

# Advisor

SPRING 2023

**Upcoming AGM**

*Just for Foster Dads*

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**Reactive Attachment Disorder**

**Be Sun Safe**

*Post Secondary  
FUNDING*

**Advocate for Children & Youth**

Monthly Maintenance Schedule

**Good Therapy Pets**

**Scavenger Hunt**



SASKATCHEWAN  
FOSTER FAMILIES

[www.saskfosterfamilies.ca](http://www.saskfosterfamilies.ca)

# Advisor

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## OUR MISSION

The Saskatchewan Foster Families Association exists to support and encourage Foster families through education and advocacy, helping create healthy homes, positive environments, and brighter futures for children and youth across the province.

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# 2023-24 Child and Family Program Monthly Maintenance Payment Dates

Monthly Maintenance Schedule applies to **Regular Foster Care, Extended Family Care (Person of Sufficient Interest, Place of Safety and Alternative Care) and Assisted Adoption** monthly maintenance.

Month Being Paid	Date Maintenance Cheques released from Linkin -Mailed/ *Direct Deposit	Date Youth Allowance Cheques released from Linkin - Mailed/ *Direct Deposit
December 2022	January 4, 2023	November 25, 2022
January 2023	February 2, 2023	December 19, 2022
February 2023	March 2, 2023	January 26, 2023
March 2023	April 4, 2023	February 23, 2023
April 2023	May 2, 2023	March 28, 2023
May 2023	June 2, 2023	April 25, 2023
June 2023	July 5, 2023	May 26, 2023
July 2023	August 2, 2023	June 27, 2023
August 2023	September 5, 2023	July 26, 2023
September 2023	October 3, 2023	August 28, 2023
October 2023	November 2, 2023	September 26, 2023
November 2023	December 4, 2023	October 26, 2023
December 2023	January 3, 2024	November 27, 2023
January 2024	February 2, 2024	December 19, 2023

**\* IMPORTANT NOTE:** *If using direct deposit, it may take up to three additional days before the funds are deposited in your bank account depending on your Financial Institution.*



# Accessing Post-Secondary Funding for Children in Care

The ministry may enter into an agreement to extend child in care services to a permanent ward if they are between the age of 18 and 21 years of age; is continuing their education; or requires assistance or training to enable them to continue their education or obtain employment. This would all be discussed with the child and their MSS worker in the year prior to the child turning 18.

Further, the University of Saskatchewan has a *Saskatchewan Youth from Care Bursary* (5 awarded). The value of each award will be up to \$20,000 and which will comprise the following:

- Regular Session (Fall and Winter terms) tuition and student fees
- Required books
- Residence and meal plan
- Laptop bundle
- Cash stipend for personal needs (\$125/month for 8 months)

The University of Regina offers a *Former Youth From Care Access Tuition Entrance Bursary* (20 awarded).

This bursary is available to former youth in/from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services or a Saskatchewan First Nation's Child and Family Services Agency and covers the cost of tuition and fees for up to two semesters.

- \$1,500.00 (\$1,000 for tuition, \$500 for books/food)



Visit this link for more information on post secondary funding available at the University of Saskatchewan.  
<https://students.usask.ca/money/awards/undergraduate-awards.php?award=302257CS01>

## A • N • N • O • U • N • C • E • M • E • N • T

The SFFA's upcoming Annual General Meeting will be held *virtually*.



**AGM**  
June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023

*Please watch for further details.*

## Simplicity Counselling Services

Warman, SK

Deborah Mooney  
BSW, RSW, SEP

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# Just for Foster Dads

by Dr. John N. DeGarmo

Without a doubt, fathers are just as important to the nurturing and development of a child in foster care as a mother. Yet, much research has shown that the love of a father is different than that of a mother. Leading child psychologist Erik Erikson stated that a father's love and a mother's love are quite different, indeed, when he said that fathers "love more dangerously" because their love is more "expectant, more instrumental" than a mother's love." To be sure, successful foster fathers, or foster dads, recognize that they need to utilize different abilities, skills, and resources when working with children in foster care.

The placement of a child into your foster home is a life changing

experience for a foster child. Placement disruption is the term used when a child is removed from a home and placed into the custody of a child welfare

“

***This may be the only positive example of a loving father that the foster child may ever have.***

agency, and thus into a foster home. For many, it is a frightening time, as the fear of the unknown can quickly overwhelm a child. Others are filled with anger, as they emotionally reject the idea

of being separated from their family members. Feelings of guilt may also arise within the foster child, as the child may believe that he or she may have had something to do with the separation from the birth and/or foster family. Some children experience self doubt, as they feel that they simply did not deserve to stay with their family. For all, it is a traumatic experience that will forever alter the lives of foster children.

