

The Island

Connection

Serving the Foster Parents of the Vancouver Island Region through Peer Support, Education, Networking and on-going Training



*You're there for the children...
We're here for you.*

CPC PUB #40780167

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The opinions expressed herein are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the FPSS Foster Parent Support Services Society or the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Call Us
TOLL FREE AT
1-888-922-8437

Visit our website at
www.fpsss.com

EMERGENCY “After Hours” DUTY WORKER

**Contact Number:
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

Call Toll Free:
1-888-495-4440

Weekdays: 4:00 pm to 12:45 am
Statutory Holidays & Weekends: 8:00 am to 12:45 am

If you have an immediate concern relating to a child in your care—we're here to help you and will provide:

- ✘ Fast response for urgent issues outside regular office hours.
- ✘ Professional support, information and consultation.

PROTOCOL SUPPORT WORKER TEAM

- ✘ Your Area Foster Parent Association can arrange for a support person to help you through a Protocol Investigation.
- ✘ The support person can answer your questions, attend any interviews with you, and give you information about the investigation.

SUPPORT TEAM LEADER—Ros Pringle
TOLL FREE 1-888-922-8437

**Megson Fitzpatrick Town & Country
INSURANCE**
3635 Douglas Street, Victoria BC, V8Z 3L6
Tel: 250-475-2276 Fax: 250-475-2298

- We are proud to be the FPSS Foster Parent Support Services Insurance Broker.
- We understand the needs and coverage requirements of Foster Parents and can provide you with a quotation on your home or contents insurance today.
- We don't surcharge or restrict coverage due to your commitment to being a Foster Parent!

The following is a listing of Ministry approved homes willing to provide Relief Care for foster parents. This list is for information purposes only.

Foster parents must make their own arrangements *with the prior knowledge and approval of their Resource Worker.*

SOUTH Island Relief Care Listing

CAREGIVER		PHONE	TYPE OF HOME
Bendall	Janis	478-3975	Level 1/0-2 yrs
Bandet	Monique	474-3639	Level 1/0-9 yrs
Morley	Sandy & Bob	478-8490	Level 2/0-10 yrs
Spring	Dini	474-5652	Level 2/0-10 yrs
Adams	Karen & Dave	652-0727	Level 2/0-12 yrs
Batten	Linda & Doug	642-2579	Level 2/0-12 yrs
Murray	Lynette & Peter	388-4208	Level 2/0-12 yrs
Case	Sandy & Rob	478-2782	Level 2/0-5 yrs
Shumard	Laura & Steve	478-1973	Level 2/0-5 yrs
Anderson	Deb	370-7665	Level 2/7-12 girls
Hayward	Terri	474-0499	Level 3
Robinson	Jackie	383-2453	Level 3/teen girls
Bracic	Daria	595-5887	Level 3/teen girls

CENTRAL Island

Please Note: Central Island area Foster Parents are encouraged to contact their Resource Social Worker, or the Child's Social Worker when seeking relief care from Ministry approved caregivers.

UPPER Island Relief Care Listing

Anderton	Ev & Warren	338-4064	Level 3
Semenick	Christine	338-7161	Regular/3-11 yrs.
Poole & Bozenich	Wendy & Paul	339-6403	Level 3
Watkins	Josie & Stephen	334-7744	Level 3

THE RELIEF FOSTER CARE RATES

- Restricted (for a child aged 0 to 11 yrs) \$35.26
- Restricted (for a child aged 12 to 19 yrs) \$38.87
- Regular (for a child aged 0 to 11 yrs) \$35.26
- Regular (for a child aged 12 to 19 yrs) \$38.87
- Level 1 (all ages) \$52.09
- Level 2 (all ages) \$64.84
- Level 3 (all ages) \$87.38

Rates effective March 1, 2007

FPSS Foster Parent Support Services Society Vancouver Island Region:

Prepared by Margaret Howley, Executive Director

Foster parents foster hope. Thank you so much for opening your hearts and homes to children in care. You're there for them - We're here for you.

The following is a summarized account of what is happening in the (beautiful) Vancouver Island region.

Advanced FASD Caregiver Certificate Program: Watch your Island Connection newsletter for dates and locations of upcoming deliveries throughout the region in the coming months.

Retention and Recruitment: Our new Recruitment website can be accessed at www.fosterhope.ca. There is also a new Provincial website for recruitment at www.fosterbc.ca – check it out! **Be a Foster Parenting Ambassador!** You folks really are the best role models we have - tell your family and friends who may be interested in becoming foster parents to call 1-888-922-8437 or go to www.fosterhope.ca to learn more and who to contact, etc.

Exciting News! We will soon have a New Foster Parent Recruiter in the Central Island Area—drop by the new office at 2-6421 Applecross Road in Nanaimo and meet all the new staff!

BC Foster Care Education Program: The program is currently being reviewed and updated with input from a province-wide committee comprised of foster parents, MCFD, FPSS and Reps from the other 4 Regions, FAFP, and BCFFPA. Work is in progress on the curriculum with some positive changes being proposed. We'll keep you apprised of developments. **In the meantime foster parents are still expected to complete the current training.** Remember, childcare and gas subsidies are available to assist participants. FPSS is working with ministry to explore ways to effectively deal with the issue of non-completion of the program by foster parents.

Working in Partnership: Provincial Advisory Committee—Retention & Recruitment is a provincial committee with representation from FPSS, Interior Community Services, MCFD Team Leaders, BCFFPA, FBCYICN and the FAFP. The committee has met several times via teleconference, and the first round of Recruitment promotional products, advertisements and media releases has begun. We will share the information as and when it becomes available.

Lights, Camera, Action!

The past few weeks have been exciting times in the recruitment department. Eric Johnson, of Nanaimo, and his wife Helen, have most generously offered to write, direct & produce a recruitment video.

