

Saskatchewan Foster Families Association

Advisor

Volume 3, Issue 1

Spring 2008

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Photo by: Beau Brewer



Message from the President of SFFA: Tracie Gilchrist



Above: Tracie Gilchrist

Hello fellow foster parents! It is hard to believe how quickly the winter has passed. With Spring upon us, the 2008 Provincial Annual General Meeting is just around the corner. Please plan on attending as this platform is a chance for you, our members to discuss and bring forth any

concerns or bouquets you would like addressed. The date to mark on your calendar is June 13th, 2008, 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm. Saskatoon Inn, Saskatoon, SK. The SFFA staff have also been working diligently on the conference and the Honoring and Caring banquet which will be held June 14th. I know you won't be disappointed, plan on attending this also.

Our association has seen many positive changes in the past year, some of these changes have been realized as a direct result of membership input. The SFFA Board of Directors have been striving for excellence and have almost completed a total turnover to a governance board. It takes time to do the necessary changes; I would like to thank the Board of Directors

and Executive Director, Deb Davies and her staff, for their dedication towards Saskatchewan Foster Families Association. Most importantly, I want to thank our entire membership for allowing the Board of Directors to realize the dream of a governance style board.

The Operational Review conducted on the SFFA is complete. Bob Quesnel, Paul Bunz and myself sat on the steering committee for this review as well as 4 members from the Ministry of Social Services. As a steering committee, we have accepted all recommendations and implementations for change. For our association, this review has been a very positive experience. It is always good to take a step back and examine the way we do business. I look forward to seeing you in Saskatoon June 13th & 14th.

**MOVING? Please contact the SFFA Toll Free: 1-888-276-2880
to continue receiving important updates and info!**

Executive Director: Deb Davies

Spring has arrived! On the other hand, shall I say we're hoping for the snow to be gone permanently...well at least until next winter.

The provincial office continues to be actively supporting foster families across the province. I want to emphasize the continued number of foster home investigations. Through my 25 years of fostering experience, I know the importance of safeguarding ourselves. Please take every necessary measure to safeguard you and your family.

Although fostering is a very challenging but a very rewarding venture, we always need reminders to take care of our families and ourselves.

In this year's provincial budget the government of Saskatchewan allotted a 2% cost of living increase effective April 1, 2008 to the basic maintenance. Over the past several months, I have had the opportunity to meet with Minister Harpauer and consider her very committed to providing the needed supports to

the vulnerable children and families of our province.

In June, the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association and the Ministry of Social Services will be hosting this year's provincial conference "Supporting Caring Families: Meeting the challenges" and also honouring foster families from across the province that have reached their 20 year milestone. I hope to see many of you at this year's Provincial Annual General Meeting, Conference, Honouring, and Caring Banquet.

Ministry of Social Services News

Hello, foster families. I would like to thank your Provincial association for allowing me the opportunity to communicate with you through this newsletter.

There are some new policies that I would like to bring to your attention. The first is the new policy prohibiting smoking in foster homes. This policy is effective immediately and can be found in the Children's Services Manual, Chapter 4.4.4. You should have received a letter with a copy of the new policy attached. This policy is supported by your association, and is being introduced in several other provinces and states. We hope that this will not create hardship for our foster families, and we ask and anticipate that you will co-operate and abide by the new policy.

I would also like to draw your attention to some changes that have been made to the Conflict Resolution policy in the Children's Services Manual. The new policy separates the conflict resolution and appeal processes, so that we now have two distinct sections: Chapter 4.4.12, "Conflict Resolution Between Foster Parents and Ministry Staff" and Chapter 4.4.13,

Smoking in Foster Homes

Protecting children from harm includes ensuring that they are not exposed to second hand smoke.

Exposure to second hand smoke is detrimental to the health and development of children. Tobacco smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals. Many are known to be harmful substances, including tar, nicotine, carbon monoxide, benzene, formaldehyde and hydrogen cyanide. More than 50 of these chemicals cause cancer.