As a foster dad, it is important to properly prepare for the child's arrival beforehand, if possible. While there are certainly those times when you do not get much, if any notice before a child is placed in your home, as a phone call might only give you a few moments notice. Yet, if

you do have time, try to get as much background information as you possibly can about the child in foster care that is being placed into your home, and into your family. Perhaps the most important thing you can do to prepare for the arrival of a foster child is to educate yourself with as much background information and history as you can about the child. Do not be concerned if you have a large number of questions for your caseworker when you are first approached about a placement of a child in your house. While the caseworker may not have all the answers, you will find valuable information by asking.

After all, the more information you have, the better prepared you are to help meet the child's needs. Some questions to consider include:

- How old is the child?
- Why is the child in care?
- How long might the child stay with you?
- Will the child need day care supervision?
- Does the child have any learning disabilities or special needs of any kind?
- Does the child have any anger management or extreme emotional issues that you need to be aware of?
- Is this the first time the child has been in foster care?
- Is the child's medical shots up to date? Are there any medical concerns?
- Is the child from the same town? Does the child need to be enrolled in your local school system?
- Does the child have clothes? Will you need to buy diapers and baby wipes?

## Role Model

As a foster dad, it is important that you embrace being a role model for your foster child. Indeed, you may very likely be the first positive role model the child has had in his life. So many children come into foster care from broken homes and broken families, suffering from neglect, abuse, and abandonment. For thousands of these children, their concept of a loving parent has been twisted, distorted, and perverted by the abuses and experiences they previously had before moving into your home. For some children, you will be the first father figure in their lives, while others will compare you to the father or father figure that they were living with previously. Whatever the situation, these children will be watching your every move and every action, and listening to your every word as they learn from you what a loving and caring father is supposed to be like. You are this example; you need to be that loving and caring father for them.

## Duties and Responsibilities

For many years, the perception of the stereotypical father figure was that of breadwinner and disciplinarian. The father would go to work during the day, come home after a long day at work to a cooked meal by his wife, place his feet up on the couch after dinner, read the paper and watch the evening news. Along with this, he might dole out some discipline to the unruly child in the home, all the while leaving the housework and child raising to the mother in the home. Today's foster fathers must be much more

involved in all areas of child care, not only for the benefit of the foster child, but for the benefit of all who live in the home, as well as the marriage, itself. After all, a marriage is a partnership, and those partnerships that share the responsibilities in a 50-50 ratio are the ones that are the healthiest and strongest.

Children begin to learn how to form healthy and positive relationships with others during infancy. Sadly, for many children in foster care, these opportunities did not come when they were babies, and as a result, the child in care struggles greatly when trying to form a healthy relationship with another. When a baby or infant is placed into a foster home, foster dads should help with the feeding of the baby. The time spent with a baby while feeding it is often instrumental in good mental health, as it can be a time of laughter and joy, sharing fun moments over a bowl of baby food, or while holding a child in one arm and a bottle in the other. Indeed, babies and infants learn about trust as they are nurtured during this time. Dinner time and/or bottle time can be instrumental in helping a foster infant develop feelings of trust and love, and a foster father can help to lead the way in this. Furthermore, nothing spells love to a small baby than the father, or foster father, singing to the child; telling stories; and simply acting silly with the little one.

Along with this, foster dads can take a small child on solo errands with him. Trips to the grocery store, public library, hardware store, or mall are opportunities

to bond with the child, as well as give the foster mother some much needed time off. A good foster dad is also one who learns about child development and the stages that correspond with this.

### **Learning about Love**

Sadly, many children in foster care come from homes where violence reigned. Profanity, abuse, and harsh words filled the air that surrounded a child. Additionally, where love was to be a child's cornerstone, there was neglect instead, as the basic needs of the child were not met, and where the emotion of love was instead substituted with just the opposite. Along with this, there may be those foster children who have had poor examples of fatherhood in their lives, resulting in poor examples of so called "manliness." There are those who may believe that a real man does not express love, does not state that he loves someone, or even grant a hug to another under the misguided belief of weakness. For these children, the understanding of parental love, of unconditional love is an unknown one. Unconditional love is simply being loved without restrictions or stipulations. For a foster child who may have been abused, beaten, or neglected, this type of love is most important.