Filming took place in Nanaimo and in Victoria, featuring local foster parents, staff from the FPSS, local actors, and even a few folks caught by surprise at the library!

We are excited for the premiere of the video, coming out early spring (and we expect a few Oscar nominations!)

If you are part of a work, school, church or community group that would be interested in receiving a DVD of the video to show it's members, please let us know! Call 250.294.7914 or email recruitment@fpss.com



Update

Fill out our survey and WIN a Great Mini-Stereo System!

You all should have received your surveys in the mail—if you didn't get yours yet, please call Emma at 1-888-922-8437 and she will send you one right away.

WEEKEND GET AWAY CONTEST WINNER!

Congratulations go out to our lucky foster parent—Mary Masterson of Black Creek. Mary is taking a few days to decide which beautiful resort she would like to visit—we'll let you know how it all works out. **Watch your newsletter for details about the next contest for BCFCE Graduates!**

Exciting, Energetic Employment Opportunity!

Foster Parent Recruitment Coordinator for South Island

Are you interested in working with our Regional Team to recruit new homes? If you, or your friends or family would be interested in working on this dynamic Team, please go to our website at www.fpss.com for details.

Job Description will be posted on April 1, 2007.

FOSTER FAMILY CARE RATE INCREASE:

Frequently Asked Questions

Foster Families to Benefit from \$31M in New Funding

On March 2, 2007, Children and Family Development Minister Tom Christensen announced the majority of B.C.'s foster families will receive a rate increase of at least \$200 per month, incrementally over the next three years. To read the News Release please go to <http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/foster/index.htm>.

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

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

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

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

The maintenance rate increase will be paid incrementally over three fiscal years. Starting March 1, 2007, foster families will receive the first increase.

On April 1, 2008 and again on April 1, 2009, the additional increases will be provided, resulting in the full increase for each age group of children in care.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Q. How was the amount of the increase determined?

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

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

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

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

Rate Increase FAQ's continued from page 4...

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

Q. Are all foster parents getting an increase?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Q. How much will the increases cost the Province?

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

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

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

Foster parents stop fostering for different reasons. These include:

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

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

More than 6,400 children and youth currently live with foster

families in B.C.

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

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

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

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

We always need more foster parents, however in some communities the need is greater than in others. Children and youth are best served when they are placed in a foster home within, or close to, their home community. They need to be able to maintain family and social contacts and attend their own schools.

Q. Where is the greatest shortage of foster homes?

A. In most B.C. communities, there continues to be a need for experienced and skilled foster parents willing to care for teenagers and children with serious challenges. Most new foster homes begin as Regular or Level 1 – depending on the experience and knowledge of the foster parents – and then, with experience, begin serving those children with greater needs. Once those foster parents have 'moved up', we then need to look at recruiting new parents.

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

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

Just For a Little Fun . . .

A little boy got lost at the YMCA and found himself in the women's locker room. When he was spotted, the room burst into shrieks, with ladies grabbing towels and running for cover.

The little boy watched in amazement and then asked, "What's the matter, haven't you ever seen a little boy before?"



Island Area Coordinator UPDATES:

South Island Area:

Report prepared by Dana Kinney

March has been a very exciting month, including the announcement of the BC Foster Family Care Rate Increase. If you have any questions in regard to this, please feel free to call me (Dana Kinney) at 294-7912 and I will do my best to find an answer for you.

The popular book *Boy Smarts – Mentoring Boys for Success at School* by Barry MacDonald is now here! Call or stop in the office at 101-814 Goldstream Avenue to borrow this or any of the numerous resource items we have available for foster parents.

Dr. Ross Greene – The Explosive Child Workshop is coming to Victoria Conference Centre on April 18th, and MCFD has purchased seats that have been filled by local foster parents. As well, FPSSS is sending 10 foster parents to this workshop. Specific information about this conference is available from Jack Hirose & Associates at www.jackhirose.com. We also have the book *The Explosive Child* by Dr Greene available for loan from our resource library.

FASD Support & Training: Our FASD Caregiver Support monthly gathering has been gaining momentum. Several caregivers attending have completed the Advanced FASD Caregiver Certificate Training. This has been a wonderful inspiration for our group. March 7 – through 10, I was able to participate in the 2nd International Conference on FASD Research, Policy and Practice Around the World. Foster parent, Kathy Baird was also able to attend the four day conference, and will be peer sharing on her experiences at the next FASD Caregiver Support meeting. Please feel free to join us here at the regional office for that talk on Tuesday April 10th at 10am. Remember, anyone who is caring for a child with complex behaviours can benefit from this kind of support group!

We are currently adding names to our waitlist for the Advanced FASD Caregiver Certificate Program; if you are interested in participating in this advanced training, please call me at 294-7912.

Infant & Safe Babies Support: February and March support meetings allowed us to view the DVD series by Patricia Buckley. Patricia's education and experience in this field is invaluable for all caregivers. These items are now available for loan from the FPSSS library

at 101 – 814 Goldstream Avenue in Victoria. Our upcoming meeting will have a focus on sharing about nutrition and infant feeding challenges. This will take place on April 12th at 7pm. All infant and safe babies' caregivers are encouraged to attend.

Life Book Work Sessions: These monthly sessions for foster parents give foster parents the chance to focus on Life Book work. Sharing ideas and visiting while assembling pages has helped motivate a number of caregivers to participate.

If you would like to join in, bring your materials, ideas and questions to our office on Tuesday April 24th at 7:00pm. You don't have to be fancy or an artist in order to participate, and many of our experienced "Life Bookers" have cost effective ideas to get you started.

In May our work group hopes to hold a "Show and Tell" for resource workers and we need all types of Life Booking ideas represented at this event, call if you would like to share.