Infants and children are particularly vulnerable to tobacco smoke because their lungs and respiratory tracts are still growing. Children have a higher metabolism and breathe faster and can therefore absorb higher amounts of smoke than adults.

Research shows that tobacco smoke can trigger colds, asthma, bronchitis, ear infections, allergies, pneumonia, and breathing problems generally. There is strong evidence that infants exposed to second hand smoke are at greater risk of dying from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Policy

Every child placed in a foster home will be provided with a safe, healthy and nurturing environment. Children in foster homes will not be exposed to second hand smoke.

Standards

Foster families must provide non-smoking environments for children placed in their homes.

"Appeal Process Between Foster Parents and Ministry Staff". This new policy places greater emphasis on the conflict resolution process at the regional level, allowing for third party mediation. Regional Directors' decisions are final for all matters, except foster home closures, which may be appealed. The appeal process is also changed in that the appeal is heard by an independent adjudicator, who makes a recommendation to the Executive Director of Child and Family Services for a final decision.

Please don't hesitate to call your social worker or myself if you have questions about either of these new policies.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the important work that you do every day! Have a great spring and summer.

Eva Carpenter

Senior Program Consultant, Foster Care

Child and Family Services Division

Telephone: (306) 787-3682



- Smoking will **not** be permitted in vehicles which are used to transport children.
- Smoking will **not** be permitted in a foster home where a child is placed.
- Foster parents will not permit children in care of the Minister to smoke in their homes or vehicles.
Foster parents will not purchase tobacco products for children in care of the Minister.

Practice Guidelines

1. This policy regarding smoking in foster homes will result in all foster homes becoming smoke-free homes. **Smoke free foster homes: smoking is not permitted in the caregiver's home or vehicle.**
2. In order to further ensure that vulnerable children are not exposed to residual tobacco smoke, it is recommended that all infants and children under the age of two, all medically fragile children, and all children with allergies and/or asthma be placed in foster homes where all caregivers and others who reside in the home **do not smoke at any time.**
3. This policy is not intended to restrict the spiritual use of tobacco, sage or sweetgrass.
4. For those foster families who would like to stop smoking, the ministry will cover costs associated with attendance at smoking cessation programs.

New Conflict Resolution Policy

4.0 OUT-OF-HOME CARE RESOURCES

4.4.12 Conflict Resolution between Foster Parents and Department Staff Policy

In situations where disagreement arises between department staff and foster parents, every effort shall be undertaken to resolve the issue in a mutually satisfactory manner, in accordance with the presented procedures.

4.4.12 Conflict Resolution between Foster Parents and Department Staff

Standards

1. The conflict resolution process, established jointly by the department and the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association, shall apply where a foster parent disagrees with a department decision.
2. Regional department staff shall work cooperatively with the staff of the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association, whose duties include providing support and assistance to foster parents during conflict resolution.
3. Foster parents are entitled to “due process” at all times, but especially when there are disagreements between the foster parents and the department.

4.4.12 Conflict Resolution between Foster Parents and Department Staff

Procedures

This policy is intended to ensure prompt and early resolution of issues at the local level wherever possible, and that foster parents receive support and assistance during the conflict resolution process.

When conflict arises between foster parents and department staff, the foster parents must be advised of the support available through the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association, who will assign a family support worker to provide support to foster families during this process.

At any point in the process, the foster parents and the Department, as mutually agreed upon, may request the involvement of Saskatchewan Justice to provide dispute resolution services in an effort to satisfactorily resolve the disagreement.

1. When foster parents disagree with a decision made by a caseworker, they will notify the caseworker, who will arrange a meeting with the foster parents to discuss their concerns within 5 working days.



2. Following the meeting, if the foster parents believe the matter has not been resolved, they may notify the caseworker, who advises his/her **supervisor**. The supervisor contacts the foster parents to discuss the matter and will arrange a meeting with all parties in an effort to come to a mutually satisfactory resolution. The meeting takes place within five days of the supervisor's contact with the foster parents.
3. If there is not a satisfactory resolution, the foster parents may request to meet with the **Regional Director** or designate.
4. The **Regional Director** or designate arranges a meeting with the foster parents and may include the caseworker and supervisor if appropriate. The foster parents may invite their Saskatchewan Foster Families Association support person. The meeting will be held within 15 working days after receiving the request, or as soon as practicable.
5. Following the meeting, the **Regional Director** or designate should meet with his/her worker and supervisor, arrive at a decision, and advise the foster parents in writing of the decision within five working days.