Without this type of love, a foster child will not form necessary and healthy attachment with others, resulting in a number of attachment disorders. Foster children who suffer from these disorders will have great difficulty connecting with others, as well as managing their own emotions, not only during their childhood and time in foster care, but many times throughout the remainder of their lives. Emotional difficulties such as a of lack of self worth, trust, and the need to be in control often result in the lack of unconditional and healthy parental love. As anyone who has worked with foster children will tell you, most foster children face an enormous amount of emotional issues, many times stemming from the lack of healthy love.

More than anything, a foster child wishes one thing and has one desire; to be loved. Foster dads can protect the child from harm, provide a safe and secure home, offer nutritious meals, and open up a doorway of opportunities for foster children, granting them new and exciting experiences that they may never have dreamed of. Yet, with all of this, with all of the wonderful opportunities and safe environments, foster children really crave love the

most. They want to be loved. After all, every child deserves to be loved. Not only do children deserve love, they need it in order to grow in a healthy fashion. While there are many forms of love, the strongest one, and most important for a foster child, is that of unconditional love. Sadly, many children in foster care either do not receive this love at all, or receive it too late, after too much emotional damage has been done.

With this in mind, it is especially important for a foster dad to communicate love to their foster children at all opportunities, and in a variety of ways. A strong foster dad is one who is not afraid to say "I love you" to his wife, to his children, and to his foster children. These simple words, these three words, can make a significant difference to a child who has only known violence and abuse. Along with this, foster dads need to be nurturing to the foster children in their home, as well. When needed, foster dads need to be comforting to a child in need, gentle in his words and actions. After all, this may be the only positive example of a loving father that the foster child may ever have.

*Source: <https://www.fosterfocusmag.com/articles/just-foster-dads-part-1>*

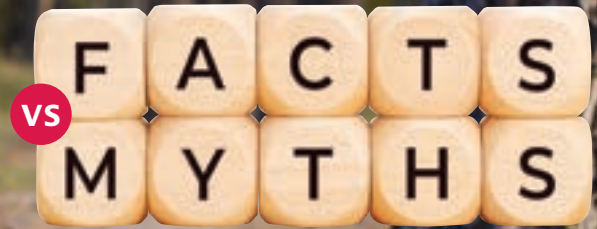


**Have you ever considered being a foster parent and don't know how to get started?**

SEARCH FOR...

"Six Steps to Fostering In Saskatchewan" on YouTube,

# Bicycle Safety for Children



**L**earning to ride a bike is a developmental milestone in the life of a child. Yet all too often children are seriously injured, or even killed, when they fail to follow basic bicycle safety rules.

Read on to learn about common bicycle safety myths, coupled with the correct information you need to teach your children about safe bike riding. These facts will help you and your children make every bike ride safe.

**Myth:** *My child doesn't need to wear a helmet on short rides around the neighborhood.*

**Fact:** Your child needs to wear a helmet on every bike ride, no matter how short or how close to home. Many injuries happen in driveways, on sidewalks, and on bike paths - not just on streets. In fact, most bike crashes happen near home. A helmet protects your child from serious injury, so your child should never be without one while riding a bike. And remember, wearing a helmet at all times helps children develop the helmet habit.

**Myth:** A football helmet will work just as well as a bicycle helmet.

**Fact:** Only a bicycle helmet is made specifically to protect the head from any fall that may occur while biking. Other helmets or hard hats are made to protect the head from other types of injury. Never allow your child to wear another type of helmet when riding a bike, unless it is a multi-sport helmet certified for bicycle use by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

**Myth:** *I need to buy a bicycle for my child to grow into.*

**Fact:** Oversized bikes are especially dangerous. Your child does not have the skills and coordination needed to handle a bigger bike and may lose control. Your child should be able to sit on the seat, with hands on the handlebars, and place the balls of both feet on the ground. Your child's first bike should also be equipped with foot brakes, since your children's hand muscles and coordination are not mature enough to control hand brakes.



**Myth:** It's safer for my child to ride facing traffic.

**Fact:** Your child should always ride on the right, with traffic. Riding against traffic confuses or surprises drivers. Almost one-quarter of bicycle-car collisions result from bicyclists riding against traffic.

**Myth:** Children shouldn't use hand signals, because signaling may cause them to lose control of their bikes.

**Fact:** Hand signals are an important part of the "rules of the road" and should be taught to all children before they begin to ride in the street. They are an important communication link between cyclists and motorists. Any child who does not have the skills necessary to use hand signals without falling or swerving shouldn't be riding in the street. Many accidents involving older children occur when they fail to signal motorists where they intend to go.

**Myth:** Bike reflectors and a reflective vest will make it safe for my child to ride at night.

**Fact:** It's never safe for your child to ride a bike at night. Night riding requires special skills and special

equipment. Few children are equipped with either. Never allow your child to ride at dusk or after dark.

