

Advisor

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2017

Featuring

Forming good habits
for back-to-school

Helping kids cope
with change

Social media tips

The teen brain

Plus

Changes to first year
foster homes

Stress reducing tactics

Kids have stress too

Supportive food
environments

Fall craft

Advisor

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Support to First Year Foster Homes has changed

New Policy - Children's Services Manual 4.4.14



The new policy includes provision for enhanced supports to foster homes in their first year of service including the following guidelines:

- Frequent contact with the family for the first three months and at least once every three months thereafter until the Annual Review;
- Limiting placements in the first year of service so that caregivers can build confidence and security in their role without becoming overwhelmed;
- Increased in-home supports or respite to assist families who are experiencing difficulty in the transition of becoming a foster parent;
- A peer support group may be very helpful during the first year to allow families to talk about child management and how fostering is impacting their lives;
- Where practicable, a dedicated resources worker is assigned to the home during the first year.



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We need
your
email

We are now sending e-mails to our foster parents on a monthly basis. To be added to our list and receive the latest news, please send your e-mail address to wayne@sffa.sk.ca

THANK-YOU!

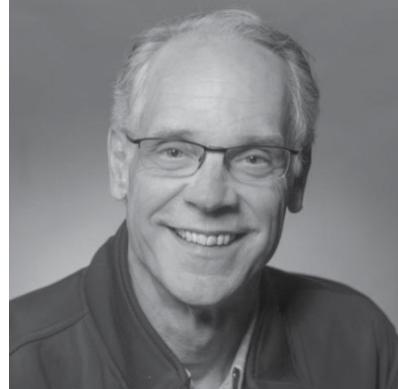
Message from our Chairman of the Board

I can't believe how summer has slipped past us. Our thoughts are certainly with our agricultural community as they work with the odd weather of the summer.

I hope many regions took advantage of the summer and were able to plan a summer activity with your foster families.

We have been fortunate to have some positive public exposure to the world of fostering, that even reached Premier Brad Wall where he reposted and commented about one of the latest video's about one of our foster families work with medical fragile infants.

PRIDE pre service training continued into July and will be resuming in the September time frame. The combination of online and in class review sessions seem to be working well. We are quite excited about the outcomes of the few pilots we did with some



"We have been fortunate to have some positive public exposure to the world of fostering, that even reached Premier Brad Wall."

additional knowledge of the effects of trauma on children and families that is provided in the review sessions.

In August the SFFA's partnership with Prairie Spirit Connections, Buffalo Pound Provincial Park and the Ministry saw 10 families

provided with a unique cultural exposure at our culture camp. We had families from across the province participate in 4 days of living the life of traditional Indigenous ways. Even with an open fire ban at the park we were able to experience life in a unique way. Each family lived in their own tipi and were able to participate and learn about indigenous life. The feedback was very positive and lives of the children and their foster homes were impacted. We were excited to see three families participate in naming ceremonies, and the powwow demonstration was a huge hit. This is a program that has great impact, if you are interested in participating next year, contact the office.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin Harris".

Kevin Harris
Chairman of the Board, SFFA



Celebrate Foster Family Week

October 15 – 21, 2017

Every fall, Canadians honour the contributions of approximately 35,000 foster families across the country. This year, National Foster Family Week will be celebrated October 15th to 21st. Please check our website for updates on events and goings-on. Visit www.saskfostering.ca



BACK TO SCHOOL

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD (AND YOU) FORM GOOD HABITS

by Gretchen Rubin

It's back-to-school time. And that means getting back into the habits required by school.

So many things to manage! Waking up on time and going to bed on time. Packing the backpack for school, with homework, permissions slips, lunch, sports clothes, etc.

Doing homework. Showing up promptly throughout the day. Plus, many children have after-school activities, so there's just that much more to remember.

The question is: *how can we help children form habits that will help them handle this load, without our constant nagging and supervising?*

I've thought a lot about this myself, because each year when school begins, it hits my family hard. We have to work to get back into the swing of routine. Upholder that I am (see below), I relish this routine, but the other members of my family don't agree.