In those situations involving decisions to close the foster home, if the matter is not satisfactorily concluded at the regional level through the conflict resolution process, the foster parents may contact the **Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association** to invoke the appeal process.

4.4.12 Conflict Resolution between Foster Parents and Department Staff

Practice Guidelines

1. Mediation or dispute resolution costs incurred in the Conflict Resolution process will be billed directly to

the Senior Program Consultant for Foster Care, Central Office, 1920 Broad St. Regina.

1. Appeals shall be undertaken only in decisions to close a foster home. All other disagreements shall be resolved through the Conflict resolution process at the regional level. The Regional Director or designate's decision will be final in these matters.

4.4.13 Appeal Process between Foster Parents and Department Staff

Policy

In situations where a foster parent disagrees with a decision to close their foster home, the foster parent may invoke the appeal process.

4.4.13 Appeal Process between Foster Parents and Department Staff

Standards

1. The appeal process shall apply where a foster parent disagrees with a department decision to close their foster home and efforts to resolve the matter through the conflict resolution process have been unsuccessful.
2. The Senior Program Consultant, Foster Care shall work with the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association to select independent adjudicators who will hear the appeal, record the information, and present a recommendation to the department.

4.4.13 Appeal Process between Foster Parents and Department Staff

Procedures

1. Following notification of an appeal, the **Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association** immediately informs the appropriate **Regional Director** and the **Senior Program Consultant, Foster Care** to advise of the appeal.
2. The Senior Program Consultant arranges a meeting with an independent adjudicator, who is appointed and contracted by the department to hear the appeal.
3. The adjudicator conducts his or her review into the concerns by gathering information from all sources, including the foster parents, department staff, SFFA staff, and the Senior Program Consultant for Foster Care.
4. When the review is concluded, the adjudicator records the information he or she has gathered and makes a recommendation to the Executive Director, Child and Family Services.

5. The Executive Director, Child and Family Services, reviews the information and makes a final decision, based on the recommendation of the adjudicator.
6. A letter documenting the final decision is forwarded to the foster parents from the Executive Director, Child and Family Services, and copied to the Regional Director and to the Executive Director of the SFFA.

4.4.13 Appeal Process between Foster Parents and Department Staff

Practice Guidelines

1. Independent adjudicators will be jointly selected by the Senior Program Consultant, Foster Care and the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association for each appeal. The adjudicator must have some knowledge and/or experience in the foster care program.
2. The costs incurred by independent adjudicators will be billed directly to the Senior Program Consultant for Foster Care, Central Office, 1920 Broad St., Regina.

Information provided by the Children's Service Manual 4.4.12-4.4.13

PRIDE Cultural Component



PRIDE Cultural Component & EOFTU has been working with First Nations Elders developing and establishing protocols that reflect the Cree, Dakota, Dene, Saulteaux nations and the Métis worldview. Protocols will be incorporated into the Core Module 7. It is very exciting to work on the cultural component that reflects First Nations and the Métis in Saskatchewan. We hope to have the draft of the protocols by March, 31 2008.

Elders bring a wealth of knowledge and history to the table. We appreciate their participation for without their input this huge endeavour would not be possible.
Enola Kayseas

Mileage Rate Change: Mileage Effective April 1, 2008 the mileage rate has changed from \$0.3961 to \$0.3906. (North of 54th x \$0.4266/km to x \$0.4206/km).

Dog Bite Prevention

By Sally Cleland

The original article on Dog Bite Prevention printed in the Winter Edition of the Advisor mentioned that the Be a Tree™ Program and the A, B, Cs of Dog Safety are based on understanding dog body language. How can we “speak and read dog” to prevent dog bites?