**Myth:** I don't need to teach my child all of this bicycle safety stuff. I was never injured as a child. Biking is just meant to be fun.

**Fact:** Riding a bike is fun—if it's done safely. Unfortunately, most people don't realize hundreds of thousands of children are seriously injured each year in bicycle falls. Worse still, hundreds of children die of them each year. Although you may have been lucky enough to survive childhood without a serious bicycle-related injury, you shouldn't count on luck to protect your child.

Teach your child these basic safety rules:

- Wear a helmet.
- Ride on the right side, with traffic.
- Use appropriate hand signals.
- Respect traffic signals, including stop signs.
- Basic safety measures like these can keep bicycle riding enjoyable and safe for your child.

Source: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Bicycle-Safety-Myths-And-Facts.aspx>

## If you're planning a vacation...

**D**id you know that the Ministry may pay exceptional travel costs up to \$500 to enable a child or youth in care to take a special holiday with their caregiver. Requests for Special Holidays may be considered once per child per calendar year. Upon returning from the trip, the caregiver will submit all receipts to the caseworker within 60 days.

Caregivers must provide a written request two months prior to the departure date of the planned special holiday in order to allow sufficient time for the Ministry to complete the approval process.

The request should include:

- Destination
- Mode of Transportation
- Length of Holiday
- Number of Individuals Travelling
- Type of Lodging
- Planned Activities



# Fostering a Child with RAD



**A**fter welcoming your foster child into your home, you noticed he seemed unreceptive to every attempt you made to form a connection with him. At first you probably thought, "Maybe he's afraid of strangers." As time goes by and his disposition doesn't change, concern or even fear may lead to you discovering reactive attachment disorder (RAD), which is typically prevalent among children between the ages of 9 months and 5 years old.

## Causes of RAD

To understand RAD, you need to have some knowledge of how the brain develops throughout infancy. When talking about how much an infant has grown, you're likely talking about his physical growth. With such rapid and noticeable outward changes, it can be easy to forget how much cognitive development is occurring. During his first 2 years, he's constantly forming new pathways and connections in his brain through interactions with people and objects.

**“There can be times when your foster child no longer exhibits signs of RAD, but that doesn't always mean it's gone.**

Among the most important connections formed during these 2 years are the infant's bond to parental figures. Caregivers create this bond through repeated positive interactions, such as playing with him and satisfying his basic physical and emotional needs. By being there for him, you're helping him understand what a stable, healthy attachment is and how to form one.

When parents neglect the basic needs of a child who's 3 years old or younger, they're preventing the child's developing brain from making important behavioral connections. Abuse or constantly changing caregivers during these ages can also stunt the brain's development. Without these connections, he may not grow to form bonds or expect care.

Attachment problems can range from mild issues that are easily treated to severe cases where he is diagnosed with RAD. While RAD is a serious diagnosis, cases of it are rare and your foster child can make great strides in overcoming it. Unfortunately, if he has RAD, it won't be an easy journey, as there will be ups and downs with plenty of heartbreak and tears. There can be times when your foster child no longer exhibits signs of RAD, but that doesn't always mean it's gone. Certain experiences may trigger an episode for your foster child, and for some it's a lifelong battle. As with most conditions, the earlier that RAD caught, the easier it is to treat.

## Signs of RAD

If you know your foster child was abused or neglected as an infant or toddler, look out for early indicators that he may have RAD. Some of the more common signs are not smiling, constant frowning and crying, not seeking to be comforted, not reaching out when picked up and watching others interact without joining them. Many of these signs seem like qualities any child could exhibit, however, if you know he was abused or neglected during infancy and has any of these traits, talk to his caseworker about having him evaluated by a pediatric psychologist or psychiatrist. The doctor may find that he doesn't have RAD but has another behavioral disorder.

As your foster child matures from infancy to early childhood, there are numerous ways he can act out that are characteristic of a child with RAD. He may display manipulative behavior, an excessive need for control, lying, stealing and potentially harming animals, among other traits. Around strangers he may come off as charming and affectionate, but when he's alone with you, it can seem like a switch flips and his bad behavior returns.

Not only does your foster child lack a bond with you but he can also fail to connect with his classmates. Children with RAD tend to not have any close friends. While he can keep himself entertained, he may not have a desire to interact and play with other children. When your foster child does have to interact with them, he's likely to control what the others are doing for his own entertainment.

Foster children with RAD often have trouble making the correct connection between the cause and effect of their actions. Rather than feeling punished for being put in timeout for behaving a certain way, your foster child may feel relieved because, to him, you have reaffirmed his belief that no one cares about him.