In my book *Better Than Before*,

about habit-formation, I learned one key fact that many habit experts ignore. There is no magic, one-size-fits-all solution for habits. The thing that works for me may be the opposite of what works for you. We need to form habits in a way that suits our nature. And the same is true for kids.

In Better Than Before, I identify 21 strategies that we can use to master our habits. So there are many from which to choose, as you try to help your child. Consider, for example:

Strategy of Convenience

— this is the most universal strategy. We're all more likely to do something if it's easy to do it. So make it easy for your child to stick to a habit. If you want him to hang up his coat, clear out the closet so there's plenty of room, or put in hooks that are quicker to use than hangers. If you want her to practice an instrument every afternoon, figure out a way so that all the equipment can stay at the ready, instead of needing to be

hauled out and put away every time she practices.

Strategy of Inconvenience — likewise, we're less likely to do something if it's a pain. If you want him to stop sneaking cookies, put the cookies in a hard-to-open container on a high shelf. If you want her to stop hitting the snooze alarm in the morning, put the alarm clock across the room, so she has to get out of bed to turn it off.

Strategy of Distinctions — people are very different from each other, but we parents often try to make our children form the habits that work for us. Don't assume that because something works for you — that you work best in a space that's very quiet and spare, or you think most clearly early in the morning, or you like to get everything finished well before the deadline, or you like to have a lot of supervision — that the same is true for your child. Pay close attention to how that child works best.

I made this mistake with my older daughter. When I work, I must be at a desk, and I kept trying to get her to work at a desk, instead of sitting in a chair or on her bed. It drove me crazy. How could she be productive on her laptop, when she was sprawled across her bed? Finally, light dawned. Just because I work best at a desk doesn't make that a universal law of human nature.

Strategy of Abstaining — this strategy works well for some people, but not for others. Talk to your child, and explain, "For some people, it's too hard to have a little bit of something, or to do something for a little while. They find it easier to give something up altogether. Do you think that for you, it would be easier to stop — [playing that favorite video game, using that app] than to try to do it just a little bit? Or maybe just do it on the weekend?" Your child may surprise you. Maybe not, but maybe.

Strategy of Other People

— to a huge degree, we're influenced by other people's habits. So if you want your children to adopt a habit, adopt that habit yourself. If you want them to be organized in the morning, be organized yourself. If you want them to go to sleep on time, go to sleep on time yourself. If you want them to put down their devices and read a book, put down your device.

Strategy of Foundation — It's easier to stick to our good habits when we have a strong

foundation. That means getting enough sleep; not letting yourself get too hungry; getting some exercise; and (for most people) keeping our physical space reasonably orderly. So to help your child manage habits well, make sure to emphasize things like bedtime, not skipping meals, physical activity, and clutter.

Strategy of the Four Tendencies

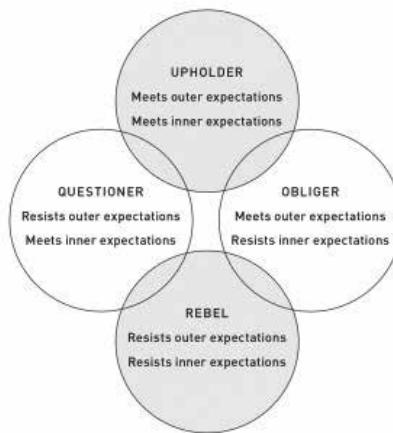
— In this personality framework, I divide all of humanity into four categories: Upholders, Questioners, Obligers, and Rebels. Sometimes, it's hard to tell a child's Tendency until young adulthood — but some Tendencies are obvious from a very young age.

Here's a extremely oversimplified version, but to give you an idea:

If your child seems to need little support during the school year, that child is probably an Upholder.

If your child asks a lot of questions, and says things like, "But what's the point of memorizing the state capitals?" "I didn't do that homework because it's a waste of my time, and the teacher is an idiot," your child is probably a Questioner.

If your child is able to do tasks when given reminders, deadlines, supervision, but struggles to do things on his or her own, that child may be an Obliger.



If, to a very noticeable degree, your child wants to do things in his or her own way and own time, that child is probably a Rebel. If you ask or tell a Rebel to do something, that Rebel is very likely to resist. It's very helpful to identify a Rebel early, because the strategies that work for the other Tendencies often backfire with Rebels! It's not the case that "all toddlers are Rebels" or "All teens are Rebels."