Dogs communicate with every part of their bodies and we humans need to interpret their behavior from the dog’s perspective not from a human perspective. Likewise, dogs interpret human body language and behavior according to how they interpret another dog’s behavior. Remember that dogs are descendents of wolves; and dogs “view” the human members of the household as members of their “pack” and their “packs” are based on a dominant/submissive hierarchy. The humans in the household need to be “top” dog or the dog will be “top” dog. Let’s consider some of the messages dogs send with various body parts: (The following photographs show examples of dog body language which tells us whether it is safe or not to interact with them.)

A calm or happy dog usually has its mouth open, often with its tongue hanging out and is panting; an anxious, worried or stressed dog or one that is focused elsewhere



Above: A dog with mouth open, tongue out = happy/safe; dog with mouth closed = attention is elsewhere, not safe

A calm or happy dog usually has “soft”, relaxed eyes; an anxious, worried or stressed dog often exhibits a ½ moon shape to the whites of its eyes. This is a very significant warning sign that a bite may be eminent.



Above: Resource guarding i.e. dog "protecting" his toy -note half moon shape to whites of his eyes =unsafe; mouth open and panting = safe

A calm or happy dog usually holds its tail in a relaxed, natural position (usually out behind it); a stressed or hostile dog generally holds its tail straight up in the air; a worried, frightened dog usually holds its tail between its legs (and frightened dogs often bite out of fear).

Dogs can exhibit displacement behaviors that are “bite inhibition” behaviors or what some experts refer to as “calming” behaviors. These are the dog’s attempt to NOT bite. Several of the warning signs are:

1. Lip licking (not after eating or drinking)
2. Head turns/eye turns (turning away from the person)
3. Yawning (not when tired)
4. Slow movements/stopping



Above: -A dog with tail straight up in the air, attention definitely elsewhere = unsafe; tail relaxed = safe

One very important human behavior that is VERY dangerous, especially for children, is hugging and kissing dogs.

The photo to the right demonstrates two significant warning signs that the dog is not comfortable with the child's hug and that a bite may be eminent. These are the half moon shape of the whites of the eyes and head turning away from the child. Recognizing warning signs can prevent dog bite injuries. The dog certainly has a "forlorn" look about him and doesn't look "happy" about the girl giving him a hug.

Dogs interpret a human hugging them as an intimidating gesture because in "dog terms", when dogs fight with each other, they "go after" each other's head and neck; he who gets a hold of the other's head and neck "wins". Thus, when a human has their arms around a dog's neck, this can appear as a threat to the dog. You can also see that the girl's face, head and neck are in a very vulnerable location relative to the dog's mouth should he bite – a dog bite injury to the face, head and neck is the number one reason children need plastic surgery. Children need to be taught that dogs don't like hugs and kisses.

Doggone Safe, the organization that developed the Be a Tree™ Program outlined previously, has recently launched an on-line Dog Body Language Course. This first course is aimed at adults especially parents (including foster parents), social workers, day care providers, etc. and it will be a precursor to additional courses on dog bite

prevention; it is probable that another on-line dog body language course will be launched for children so they can be "Dog Detectives". Details can be found at www.doggonesafe.com or www.be-a-tree.com.

"If you talk to the animals they will talk with you and you will know each other. If you do not talk to them you will not know them and what you do not know, you will fear. What one fears, one destroys."
- Chief Dan George

Sally Cleland is available for training seminars. If there are any local committees that are interested in receiving training on Dog Bite Prevention please contact Jolyn Sloan at jolyns.sffa@sasktel.net, (306) 975-1585 or 1-888-276-2880.



Above: A picture of what children should NOT do. Dogs Don't Like Hugs and Kisses.

Discounts for Foster Families

Please bring in your membership card to the businesses below and receive great discounts.

If you know of a local business to request discounts from please call Jolyn Sloan for more information: 1-306-975-1580 and we will provide you with a letter you can present to the business which will then be followed up by the SFFA.