**“ Foster children with RAD often have trouble making the correct connection between the cause and effect of their actions. ”**

Some cases of RAD are so severe that they can lead to property damage or harm to members of the household, including pets. Before taking in a child with RAD make sure everyone in your support system is ready for the emotional challenges that lie ahead. There will be times when you're fighting back tears and anger and other times when you're overwhelmed with joy. In trying times, remember the magnitude of good you are doing for your foster child and where he could be without you. If the safety of those in your house becomes a concern, do not feel obligated to jeopardize anyone's wellbeing. When these situations arise, reach out to your foster child's caseworker and discuss the situation and possible options.

*Continued...*

## Helping Foster Children with RAD

When raising foster children with RAD, there's no single surefire treatment method; each case can present its own challenges. The first step is to provide a stable living environment where your foster child has time to experience what positive attachment is like and to develop a bond with you.

- Building a personalized strategy with a therapist from the start will ensure that you're using the appropriate methods for your foster child's case. Forming a team with the therapist also makes it more difficult for him to manipulate and breakdown any one individual and provides you with someone to talk to who has an understanding of what you're going through.
- As previously mentioned, avoid giving timeouts or grounding your foster child. Instead, give him "time-ins" when he acts out. During these "time-ins," keep him close to you with the goal of making him communicate with you. This transforms his punishment from a form of isolation into a social interaction that may slowly build a connection between the two of you. During this time, it's important to keep your cool no matter how unruly he acts.
- Avoid beginning sentences with "you" because it suggests that you know what's going on inside him, as well as implies an accusation. Instead, begin sentences with "I," such as "I am upset with what you did. I want you to sit with me for the next 5 minutes." Verbalizing your emotions

can help your foster child with RAD gain a better understanding of his own feelings. Also use "I" to support positive experiences by saying things like, "I am glad to see you and John playing together."

- Sign him up for a team sport where he's interacting with other children to help foster a bond among peers. This places him in a position where he's not in control and demonstrates the value of positively interacting with others.
- Slowly introduce physical touch as a way of bonding. Start off with minor interactions, such as a quick pat on the back for doing something good. As he becomes more comfortable with these attachment experiences, gauge his comfort level and consider introducing other signs of affection, such as a hug.
- Constantly remind your foster child that it's okay if he doesn't know how to show affection to you and that you will always care for him, regardless of how he feels about you.

Due to your foster child's experiences during infancy, his brain never had the opportunity to make emotional connections that most people take for granted. Through your attention and patience, you can help him make these connections and learn how to create relationships with others. There will be tears, anger, fear and times when you feel like giving up, but with persistence you may begin to see your hard work pay off.

Source: <http://foster-adoptive-kinship-family-services-nj.org>

## LONG-TERM EFFECTS of the Failure of Childhood Attachment

**W**e are learning more and more about the long-term effects on children who do not make positive and nurturing connections with their parents or other consistent adult caregivers during their childhood.

We now know that it is crucial for parents to form a strong and loving attachment to their babies. If they do not, their children will be at risk for a variety of emotional, social and learning problems as they go through childhood and into adolescence and adulthood.



- Developmental Problems**
- Conscience Development**
- Self-Esteem**
- Impulse Control**
- Interpersonal Interactions**
- Emotional Difficulty**
- Cognitive Problems**

Source: [https://www.nurturingparenting.com/images/cmsfiles/long-term\\_effects\\_of\\_the\\_failure\\_of\\_childhood\\_attachment.pdf](https://www.nurturingparenting.com/images/cmsfiles/long-term_effects_of_the_failure_of_childhood_attachment.pdf)



## Who is the Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth? And When Should You Call...

There are approximately 275,000 children and youth in Saskatchewan under the age of 18, who are from varied cultural, health, social and economic backgrounds. These young people receive services from the government of Saskatchewan by going to school, receiving health care, or being involved in the social services or justice systems. Often the service they receive is satisfactory. But what can youth do when they, or their caregivers, believe those services have not met their needs or upheld their rights?

Meet Dr. Lisa Broda, the Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth. She and her team of professionals are independent from the part of provincial government that provides services to young people. The Advocate for Children and Youth (ACY) office has oversight of these child-serving systems and advocates for the rights, well-being, safety, and voices of children and youth in Saskatchewan.

ACY staff make children and

youth the priority in their everyday work. The office has a particular focus on the needs of young people who are vulnerable or disadvantaged.