Ongoing Training Workshops: We are working to provide a variety of options for foster parent training by utilizing workshops available in our community. If you know of any training opportunities that might be beneficial to caregivers please contact me at 294-7912 or forward them by email to svicordinator@fpss.com.

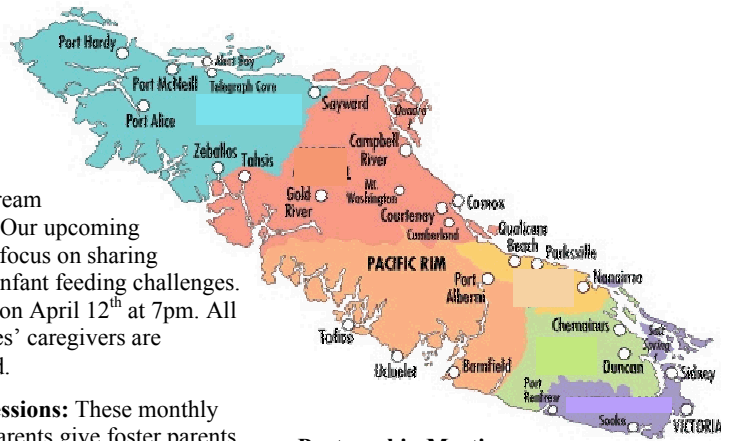
Remember to submit your First Aid training receipts for reimbursement. You pay for the first \$ 25.00 and FPSSS will cover the remainder.

Please—as always, feel free to call or stop by the office if you would like information or just a chance to connect. I am interested in meeting the support and training needs of all South Island caregivers. I am looking forward to seeing you in April!

Central Island Area:

Report prepared by Sarah McDonald

Foster Parents Support Meeting: Laurie Chalmers and I attended the monthly foster parent support meeting on February 15th to make plans for upcoming events and answer question from seven local foster parents. One of the requests was to plan a partnership meeting with the staff from MCFD and other community partners. This will be held on April 5th, 2007.



Partnership Meeting-

Duncan: I attended the Duncan partnership meeting on February 21st. Four MCFD Staff members, four foster parents, and one community partner were also on hand to share ideas, voice concerns and plan up coming events for their area.

Exploring Relationships in Fostering: This workshop was held in Duncan with 17 MCFD staff members, 12 Foster Parents and 2 community partners. Michael Gintowt and his entire mental health team presented to local foster parents. The feedback from participants was great. I myself have received calls from local foster parents telling me how much they enjoyed it and look forward to something similar being held in the future. Congratulations on a job well done to all involved!

Partnership Meeting-Nanaimo: MCFD Staff, community partners, foster parents and FPSSS staff met for an informal gathering to get connected with one another, have a coffee and share ideas. Attendance was quite low at this meeting, so mark next months date on your calendar. We are looking forward to getting together with you.

Presumption in Favour of Collaborative Planning Committee Meeting: Wow! What a group of people. Laurie and I attended the Committee Meeting on February 26th. Feedback was given on the information sessions that had been presented through-out the Vancouver Island region. Plans are also getting under way to bring these sessions to areas that have not had them yet. So keep your eyes open for dates and times.

Pre Service Orientation-Duncan: This training was held over three Saturdays. MCFD Ted Lofto, Debbie Underhill and Roslyn Pringle answered questions and shared information with 13 prospective caregivers. The presenters brought sensitivity and humour to these sessions resulting in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Way to go team! And congratulations to all who attended.

Upper Island Area:

Report prepared by Erica Beech

I'm happy to say the inaugural "Shoot the Breeze" Coffee Group gathering on March 12th in the Comox Valley was a great success with 6 Foster Parents attending to enjoy a potluck lunch, had some laughs and, most important of all, to support one another in their fostering experiences. This is a fun bunch and they encourage other Foster Parents to join them on Monday, April 16th from 11 a.m. until whenever the group wants to call it quits. There will be a potluck lunch again for all to feast on. This is the *only* opportunity in the Comox Valley where *only* Foster Parents can regularly gather to enjoy each other's company, support one another and freely discuss fostering issues.

Training to watch out for on the Upper Island this spring are:

- **Standards** training in Campbell River with an emphasis on interactive, fun and food!
- **Safe Babies Program refresher** training by the new FPSS Society Safe Babies Coordinator, Laurie Chalmers in June.
- **Working with Biological Families** by the Comox Valley Joint Education Committee will include the roles of the MCFD, Foster Parents, the biological families when a child is placed into care, setting boundaries, communication, resolving conflicts, addictions, etc. Please contact me at (250) 286-0555 if you have any topics you would like to see addressed.
- **Advanced FASD Caregiver Certificate** training specifically developed for the unique needs of Foster Parents caring for children with FASD. If you wish to take this training please contact Dana Kinney, facilitator for this training, at 1-888-922-8437 to be included on the interest list.
- **BC Foster Care Education Program** will be occurring in Port Hardy and either Campbell River or the Comox Valley. Please contact Christine Howley, BCFCE Program Coordinator, at 1-888-922-8437 if you have any questions as to which session(s) you need to complete.

Thank you to all the Foster Parents who continually juggle their responsibilities to attend Joint Education and/or Partnership meetings to share their first-hand perspective with the hope to improve the fostering experience for themselves and others. Please know your time, knowledge and input is valued.

Safe Babies Coordinator

Report prepared by Laurie Chalmers



Wow! – two months have flown by very quickly. I have had the opportunity to speak personally with many of you on the phone and have corresponded with many others via email. If I have not spoken with you yet – expect a call over the next couple of months. The theme for

March was "Self Care" and we held two "Do it Yourself Spas." April's theme is "Comfort Measures for Babies" and you have a choice between evening or morning sessions – I will fill your "tool belt" with many new techniques and ideas for calming babies.