Kids Trading Company is offering foster families a 10% off discount for everything in the store. Show your membership card at time of purchase. (Regina)
<http://www.kidstradingcompany.ca>



Payless is offering foster families a 15% off all regular priced merchandise for 2008. The discount cannot be used in conjunction with any other promotion or discount. You must show your membership card at time of purchase.



ICI paints offers 30% off paint and 20% percent off brushes and rollers. Bring your membership card in and the discount account is under Saskatchewan Foster Families. The account is available all across Saskatchewan.



Saskatoon location) Standard rooms: 89.95 for single/double. This rate is subject to availability. Group conference rates (10 rooms or more) can be negotiated at the time of booking. If you have trouble booking a room, please call Alana at 978-6520.



(Saskatoon Location) When foster families purchase a NEW membership at Costco, you can receive a \$10.00 Gift card. This is not available for membership renewals. Please contact Debbie Oberhammer at 933-4262 if you are interested in this offer.



Saskatoon: contact Randy King or Ken Collier and they will give you contract pricing. Make an appointment with Randy and the process will go more quickly. 244-1400

Prince Albert.: Contact Heith Olmstead for contract pricing. 763-1775

Regina: Contact Roger Martin for contract pricing. 924-2020

Moose Jaw: Contact Ron Morin for contract pricing 692-9520

North Battleford: Contact Tim or Chris for contract pricing. 446-3433

Uncle Ed's Saskatoon: Talk to Bernie or Manfred and they will give



Reminder to all foster parents to respect confidentiality of all information regarding a child, the child's family, and his/her background as required by The Child and Services Act, Section 74. This includes posting pictures and information on the internet.

Provincial Annual General Meeting

Saskatoon Inn ~ 2002 Airport Drive

Canadian Room

June 13, 2008

12:30 PM Registration

1:15 PM PAGM

Supporting Caring Families; Meeting the Challenges Conference

June 13-14, 2008

Saskatoon Inn ~ 2002 Airport Drive

Friday June 13th, 2008

6:30pm-7:30pm Registration

7:30pm Fashion Show & Social

Saturday June 14th, 2008

7:30 AM– 8:30 AM Registration

8:35 AM– 3:45 PM Conference

6:00 PM Cocktails

6:30 PM Honouring and Caring Banquet



A Poem or Two

These two poems were written by an experienced foster parent after attending a few modules on PRIDE. Many parents came into the training because they felt they had to, but after attending a few modules, they enjoyed the program and were excited to continue. Here are two poems Eileen Robb wrote after participating in the PRIDE training.

Working as a Team

I believe one needs to be honest and fair
Be concerned...show love and care.
Whether it's work...or if its play
Be kind to others...every day
We need company and we need friends
Forgiving...sure makes amends
Many times one gets carried away
Our minds go adrift...swing and sway
Say and do things we didn't really mean
Makes for an unsightly...uncaring scene
So stay on track...show concern and care
If you need help...M.O.S.S. is right there
Ask for guidance at any length
Teamwork and support will give you more strength



I Thought I Knew the Answers

I thought I knew the answers- when I was just sixteen
And simply couldn't wait to grace- the intellectual scene

I thought I knew the answers- when I was twenty-one
But found life's question marks- had only just begun

I thought I knew the answers- when I got to thirty-three
But soon realized that fate had played- some funny tricks on me

I thought I knew the answers- but hasten to recall
As time went by- it seemed that I- just didn't have them all

Now that I am seventy- I think it's safe to say
Experience can help- but still- I'm learning every day

Eileen Robb (Nipawin)

Canadian Foster Family Association Annual Poster Contest

Who can enter:

All children and youth living in foster homes (including the natural children/youth of foster homes) between the ages of 2-19

Categories:

Bursaries will be awarded in all categories.