ACY staff often hear from young people who receive social services, like foster care, for example. In these cases, regional advocates listen closely to what the youth needs – such as reconnecting with family, community, or their culture. Advocacy cases are youth-led with a goal to understand their concerns and needs, and ACY staff either help them self-advocate or work with them and the government body involved to advocate for their rights and goals.

Sometimes issues come to the Advocate's attention that leads to an investigation, such as hearing about ongoing concerns about the state of mental health and addictions services for youth in Saskatchewan. In this case, the Advocate launched an investigation on this issue. ACY staff interviewed nearly 500 people throughout the province, including youth, caregivers, professionals involved in providing mental health and addictions services, and those in other child-serving systems. The results were made public in a report called *Desperately Waiting*, that includes 14 recommendations to improve these services. The Advocate is

monitoring the government's commitment to implementing these recommendations.

Another important aspect of the ACY's role is providing public education through presentations, workshops, and educational materials. ACY staff regularly reach out and engage with children and youth across the province to help them learn about their rights. Starting in 2022, ACY staff began teaching self-advocacy skills to youth using its newly developed *Speak For Yourself* workshop. Classrooms across the province are raving about these sessions and signing up for more. ACY staff also teach about children's rights to child-serving professionals.

As the Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth, Dr. Broda knows there are still too many young people who don't know about their rights, and too many people who don't realize the ACY may be able to help advocate for those rights. Anyone can call when concerned about children's rights. All calls are confidential.

Learn more about the ACY at [www.saskadvocate.ca](http://www.saskadvocate.ca) or call **(306) 933-6700** or toll free **1-800-322-7221**.





## Animals that make good therapy pets

A therapy animal is dedicated to the child in need and not a family pet. The child should choose the creature that is most meaningful to them, and has qualities that make them therapeutic.

**A**n amazing variety of creatures can make good therapy animal, not just dogs or cats. In fact, the family dog or cat may not be the best for your child. They need a very personal creature just for themselves. This includes “pocket pets” like ferrets, guinea pigs; or unconventional like birds, reptiles and even insects. All of these have become an excellent therapy animal for children with any disability: physical, behavioral, and cognitive. The right therapy animal offers unconditional love. Or they like to hang out (bearded dragon), allow touching (mammals, reptiles), interact (birds), or look pretty (fish). The ideal animal makes your child feel special. Measurable benefits have been seen with many creatures “ranging from dogs, cats, birds, and fish to goats and snakes.”

**If you are considering therapy animal, strategically pick the right animal.**

When choosing a pet, monitor your child’s interactions when first introduced to the creature. Be honest with yourself, **the therapy animal you think is best may not be the best for your child.**

Look to your child for clues. What behaviors does this pet instill? Hyperactive and barking dogs, aloof cats, nervous rodents or noisy birds don’t work and can be outright stressful. Pay attention to how much stress a fussy pet can cause.

### **What is the right animal?**

The animal’s natural manner fits your child’s emotional needs, for example:

- Quiet and calming if your child is anxious or distractible;
- Soft or affectionate for a child who needs attention;
- Interactive—for a child who needs connection: a bird that speaks, or a dog that follows instructions;

The animal likes to be with your child for long periods. The animal has a preference for your child.

Your child is able to treat the pet humanely. (Intentionally or not, animals can be abused by troubled children.)

You appreciate the animal too and aren't concerned about mess, smell, hair, or feathers in your home. You accept that you are the one responsible for the animal's care. **This pet is a therapist first and not a lesson in responsibility.** Your child might take responsibility or needs to learn responsibility another way.

## DOGS

Most people are familiar with therapy dogs. Their natural affinity with humans is the reason why dogs are the most popular of pets. And research shows dogs reduce depression and anxiety. If you are interested in getting a puppy to train as a therapy animal, you can find instructions on how to train certified therapy dogs. (Real certified dogs need much more training because they must be trustworthy around fragile people in nursing homes, hospitals, and schools.)

## BIRDS

With marvelous personalities and good energy, the parrots and hooked beak birds are highly intelligent and interactive. They will loyally bond with their owner for life. These colorful birds can be trained to perch on a finger or shoulder, lie in one's hand, or play with small toys.

*"Patients hold and stroke cockatiels so tame that they often fall asleep in a human lap." Maureen Horton, the founder of 'On a Wing and a Prayer' described bringing her birds to visit a group of violent teenage delinquents who clamored to touch a cockatoo named Bela. "For a few minutes, these hardened criminals became children again." – Maureen Horton*

## FISH

Fish can't be held, but few things beat the visual delight and serenity of a beautiful aquarium. They have personalities and form interactive communities in a tank, and are fun and peaceable to watch. There is a reason aquariums are common in waiting rooms and clinics, lobbies, and hospitals. They help people relax and calmly pass the time.