A Safe Babies Training has been tentatively set for Fridays in October and I will also be offering a Safe Babies "Refresher" course in June – watch for dates next month.

A huge thank you to Dream With Me baby boutique in Nanaimo and "Miracle Blankets"! They have donated "Miracle Blanket" swaddle blankets to all of you infant and safe babies foster parents. They will be available to you when you come out to the drop-ins and we will have the opportunity to practice with them at the Comfort Measures workshops. You are also welcome to stop by the office to introduce yourself and pick one up.

Please email or call me with your suggestions or ideas – I would love to hear from you! 390-9686 safebabies@fpsss.com.

BC Foster Care Education Program

RELIEF EXPENSES: Funding for relief and transportation is available. Please obtain approval from the FPSSS Regional Office at (1-888-922-8437) PRIOR to registering for courses.

Attention Caregivers!

Our records indicate that there are 554 caregivers on Vancouver Island that have NOT completed the BC Foster Care Education Program.

There is babysitting and gas subsidies available to support you in completing this mandatory education—just get confirmation when you call to register.

If you require evenings and/or weekends please phone Emma at 1-888-922-8437 and get your name on the waitlist so we can start a session in your area as soon as there are enough participants.

If you want to register for the *Fast Track Option* (which only is offered in the summer) also please phone Emma and get your name on the waitlist so we can schedule now and you can plan your holidays without any interruptions.

Series 1—36 hours / 9 modules:

While it is recommended that Series 1 be taken before completing Series 2, it is not a requirement.

- S1-1 Caring for Children: Overview— 3 hours
- S1-2 Communication Skills & Self-Awareness—3 hours:
- S1-3 Effects of Caregiving—3 hours
- S1-4 The Child's Family— 3 hours
- S1-5 Observing, Recording, & Reporting—3 hours
- S1-6 Child and Youth Development—3 hours
- S1-7 Attachment, Separation, & Loss—6 hours
- S1-8 When Children Experience Abuse & Neglect— 6 hours
- S1-9 Guiding Behaviour of Children & Youth—6 hours

Series 2—17 hours/5 modules:

While it is recommended that Series 2 be taken after completing Series 1, it is not a requirement.

- S2-1 Cultural Responsiveness—3 hours
- S2-2 Aboriginal Children in Care—3 hours
- S2-3 Substance Misuse Awareness—3 hours
- S2-4 An Introduction to Fetal Alcohol and Neonatal Abstinence Syndromes—3 hours
- S2-5 Suicide Awareness— 5 hours

SOUTH Island Local News & Events

Foster Parent Coffee/Support Morning

Thursday, April 5th—9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Hostess: Karen Adams, 6752 Jedora Palce—652-0727

With on-site babysitting, you are free to enjoy this gathering where you can share, and get the support and answers you might need! All Foster Parents are always welcome!

Foster Parent/Support Coffee Morning

Thursday, April 26th —9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Hostess: Sandy Case, 2842 Hagel Rd, Tel 478-2782

- Come out and enjoy yourself with fellow Foster Parents who understand 'where you're coming from'.
- On-site babysitting is provided while you enjoy the conversations over a 'cuppa' and snacks.

ANNUAL Easter Egg Hunt & BBQ

**Saturday, April 7th—1 to 3pm
Goldstream Park Picnic Site**

We will provide hot dogs, munchies, crafts, face-painting, coffee, hot chocolate, juice boxes and a goody bag of Easter candy for everyone.

Open to everyone - foster children and their birth families, your natural children, friends, MCFD and FPSSS staff and their families are also welcome to attend.

Please remember to bring loonies or toonies for parking.

Have questions?
Please phone our Special Events Chairperson,
Mandy Weeks at 592-0471



Open Support Coffee Dates—Can you help?

If you would like to host a coffee/support morning on May 10th, 24th, or in the fall, please call Laura Shumard at 478-1973. We provide a paid babysitter and a \$25.00 honorarium to the hostess.

*Happy Easter! and please remember that
ALL our events are open to ALL foster parents!*

South Island Foster Parent Association

Annual General Meeting

**Tuesday, April 17th - 7:00-9:00pm
LANGFORD Fire Hall**

See page 9 for details...

Resource Team Meeting

Monday, April 16th —9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

West Shore MCFD Office,

345 Wale Road (off Goldstream just up from Colwood corners)

- Get the latest information that has to do with any changes that affect us in Fostering. The Resource Team set up these meetings to keep in touch and keep us informed! ALL Foster Parents are encouraged to attend.
- Free on-site babysitting is provided.

Infant & Safe Babies Caregivers South Island



**Thursday, April 12th—7 to 8:30 pm
FPSS Office—101-814 Goldstream Ave**

EVERYONE WELCOME!

**For more information please call
Dana Kinney at 294-7912**

Life Books Session

**Tuesday, April 24th
—7:00 'til 9:00 pm—**



Are you interested in gathering to work on life book projects? We are planning a work session for those who need some extra motivation or are looking for ideas.

FREE Deluxe Scrapbook for the first 6 foster parents to Register!

Call Dana at 294-7912 to Register

FPSS Offices: 101-814 Goldstream Ave



FASD Caregiver Support Group

Tuesday, April 10th
—10:00 to 11:30a.m.—
FPSSS Meeting Room
101-814 Goldstream Avenue

This is a great opportunity for caregivers to network, support and share strategies.

For more information please contact Dana at 294-7912

Teen Homes WANTED

If you know someone who just has a way with youth, please encourage them to consider fostering a teen.

We urgently need more youth homes.

**Call 294-7914 or
Email recruitment@fpsss.com**

FOSTER PARENTING



INFO SESSIONS

Foster Parenting Information Sessions

**Tuesday, April 24th 6:30 p.m.
Juan de Fuca Library Meeting Room
Island Hwy, Colwood**

If you know of friends, family, co-workers, or neighbours who would like to learn more about becoming foster parents, please tell them about our upcoming Foster Parenting Information Sessions.