2-6 7-12 13-19

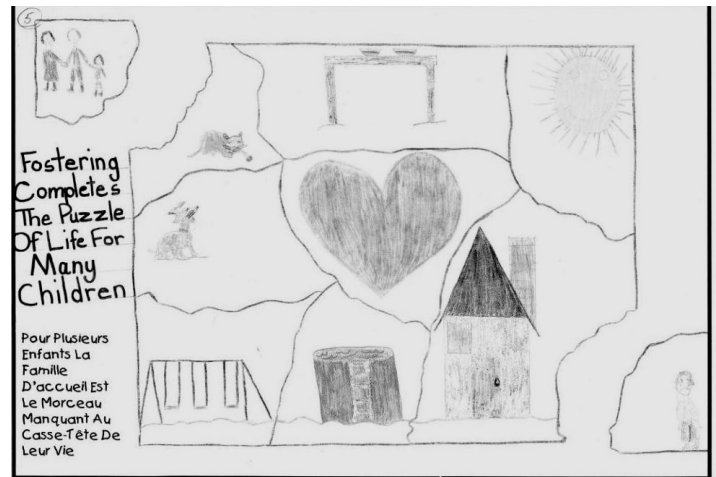
When and where the posters will be judged:

The winning posters from each Province/Territory will be delivered to the CFFA Poster Contest Chairperson at the Annual CFFA symposium, no later than the beginning of the Annual General Meeting in Manitoba (Sunday May 25, 2008). Posters will be judged by the Directors during the Symposium.

Guidelines for Posters:

The following MUST be followed as this will be taken into consideration in the event of a tie.

- The poster shall measure approximately 57 cm (22.5 inches) by 36 cm (14.5 inches). This is one half of a bristle board.
- The printed name, address, phone number, and interpretation shall be on the BACK of the poster. This information shall also be printed on a separate piece of paper attached to the BACK of



Above and below: Winners of last year's poster contest

- The words "Foster Family Week" and/or "Third week in October" or any identification of the child/youth, SHALL NOT be written on the front of the poster. A caption or other words of the child's or youth's are welcome.
- The first and second place winners from each category shall be eligible for the CFFA judging.
- Any submissions/entries for the Poster Contest that do not follow the stated guidelines will not be eligible for the competition and will be excluded from the judging.

Please note:

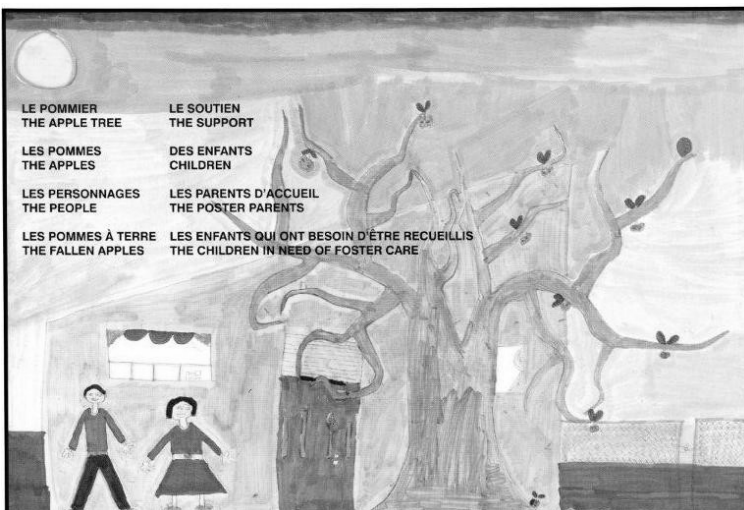
Upon receipt, all posters become the property of the CFFA, and may be used for CFFA purposes. The CFFA reserves the right to reduce the number of colors printed in the final poster to meet CFFA budgetary constraints. Mail or drop off your poster (with information on the back of the poster) **before May 20th!** Mail to:

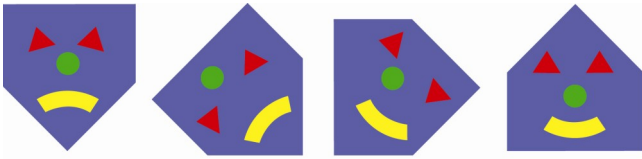
Saskatchewan Foster Families Association

Re: Coloring Contest

231 4th Ave South

Saskatoon, SK S7K 1N1





Saskatchewan Foster Families Association Support Staff

SASKATCHEWAN FOSTER FAMILIES ASSOCIATION INC.

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