## "POCKET PETS"

Little mammals that like to be cuddled and carried around, often in pockets, are good therapy: ferrets, mice, rats, gerbils, hamsters, guinea pigs, and very small dogs. It is best to select a young animal that is calm and won't bite, and handle it gently and

often so that it becomes accustomed to being held. Challenges with many pocket pets include running away or escaping their enclosures, urine smell, and unwanted breeding. As the main caretaker, you will want to be comfortable with their needs.

## REPTILES

Snakes and lizards are also excellent pets and demand little attention, and they are readily accepted by children. My bearded dragon, Spike, comes with me to my support groups. Dragons are a very docile species—safe with young children and popular with teens and parents. Other good species are iguanas, and geckos.

*"I'd have to say my Leopard Gecko Mindy is very much therapy for me. She really is my therapy lizard, she wants to sit with me when I'm upset and tolerates me, which even my two dogs and cat won't. She'll just find a place on me and curl up and be like "I'm here, I won't leave you." – "Midori", Child in Care*

## HORSES

Properly-trained horses are powerful healers for the most difficult children. Certified horse therapy programs are medically certified and often covered by health insurance. Children and teens with many disabilities can benefit. This includes those with physical disabilities such as paralysis and loss of limbs; mental/cognitive disabilities such as development disabilities; and children with mental and behavioral disorders. The horses selected out for training are chosen for their steady, grounded demeanor, and if they respond safely if antagonized by a child.

Horse therapists have special training, and they 'partner' with the horse as a team. Horses are intelligent and interactive like dogs, and quite capable of being a co-therapist. A horse also has a warm soft hide to lean on. They empower riders sitting up high and in control of the reins. On a horse, a child senses the animal's rhythmic bodily movement, which stimulates the physical senses and steadies the child. According to parents and children in these programs, horses change lives. Study Suggests That Equine Therapy is Effective.

Source: <https://margaretpuckette.com/animals-that-make-good-therapy-pets-2/>



# BACKYARD KIDDIE POOL SAFETY

**O**n a hot summer day most kids would love the opportunity to splash around in a kiddie pool. But just remember these simple tips to keep them safe:

- Protect babies from the sun with age-appropriate, high SPF sunscreen, a hat, and a swim shirt. You could also place the pool in the shade to further protect them from the sun and prevent overheating.
- Use fresh, clean water every time you use the pool. Remember, kiddie pools aren't equipped with filters or chemical treatments that kill bacteria.
- Rinse the pool after each use and wipe it down with disinfectant.
- Do not let kids drink the water. If your child is old enough to drink water, provide a bottle or sippy cup to help them stay hydrated. Don't let the mouthpiece get in the pool water.
- Carry your kids or have them wear slip-on shoes to and from the pool to keep their feet clean. This also protects them from stepping on something sharp in your yard.
- Give children a bath before they get in the kiddie pool. It seems counterintuitive, but good hygiene prevents bacteria from spreading in untreated water.
- Make sure they use the potty before play time. Encourage bathroom breaks. If your child is in diapers, make sure they are wearing watertight swim diapers.
- Remember children (and adults, for that matter) can drown in shallow water. Supervise children around water at all times.
- Store the pool and pool toys in a safe place to prevent damage to the pool. You don't want brittle plastic, or for the pool to deflate during play time. Proper storage prevents drowning, too. Leaving toys in the water can lead to children deciding to play in the pool by themselves.
- As with bath water, check the temperature to make sure it's not too hot or cold. Hoses left out in the sun will run hot at first before they start spraying cold water. Babies and young children can't regulate their body temperatures as well as we do, so don't let it get too cold.

Kiddie pools are inexpensive. They provide relief in the hot summer months, and an opportunity for you to practice pool safety with very young children.

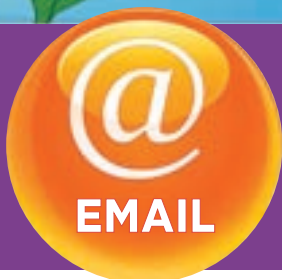
**PLEASE NOTE:** If you have recently purchased a pool or a hot tub please reach out to Taylor at **306-975-1591** or **taylor@sffa.sk.ca** to discuss water and pool safety and to ensure your set up follows policy.