P.S. If you would like to share your experiences at one of these sessions, please contact us!

To reserve a spot, call 294-7914 or email Erin Brulé, FPSS Recruitment Coordinator at recruitment@fpsss.com

One Hot Night!

South Island
Foster Parent Association

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Elections & Dessert Night

Tuesday, April 17th at 7:00 pm
Langford Fire Hall

Welcome to an evening featuring sizzling elections, a hot topic, Langford Firefighters, and heavenly desserts. This event will be held at the Langford Fire hall on the corner of Peatt Rd and Veterans Memorial Parkway.

We will have Langford Firefighters joining us to talk on smoke detectors, emergency fire evacuation, and give us many helpful tips on how to keep children safe in fires, how to get children out and how to help firefighters know where children are.

All foster parents are welcome and encouraged to come out and enjoy this informative and delicious evening.

**Call Dini Spring at 474-5652
for more information.**

Peer Support Service

Vicky Bridge, MA, RMFT

Friendly, non-judgmental, and confidential support to local caregivers regarding family issues, behavior management guidance, personal support, and debriefing.

Whether you need an objective sounding board from someone who understands what fostering is all about or someone to help you trouble shoot a crisis situation, you are invited to call me at

**661-3348
Monday to Friday,
8:00a.m. to 8:00p.m.
or email at
vbridge@shaw.ca**

Supported by the South Island Ministry for Children and Family Development Residential Resources, and the South Island Foster Parent Association

REMINDER to those who are registered for the Dr. Ross Greene Workshop
The Explosive Child: The Collaborative Problem-Solving Approach

Wednesday, April 18th—9:00am - 4:00pm
Please note: Registration starts at 8:00am.
The Victoria Conference Centre, 720 Douglas Street



CENTRAL Island Local News & Events

Cowichan Valley

Partnership Meeting

Wednesday, April 4th—10:30am to 2:00pm
MCFD Offices, 161 Fourth Avenue, Duncan

- Implementing New Caregiver Support Service Standards

Foster Parent Support Group

Tuesday, April 10th—9:30 to 11:30am

The Country Grocer, meeting room
Facilitated by: Michael Gintowt & Roslyn Pringle

- For more information please contact Roslyn at 743-6689

Foster Parent Coffee Morning

Monday, April 16th—10:00 to 12:00pm

The Country Grocer, meeting room

- Refreshments will be served
- Contact Sarah McDonald for more information at 390-9686

Parksville / Qualicum

Foster Parent Support Group

Family Resource Association
181 Sunningdale in Qualicum

- For dates and times, please contact Bonny at 954-4743

Non-Violent Crisis Training

Held in May or June for Parksville/Qualicum foster parents only.

- There are only 12 seats available.
- Contact Bonny at 954-4737, to get more information or to reserve your set.

Port Alberni

Partnership Meeting and Spring Luncheon

Thursday, April 5th—10:00am to 12:00pm
Alberni Valley United Church, Church St.

- Meet with other foster parents and ministry staff for networking, support and information in a relaxed, casual setting.
- **Refreshments and lunch will be served.**
- Come and meet your new area coordinators from Foster Parent Support Services Society—Laurie Chalmers & Sarah McDonald.

Port Alberni FP Support Group

Thursday, April 19th—9:30am to 12:00pm
The Alberni Valley United Church on Church St.

- Light Refreshments will be served and child-minding is available by calling Louise at 723-7960.
- Come and join us for some lively and informative conversation!
- Call Diane at 723-9779 or Louise at 723-7960 if you have any ideas for workshops - we welcome your input!

Nanaimo/Ladysmith

Emergency Preparedness Information Session

Tuesday, April 10th—10:00 to 11:30am
FPSS Office #2-6421 Applecross Rd.

Alexis Petersen will be presenting on Emergency Preparedness in the home.

Challenging Behaviors, Looking Beyond the Obvious

Thursday, April 12th—9:30 to 11:00 am
FPSS Office #2-6421 Applecross Rd.

Facilitator: Penny Mitchell

A chance for caregivers to meet with Penny to discuss strategies for working with children with challenging behaviors.



Infant & Safe Babies

Caregivers

Central Island Area

"Comfort Measures for Babies"

Add some tools to your tool belt! We'll learn carrying techniques, calming techniques, and demo a variety of infant carriers.

Nanaimo:

Tuesday, April 3rd—6:30-8:30pm

Tuesday, April 17th—9:30-11:30am

Cowichan Valley:

Tuesday, April 24th— 10am-12pm

To RSVP and for more information please contact Laurie Chalmers at 390-9686

Refreshments Provided

First Nations Cultural Training

Wednesday, April 18th—10:00 to 11:30am

FPSS Office #2-6421 Applecross Rd.

Presenter: Debbie Good, SW, Kwumut Lelum Child & Family Services.

Keeping Aboriginal children in care connected with their culture may sometimes be a challenge for us. Debbie will teach us ways to bring their culture into our home and to help these children have a strong connection to their roots.

- For more information contact Sarah at 390-9686.

Scrap Booking and Life Books

Wednesday, April 25th —10:00 to 11:30a.m.

FPSS Office, 6421 Applecross Rd.

- Come out and meet some friends, share ideas and enjoy a coffee. Scrap books will be provided **free to the first 6 foster parents**. Some supplies will also be provided for you.
- Contact Sarah to RSVP at 390-9686.

Nanaimo Partnership Circle

Thursday, April 26th—10:00am to 11:30am

FPSS Office #2-6421 Applecross Rd.

- Meet with other foster parents and ministry staff for networking, support and information in a relaxed, casual setting.
- Refreshments will be provided.