In just about every situation, it's extremely helpful to know a person's Tendency, because it makes a big difference in what works. For instance, the Strategy of Accountability is crucial for Obligers; often helpful but perhaps not necessary for Upholders and Questioners, but counterproductive for Rebels! Supervision, nagging, and reminders will make a Rebel child less likely to keep a habit.

The Four Tendencies framework is a huge subject. In fact, I just completed an entire book about the Four Tendencies, and how to use them in different situations. (Please see back cover of this publication for more details.)

Source: <http://gretchenrubin.com>

Helping kids cope with change

Kids like routine. They thrive on knowing what happens when. But life doesn't stay the same – people move houses, kids change schools, friends shift away or stop being friends, parents can separate and almost every year they'll probably have to face a new teacher.

Parents can play a vital role in helping their kids learn how to cope with change, arming them with valuable life skills along the way.

Coping strategies for change

According to a growing body of research, kids learn how to cope with change and ups and downs of life by developing resilience.

For years it was considered one of the inherent traits we were all born with but psychologists today now know that it's one of the most important qualities parents can teach their kids (along with compassion).

And how do they learn it? Apparently by watching us. Studies have shown that children as young as two years old copy the coping, stress-management and thinking styles of the adults around them. And they can sense if parents are anxious or worried and will tend to mimic that. Other studies have found that there is strong evidence that

good early relationships with carers can help make children more resilient. And the earlier this resilience-building is started the better.

Reinforcing this "it starts at home" message, Andrew Fuller, consultant psychologist for The Resilience Foundation and author of *Tricky Kids*, says resilient parents raise resilient kids. "When your child needs you to help them make sense of the changes that might be happening, that is not the time to confront your own inner demons," he says. "It's a handy skill for parents to learn to hold their own anxieties in check." Fuller describes resilience as "the happy knack of being able to bungee jump through the pitfalls of life".

Simple tips on helping kids to cope

- Give them a sense of being loved by their family and of belonging
- Encourage a diverse group of friends – both for them and the family as a whole
- Enjoy family rituals – like Sunday night dinner, or a weekend drive

Top 5 practical coping skills

- 1) Be prepared to answer their myriad of questions – and create an environment in which they feel safe about asking you anything about the changes they're facing. Asking questions helps them process change and

the answers they receive from the people they trust most – that is mum and dad – will help them transition.

2) Give them warning – like adults, no child will cope well with change being sprung on them. If you can, start talking through the changes early so they can get their head around it as well as formulate all those aforementioned questions.

3) Stick to routines as much as possible – try not to change everything at once. If you have routines in place like bedtime rituals, the books you read even the TV shows you all watch, try to keep those in place where possible.

4) Let them grieve - when any of us move, change schools, or make any kind of change in life, we leave something behind. Let your littlies talk about what they miss and don't try to point out all of the wonderful things about new house, school, bedroom or whatever - let them appropriately mourn what they have lost.

5) Be prepared to weather the change – many kids don't adapt immediately and there may be tears and tantrums, followed by major parental guilt. Expect that it can take time for children to adjust.

Source: <http://www.kidspot.com.au/parenting/>





Stress-reducing Tactics for Foster Parents

In a recent study, it was discovered that 70% of adults in North America deal with stress or anxiety every day. If you have a child in your home, to some degree, you likely fall into this statistic. Foster parents experience every level of stress, from the small things like is your foster child going to like the new toy you bought to bigger things like whether your foster child will like you.

While some of these situations are fleeting, the stress from them can stay with you for days or weeks. When a stressful situation hits, the parent in you puts others' needs ahead of your own, while leaving your needs unattended. While you can get away with ignoring your stress for a little bit, it will catch up to you and start affecting your day-to-day life. Before you start questioning your sanity and whether you are cut out for this life, take a step back and try these stress-reducing tactics for foster parents.

Breathe

Take several deep breaths and push all thoughts out of your head. Deep breathing lowers your heart rate and sends a calming effect throughout your

body. With a clearer mind, you may find the issue was more manageable than you thought.



