISCIPLINE = LOVE.**
7. Thou shalt not unilaterally change the visitation arrangements.
8. Thou shalt never make your child feel "stuck in the middle".
9. Thou shalt never blame or indicate the divorce is due to or revolves around your child. Divorce is a grown up matter.
10. Thou shalt always practice loving, positive, and consistent parenting and make your child's world a safe and special place to live.



Krista Smith
Children's Mental Health Therapist

We are on the Web!
www.facsrr.ca



Developmental Services

Positive Parenting



Parenting is perhaps the most important task that we will ever

undertake, and perhaps the most difficult. While our own parents may have used spanking, shaming, or other negative parenting strategies to enforce good behavior, these are no longer desirable or useful responses. There are programs available through the Infant and Child Development Program at Family and Children's Services, to help parents learn more about "positive parenting" approaches.

Parents will learn about temperament, and how different temperaments influence behavior. Temperament is the set of personal qualities and characteristics that babies are born with. Because temperament is stable throughout life, it helps if we can work with our child's temperament. Some babies come into this world as spirited little beings, who never cease to be a challenge, and

some are laid-back and easier to care for. The temperament each child is born with has a profound influence on the challenges presented, especially if his temperament does not mesh with the parents' own.

Parents will benefit from a basic knowledge of normal child development, which promotes realistic expectations. Babies are too young to understand limits and rules. They need us to understand their needs and to help them feel safe and secure. Daily routines around feeding, sleeping, and eating, and lots of love and affection, help them grow. Two and three year olds are generally ready to start learning simple rules, and the consequences of breaking them. Children who are old enough to understand, need to know what we expect from them, and why. A few sensible rules that are consistently enforced, are best.

"Positive parenting" means focusing on what to do, rather than what not to do. Often, negative behavior gets noticed, while good behavior



gets overlooked. By praising the behavior we want, it is more likely to happen again! Giving children choices is a powerful positive parenting strategy that promotes good behavior, and teaches children to think for themselves. "Grandma's Rule" can be effective in gaining cooperation from reluctant children, without a fight. Instead of saying "You can't go out to play until you clean your room", try "As soon as your room is clean, you can go out to play". Consequences should be natural or logical, whenever possible. Brief time-outs (a minute for each year of your child's life), can be effective with children between two and twelve years of age.

For more information about "positive parenting", call the Infant and Child Development Program at 274-7787 in Fort Frances, 597-2700 in Atikokan and 483-1357 in Rainy River.

Carolyn Pelletier,
Child Development Worker

Call your local office of Family & Children's Services 24 Hours a day, 7 Days a week Or visit us on the web www.facsrr.ca



Community Services & Quality Assurance

A word from the Family Conferencing Coordinator...



In July 2008, the Case Management/Family Centred Conferencing program became a permanent addition to Family and Children's Services of the District of Rainy River. The need and

the success of the program have proven to be very significant for this agency. The program has continued to enjoy success in reconnecting children to their biological parents or family members, preventing children from being admitted into care, permanency planning, service coordination, and working with our aboriginal communities through customary care agreements.

The process of conferencing can sometimes seem long, emotional and difficult to find time for, but the

rewards are worth it. It is evident that everyone is unique but that uniqueness is what makes it work for the families that we service.

It's important that participants remember everyone has a valuable role in this process and whether the progress is small or large, working together is in the best interest of the children.

Tina Arnold,
Family Centred Conferencing Coordinator