**Cowichan Valley
Foster Parent
SUPPORT GROUP**

**Tuesday, April 10th
9:30 to 11:30am
Country Grocer Meeting Room
Duncan**

**Facilitated by:
Michael Gintowt & Roslyn Pringle**

Feeling frustrated by challenging behaviours, feeling undervalued as a caregiver? Do you have questions that need answers or do you need a safe place to vent? Well, then this is the place for you!

New and experienced caregivers come together to share their stories and in doing so, realize they are not alone. This group is facilitated by a family therapist who will offer information on various disordered and challenging behaviours, but the most important work that is being done is foster parents building a network of support for themselves.

Life Book Session

**Wednesday, April 25th
—10:00 to 11:30am—
FPSS Meeting Room
Suite 2-6421 Applecross Road
Nanaimo—390-9686**

*Free Life Book Album
to first 6 participants!*

**You're
Invited!**

**Attention PORT ALBERNI
Foster Parents and Ministry Staff!**

**FP/MCFD Partnership Meeting and Spring Luncheon
Thursday, April 5th
—10:00am to 12:00pm—
Alberni Valley United Church, Church Street**

Take a few hours and come out to meet with other foster parents and ministry staff. Treat yourself to a little networking, peer support and information sharing in a relaxed and casual setting.



You're all invited to come and meet your new Area Coordinators from Foster Parent Support Services Society—Laurie Chalmers & Sarah McDonald.

A light lunch and refreshments will be served; just our way of saying thanks for coming!

**Please call Diane Burrows
at 923-7997
or Sarah McDonald
at 390-9686 for more
information.**

See You There!

UPPER Island News & Events

Comox Valley

Joint Training Committee Meeting

Monday, April 2nd—9:00 to 10:30am

MCFD office on 2455A Mansfield Drive, Courtenay

Come on out Foster Parents! The committee is currently organizing a workshop on “Working with Biological Families” which will represent the Foster Parent, Social Worker and the Biological Families perspective.

Please join us if you have suggestions you would like to see addressed at this workshop. If you are unable to attend please share them with me, Erica Beech, 286-0555/ fpsscr@telus.net

The “Shoot the Breeze” Foster Parent Coffee Group

Monday, April 16th— 11:00am to whenever we want to call it quits!

Potluck Lunch—Jill Beech’s House

Good times were had by all at the inaugural “Shoot the Breeze” gathering with delicious food, door prizes and commadore! This is a great chance to recharge your batteries with others who can relate and are willing to provide you with any support you may need. You deserve a break!

For Jill’s address please contact her at (250) 338-1261. We look forward to seeing you there and would enjoy seeing new some faces, so mark your calendar!

Foster Parent Meeting

Wednesday, April 11th—9:30am to 11:30am

Bill Moore Park in the new Lawn Bowling Building

Guest Speaker: Roger Kishi, Outreach/FASD Keyworker for CV. The FASD Key Worker position is a relatively new position in the Comox Valley (since September 2006). Roger will discuss what services he can provide for foster families including information and advice about services and supports (education, social services, financial resources, recreation, transportation, health, etc.) available to children with FASD and their families and how to access them.

There will also be an “open floor” opportunity for Foster Parent to ask questions and address fostering issues they wish to discuss as well as receive MCFD and FPSS Society up-dates. We always find the time to share some laughter too.

We’re looking for ways to make these meetings more interesting to Foster Parents and would appreciate any suggestions you may have. Please share your ideas with Erica, your area coordinator.

Campbell River

FASD Caregiver Support Meetings

Tuesday, April 3rd— 10:00am– 12:00pm

The Robron Centre, 740 Robron St

The Family Place Plus Room (A127)

All Foster Parents with foster children of all ages are welcomed to attend these new gatherings facilitated by Mary Catherine Bellamy, Campbell River FASD Coordinator, to support, learn and exchange parenting ideas for those caring for children with FASD.

- Please contact Mary Catherine at 286-0391 for further information.

Joint Education Meeting

Tuesday, April 3rd—9:00 to 10:30am

The MCFD office on 929 Ironwood Road

We’re always looking for Foster Parents who are available to share their training ideas and perspective with the Joint Education Committee which comprises of Foster Parents, Resources Social Worker, Behavioural Consultants and Upper Island Area Coordinator, Erica Beech. Call 286-0555 for more information.

Foster Parent/MCFD Partnership Meeting

Tuesday, April 10th— 11:00am to 1:00pm

MCFD Office on 929 Ironwood Road

You’re invited to join other Foster Parents, Social Workers, Behavioural Consultants and the Upper Island FPSSS Area Coordinator to discuss fostering issues and trends, MCFD team up-dates, FPSSS up-dates and local Foster Parent training and supports. It’s also an opportunity to connect with other Foster Parents and share your concerns too.

- For further information please contact Erica at 286-0555

Relief Caregiver List for Campbell River Foster Parents

(Not approved MCFD foster homes)

Heather Murphy has a growing list of people who are not approved MCFD foster homes willing to provide relief care for Foster Parents. This list is for information purposes only; therefore, the responsibility remains with the Foster Parent to use a thorough process that ensures the relief caregiver is capable of providing the required quality of care to the children in their care with the prior knowledge and approval of their Resource Social Worker as outlined in the Standards for Foster Homes. Please contact Heather at 923-6028 to access the list and find out the requirements the relief caregivers had to provide to be included on the list.



“Fostering Hope”

Foster parents Sue Schwarz and Jo-Lynn Pearson are compiling caregiver and child in care stories for a book called “**Fostering Hope**” to be used for the recruitment and retention of caregivers. If you are a caregiver or a child in care (including former) wishing to share your success stories about fostering or adoption, **please contact Sue at 923-8262 or Jo-Lynn at 287-2580 or email jochris6@telus.net with the subject line ‘stories’.**

UPPER Island Continued...