Exercise

Along with offering physical benefits, exercise is good for your mental health. Regularly exercising can decrease tension, improve your mood and help you sleep better. It also provides you with much deserved alone time and the opportunity to reflect on what is stressing you out.

Journaling

Writing down your feelings and thoughts can be a great outlet for your stress and frustrations. Putting the situation on paper can help you see things more clearly and help you find an answer. Re-reading journals is a great way to remind yourself how much you've grown from previous stressful situations.



Find Support

There are going to be times when the stress of foster care makes you feel like you're alone and

that no one understands what you're going through. Finding a support system, whether it's friends, family or other foster parents, is vital to getting through foster care's most difficult moments. Having someone to talk to who has gone through a similar situation will reassure you that you aren't going crazy and that you can make it through.

With these stress-reducing tactics for foster parents, you will be better prepared to manage stress in a healthy and helpful manner. When a nerve-racking situation occurs, try turning it into a learning experience and see what you can do to prevent it from happening again.

If you find that your stress is becoming too much for you to handle, you can talk to your caseworker about finding respite care for your foster child while you take some time to recharge. Many foster parents have found that respite care helped them avoid burning out and stabilized their homes.

Stress is unavoidable, especially for foster parents who are trying to make a difference in children's lives by going above and beyond. When things get stressful, remind yourself why you foster and how rewarding it is when you see the positive impact you make on your foster child.

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

The image features a central title 'SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS FOR FOSTER PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS' set against a background filled with a variety of social media and communication-related icons. These icons include speech bubbles labeled 'BLOG', 'SMS', and 'BLOG'; envelopes; a video camera; a magnifying glass; a thumbs-up sign; hearts; clouds; a shopping cart; a smartphone; and a laptop. The icons are rendered in different colors (black, white, red, blue, green) and sizes, creating a dynamic and interconnected visual metaphor for the digital landscape.

While social media has changed the way the world communicates, it has also created privacy and safety concerns. This article discusses the benefits of social media for children and youth in foster care and provides tips for parents and caregivers who want to help youth use social media safely. Advice for social media use by foster parents is also provided.

Helping Youth Use Social Media Safely

While it may be tempting to forbid children and youth to use social media, this is seldom realistic. The Internet and mobile devices are too widespread and accessible. In addition, forbidding social networking may make it harder for youth in foster care to fit in with friends and relate to other teenagers in the community. Instead, foster parents should provide guidance and boundaries to help youth in their care use social media safely. Before talking to youth about social media, make sure you know your child welfare agency's social media policies.

Social media provides benefits for youth

- **Social ties.** Social media helps youth in foster care fit in with their peers and fosters normalcy. Using social media, youth can keep in touch with friends, siblings, and others and make new connections.

- **Support.** Through online community groups, youth in foster care can share experiences with peers who have had similar experiences.
 - **Family connections.** Between visits, youth in foster care may share posts or have online conversations with biological family members, when appropriate and approved by the caseworker.
 - **Self-expression.** Videos, blogs, and other digital venues allow youth in foster care to express their feelings and ideas, which can help shape their identity and contribute to healing from childhood trauma.

Tips to help youth use social media safely

- **Talk with your youth's caseworker.** Ask about safety needs and concerns that may affect your youth's use of social media and whether he or she had any past issues with social media use.
 - **Discuss social media with youth in your care.** Ask youth how they use social media and private messaging and why it's important to them.
 - **Set house rules for what's okay and what's not.** Rules will likely vary with the youth's age, but setting them early is important.
 - **Set strict privacy settings.** Use privacy settings to help youth limit who can find them online, which posts or photos can be seen, and who has contact permissions.