# Summer Camps

*Things to remember when sending children who are in foster care to camp:*

- ▶ Families must receive prior approval before registering a child for organized activities.
- ▶ Families must ensure that the camp is safe and provides supervision and programming appropriate to the needs of the child.
- ▶ Summer camps must be accredited by the Saskatchewan Camping Association.
- ▶ Foster families will continue to be paid maintenance while the child attends camp however, are required to pay \$25 for each child in attendance towards the camp.
- ▶ Given the unique needs of children in care the following must be in place:
  - The camp's discipline policy is consistent with the Ministry's discipline policy
  - The camp has a policy for responding to children's complaints regarding harassment and abuse
  - The children are aware of this policy and how to make a complaint



## Let's stay connected...

We regularly send out e-mails to our foster parents. To be added to our contact list and receive the latest news, please send your e-mail address to [Taylor@sffa.sk.ca](mailto:Taylor@sffa.sk.ca)



# be SUN safe

Children are often outside when the Sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays are the strongest.

## Protect your skin & eyes from the sun

**Time of Day:** If you can, limit time in the sun when the UV Index is 3 or higher, usually between 11 am to 3 pm.



**Sunscreen:** Apply plenty of sunscreen with SPF 30 or more, labelled 'broad spectrum' and 'water resistant'. Reapply when needed (especially after swimming, sweating, or towelling). Use a sunscreen lip balm. Sunscreen may be used on babies over six months of age; avoid the mouth and eye areas.



**Shade:** Seek shade or make shade by using an umbrella, a UV protective tent or pop-up shade shelter. Keep babies younger than 1 year of age out of direct sunlight.



**Cover Up:** Wear clothes that cover as much skin as possible or UV-protective clothing. Wear a wide brimmed hat or baseball cap with flaps that cover the head, neck and ears.

**Sunglasses:** Wear close fitting/wrap-around sunglasses with UV 400 or 100% UV protection. Children's and babies' sunglasses should be unbreakable. Children's eyes have large pupils and clear lenses, allowing a lot of sunlight to enter.



UV rays can harm the eyes at any time of day and all year round, even when it's cloudy.

**Stay Hydrated:** Drink water regularly when playing in the sun. It will help keep skin healthy and prevent heat exhaustion. Watch for signs of overheating

like sweating, dizziness, shortness of breath, and muscle spasms.



**Check Medications:** Read labels to see any negative interactions with sunlight.

## Things to avoid

- Children and teens should avoid getting a tan or a sunburn.
- Don't expose children to UV rays to meet vitamin D needs. Use food or supplements instead.

Source: Ontario Sun Safety Working Group

# *Gratitude Nature*

## SCAVENGER HUNT

*Look for something in nature that...*

- Makes you smile
- Is your favourite colour
- Would make a friend happy
- Makes a pretty sound
- You are thankful for
- Is fun to play with
- Smells Lovely
- Is interesting to look at
- Feels soft to touch
- Is fun to climb on
- You would like to draw a picture of
- Can be used to build with
- Is fun to watch move around
- Is beautiful
- You could use to make a heart shape
- Is the perfect resting spot



# goodreads

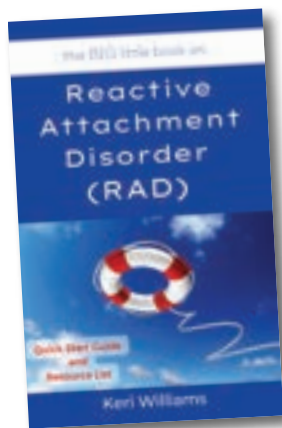
## **Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD): The Essential Guide for Parents - by Keri Williams**

If you are struggling to parent a child with Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD), this is the resource you need.

*No platitudes or false hopes here, only practical suggestions that actually work!*

- Understand developmental trauma and Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD)
- Learn tips and tricks to help you to navigate "the system"
- Get resource recommendations that will provide a way forward

Adopting or fostering a child with Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) is beyond challenging. They may have violent outbursts, engage in outlandish lying, steal, play with feces, and hoard food. With histories of early childhood trauma, kids with RAD too often break even the most loving of caregivers. Many parents of these children feel utterly isolated as family, friends, and professionals minimize the struggles. *Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) - The Essential Guide for Parents* comes from a parent who's in the trenches with you. Keri has lived the journey of raising a son with RAD and has navigated the mental health system for over a decade.



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## **the BIG little book on Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD): Quick Start Guide and Resource List - by Keri Williams**

- Just getting started on your RAD parenting journey? This little book is literally a BIG bang for your buck!
- Quick start guide with an introduction to the disorder, how to get your child an evaluation, and next steps.
- List of over 125 RAD related resources including books, conferences, coaching, blog posts, and support groups.

### **PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 41271051**

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:  
SASKATCHEWAN FOSTER FAMILIES ASSOCIATION  
231 Robin Crescent  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7L 6M8