Campbell River Continued...



Safe Babies Caregivers Upper Island Area

Safe Babies Caregivers are invited to join in on the visit, support, learning and brainstorming information on caring for these children with unique gifts and challenges.

**Tuesday, April 17th
—10:30 a.m. 'til noon—
The Robron Centre, 740 Robron Street
The Family Place Plus Room (A127)
—Campbell River—**

Refreshments will be provided.
For more information please contact
Heather Murphy at 923-6028 or
Mary Catherine at 286-0391.

Fostering Challenging “Twens” & Teens Focus Group

Wednesday, April 18th— 12:30 to 2:30pm
C.R. Family Services Conference Room.

(This meeting is open only to foster parents and Gloria Jackson and Jenn Errico, Behavioural Consultants)

Foster Parents have expressed concerns about the high needs “twens” and teens placed in their homes in the recent past. Many Foster Parents dealing with these challenging placements are feeling isolated, feeling like their “hands are tied” and feeling more like a flophouse than a change agent in the lives of these struggling youth. Many believe that the services available to the youth themselves do not respond effectively to the youths’ diverse needs.

If you have had involvement with a youth who is at risk of becoming sexually exploited, has substance abuse issues, has undiagnosed mental health issues or is simply presenting you with behaviours that you feel overwhelmed by, we’d really like to hear your perspective and give you a chance to hear from others with similar experiences. A focus group is gathering to begin figuring out what the gaps in services are, and what steps need to be taken – for foster parents and for the youth. Refreshments provided. **Please contact Jenn Errico at 286-0611 for further information.**

North Island

Caregiver Support Service Standards Information Session

Wednesday, April 4th— 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
North Island College Room #106
Trustee Road, Port Hardy

**Facilitator: Terrena O’Connor,
MCFD Resource Social Worker**

These standards were developed to provide caregivers with continuous high quality services in promoting and enhancing:

- The safety and well-being of children in care.
- The development of collaborative plans to return a child to their family wherever possible.
- The stability and continuity of lifelong relationships for children in care.

This interactive orientation session will provide caregivers, social workers and community partners with an opportunity to review new and updated information regarding practice standards for caregiving.

**To register contact the
Port Hardy MCFD at (250) 949-8011**

MCFD/Foster Parent Partnership meeting

Wednesday, April 25th

The Port Hardy MCFD Boardroom

- All foster parents are welcomed to attend these monthly meetings between Foster Parents and the MCFD to openly discuss Foster Parent issues and concerns, Ministry up-dates, policies and how they affect you locally.
- **Please contact your Resource Social Worker at 949-8011 for the times.**

N.I. Foster Parent Association “Share and Care” Meeting

Wednesday, May 16th — 10:00 a.m. to Noon

- Take a break from your day to touch base with other Foster Parents to share your experiences, discuss what’s happening locally and visit.
- **Please contact Jackie Kervin at 949-7397 for the location of this meeting.**

The “Camp for Kids” Grants

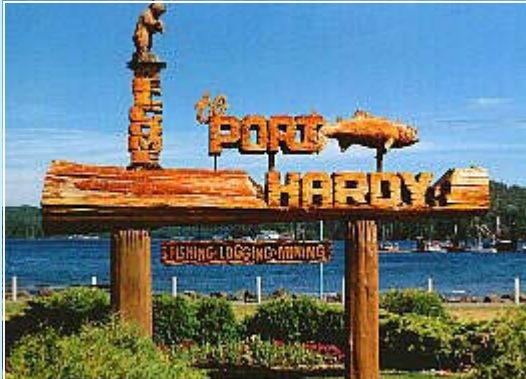
The “Camp for Kids” grants were established by the B.C. Federation of Foster Parent Associations (BCFFPA) to alleviate some of the costs Foster Parents encounter when sending their foster, adopted or birth children to camp (day, away and sport camps).

Foster Parents who are BCFFPA members sending children ages 6-19 years old to camp are eligible to apply for one of the 20 \$250.00 grants issued each year by submitting the application and supporting documentation **by April 30th, 2007.**

For more information on the “Camp for Kids” grants visit the BCFFPA website at



BC Foster Care Education Program is coming to North Island in the Spring of 2007...



—Port Hardys' Carved Town Sign—

The "little town that did" is soon to have an opportunity to "do it" again! Planning is underway for a delivery of the BCFCE Program in Port Hardy as soon as we have enough registrations and travel arrangements are worked out. You've been asking—and we plan to deliver!

Call (toll free) 1-888-922-8437 and let Emma know that you want to be included in the registration.

Last time over 70% of North Island Foster Parents showed up! Way to go! So come on out, finish the program, enter your name in the **Weekend Get-Away CONTEST Draw**—and who knows? ... maybe you'll win a door prize ... we plan to have lots!

NEW & Coming soon to CENTRAL & UPPER Island!

Advanced FASD Caregiver Certificate Training

Learn an EXCITING, EFFECTIVE framework that will meet your child's needs and reduce you own stress levels.

It is specifically designed to improve outcomes for children in care with FASD by providing caregivers with new strategies for parenting.

If you are interested call Dana Kinney at 1-888-922-8437 Toll Free



Every Day Heroes!

We believe foster parents are heroes everyday. We also believe that foster parents have super powers!

As a foster parent, you have the ability to offer a glimmer of the fostering world to our community. Only you are able to give an honest perspective of how fostering has changed your life.

That's powerful. Really powerful.

We are hoping some of you may be interested in using this super power to help out in our

"foster hope campaign".

If you have a tale to share, whether it be an encouraging story, a challenge you overcame, or a humorous anecdote, we want to hear from you!