- **Teach youth to keep personal information private.** Advise youth in foster care not to post their full name, address, school name, phone number, or other identifying information.
- **Learn about social media sites and apps.** Keep abreast of current technology and best practices for the most popular social media sites and apps youth are using today.
- **Be aware of online gaming risks.** Online games can be unsafe as players often interact with others on gaming platforms. Youth should avoid posting pictures of themselves or giving personal information while playing online games, and they should know they can come to you if they are being bullied or harassed. Be aware of the kind of games your youth plays and discuss the risks.
- **Monitor use.** Station computers in a shared area (not a bedroom), and keep track of mobile device use. Know what type of social media your youth uses. Consider asking youth for passwords and permission to let a trusted adult “friend” them. However, try to balance monitoring with privacy. Installing an online monitoring program can also help watch out for inappropriate use.
- **Conduct searches.** Every so often, search a youth’s name and address to see what information or tagged photos are publicly available.
- **Watch out for profiles on dating apps or risky matchmaking sites.** Look for use of dating sites like OKCupid, Match.com, or Tinder, which may not be appropriate for teens.
- **Explain the need to be careful.** Make sure youth understand that online, not everyone is who they say they are. Advise youth to avoid sharing intimate photos and messaging about sex online.
- **Discuss cyberbullying.** Warn youth not to send, forward, or respond to mean or embarrassing messages or pictures. Help youth document, block, and report bullying if needed.
- **Keep lines of communication open.** Encourage youth to let you know if an exchange makes them uncomfortable, if someone is sending them inappropriate photos, or if anyone asks to meet them in person. Appreciate your youth’s participation in their online communities and show interest in their friends.
- **Understand their language.** Youth in foster care may use abbreviations, hashtags, and emoji in their online communications. Understand that teens communicate in a language different from yours.
- **Be prepared to deal with mistakes.** When youth slip up and don’t follow guidelines, approach the situation as a teachable moment and calmly work together on what to do next.

Foster Parent or Caregiver Use of Social Media

If permitted by the agency, you may also use social networks to keep in touch with child welfare workers or your youth’s family members, for support and to share information with other foster parents and caregivers.

Tips for social media use by foster parents

- **Talk with your caseworker about agency policies.** Ask about guidelines for your social media communication between your youth’s family and with community agencies, other foster parents and caregivers, and the agency staff. Find out whether there are specific considerations for the youth in your care.
- **Get permission from the agency and youth before posting family pictures that include a youth in care.** It’s important to ensure that photos do not create privacy or safety risks.
- **Protect privacy and confidentiality.** Do not identify a youth as a foster child or post the youth’s full name or address on a social network. Never discuss specific case information.
- **Be aware that photos may reveal the youth’s location.** Some smartphone photos and network services (such as Facebook’s and Instagram’s location features) provide GPS information. Learn how to manage location services on your smartphone or turn them off completely.
- Think before you post. Be sensitive to how messages may be interpreted by others, including your youth’s family members and agency staff.

Reprinted with permission from Child Welfare Information Gateway (2017).