All entries will be included in a draw for Dinner for Two including babysitting costs!!!

Please call Erin Brulé at 250.294.7914 or email recruitment@fpsss.com, she can interview you or you can prepare your own story.

LifeBooks: Every Foster Child Needs One

By Beth O'Malley M.Ed

Article reprinted with permission from Central Okanagan Foster Parent Association

Foster children so often have that sense of missing pieces. I should know. I spent my first 5 months in foster care, before being adopted. Information is gold to any child separated from their biological family. Every tiny piece is precious, whether it's a photo or quote from a child's first foster parent.

LifeBooks help put all the pieces together in a way that helps a child make sense and ultimately feel good about his or her history.

"...My second foster family reported that I used to make these funny lip smacking sounds as a baby...and that the entire family would watch and laugh. This is one of my favorite pieces of information, discovered in my foster care notes..." (Beth O'Malley)

This story never appeared in any LifeBook. Instead, my foster parents took the time to share it with my social worker. She found the time to write it in her case notes. The adoption agency then managed to hold onto my case record for 35 years. And the post adoption social worker thought I might find the anecdote amusing.

Talk about teamwork. I'm grateful that every person followed through, giving me this "baby picture" in words that I carry in my heart today.

I'm convinced that my entire life would have been different if I had been given a LifeBook. The absence of information on my birth family meant I had nothing with which to connect with my history. A blank screen. A feeling of floating, or that numb sensation that so many foster children later describe.

"...LifeBooks remain important to my children...They show that their biological connections are still important...They will never be forgotten..." (Michelle Braxton, single foster/adoptive mother of seven)

Imagine what would be important to you 10 or 20 years later in life. Including school papers, awards, copies of report cards, the birth certificate, locks of baby hair, baby teeth, and mementos increases a LifeBook's value. These volumes will fill in gaps, with words, art work, and photos, if available. Your words can create pictures if none are available.

Speaking of pictures, can you imagine going through life without ever knowing what your mother or father looked like? Foster parents often have the unique opportunity to get photos of birth parents. Foster mother Sandy Parker shared the following story:

"...I took three-year-old David for a visit with his birth mother while she was incarcerated. They didn't allow cameras inside the facility. Shortly thereafter she was released, overdosed, and died. So I learned a lesson. At the next visit with a different child I took pictures...His birth mother also died abruptly, but Sam will know what she looked like!"



One foster parent recently lamented that with five foster children, one being medically involved, coupled with caring for an aging parent and her 150-pound dog, she didn't always have the time to complete her children's LifeBooks. It is a tall order.

A team approach to LifeBooks may be the wave of the future. If foster parents can capture a few pages of the child's life, perhaps grabbing a picture of the birth family (regardless of the goal), then the LifeBook has begun. Social workers, CASA volunteers, and/or therapists can add in additional information. Don't forget the

birth certificate, which children in foster situations love at any age.

Here are a few suggestions from Dr. Vera Fahlberg, national adoption expert:

- ★ start with the child's birth
- ★ always discuss the birth mother and birth father (even if you know nothing, *say* you don't know)
- ★ talk about the reason for separation from the biological family

LifeBooks help reduce magical thinking and fantasy. This frees up a foster child to pay better attention in school or be more available to focus on developing painting skills or playing soccer.

LifeBooks help answer questions, increase self-esteem, and teach children the truth. They are the ultimate teaching tool. LifeBook facts become "memory pegs," says Mimi Robins, originator of LifeBooks in Massachusetts. If children are given the basics, the essentials, then hours of therapy later in life can be saved.

Children need to feel proud of their strengths and those of their birth parents. A LifeBook page on birth parents really helps in those tough adolescent years when identity issues begin to peak.

Foster care periods are often the only time when birth parents are usually available to answer questions and discuss talents and hobbies.

The ultimate *magic* to creating a treasured LifeBook is to start it, work on it with a child, and give it to him or her, or to the social worker, when the child moves on. Even if it only has five pages, it is tangible proof to that child that s/he is precious enough to deserve this treasure.

By Beth O'Malley, M.Ed., former foster baby, new adoptive Mom, author, sign up for free lifebook tips at www.adoptionlifebooks.com or lifebooks@earthlink.net.
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FPSS Foster Parent Support Services Society

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Support Worker Team	Jill Beech	338-1261	338-1261	gildabeech@shaw.ca



Foster Parent Support Services Society

MISSION STATEMENT:

The FPSS Society is a Grass Roots organization committed to providing meaningful and accessible support, education and networking services which will continually enhance the skills and abilities of foster parents to deliver the best care possible to the children in their homes.

Funding: FPSS Society is a Registered non-profit organization that is 100% funded through contracts with the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development to deliver the 53-hour mandatory BC Foster Care Education Program, support services, networking, communication and on-going training opportunities for the foster parents of the Vancouver Island Region.

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Fax: 1-250-598-8810

Toll Free: 1-888-922-8437

Website: www.fpsss.com

Hours of Operation:

Monday to Friday: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

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svicoordinator@fpsss.com

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**Suite 2- 6421 Applecross Rd
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cicoordinator@fpsss.com

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**106 - 301 Dogwood St
CAMPBELL RV V9W 2Y1**

Area Coordinator:

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250-286-0555

Fax: 286-0545

fpsscr@telus.net



We invite any letters or comments. Please ensure your submissions are forwarded by the 5th of the month.

**How are we doing? Do you have Comments? Suggestions?
Queries? Newsletter Submissions?**

Please feel free to contact us anytime at Toll Free 1-888-922-8437

Victoria telephone: 1-250-598-1500 fax: 1-250-598-8810

Nanaimo telephone: 1-250-390-9686 fax: 1-250-390-9687

Campbell River telephone: 1-250-286-0555 fax: 1-250-286-0545

or email us at admin@fpsss.com