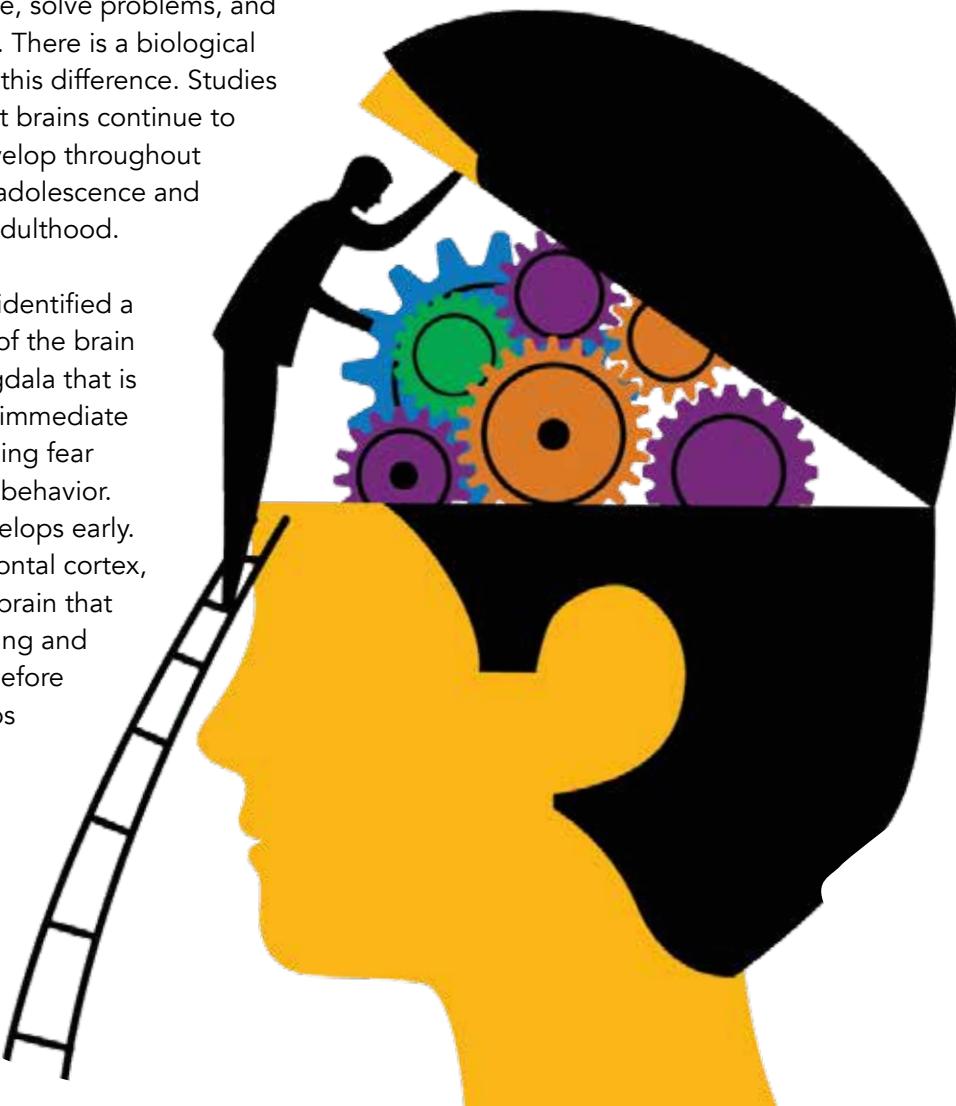
TEEN BRAIN: Behavior, Problem Solving, and Decision Making

Many parents do not understand why their teenagers occasionally behave in an impulsive, irrational, or dangerous way. At times, it seems like teens don't think things through or fully consider the consequences of their actions.

Adolescents differ from adults in the way they behave, solve problems, and make decisions. There is a biological explanation for this difference. Studies have shown that brains continue to mature and develop throughout childhood and adolescence and well into early adulthood.

Scientists have identified a specific region of the brain called the amygdala that is responsible for immediate reactions including fear and aggressive behavior. This region develops early. However, the frontal cortex, the area of the brain that controls reasoning and helps us think before we act, develops later. This part of the brain is still changing and maturing well into adulthood.

Other changes in the brain during adolescence include a rapid increase in the connections between the brain cells and making the brain pathways more effective. Nerve cells develop myelin, an insulating layer that helps cells communicate. All these changes are essential for the development of coordinated thought, action, and behavior.



“ Their actions are guided more by the emotional and reactive amygdala and less by the thoughtful, logical frontal cortex.

CHANGING BRAINS MEAN THAT ADOLESCENTS ACT DIFFERENTLY FROM ADULTS

Pictures of the brain in action show that adolescents' brains work differently than adults when they make decisions or solve problems. Their actions are guided more by the emotional and reactive amygdala and less by the thoughtful, logical frontal cortex. Research has also shown that exposure to drugs and alcohol during the teen years can change or delay these developments.

Based on the stage of their brain development, adolescents are more likely to:

- act on impulse
- misread or misinterpret social cues and emotions
- get into accidents of all kinds
- get involved in fights
- engage in dangerous or risky behavior

Adolescents are less likely to:

- think before they act
- pause to consider the consequences of their actions
- change their dangerous or inappropriate behaviors

These brain differences don't mean that young people can't make good decisions or tell the difference between right and wrong. It also doesn't mean that they shouldn't be held responsible for their actions. However, an awareness of these differences can help parents, teachers, advocates, and policy makers understand, anticipate, and manage the behavior of adolescents.

Source: https://www.aacap.org/aacap/families_and_youth/facts_for_families/FFF-Guide/The-Teen-Brain-Behavior-Problem-Solving-and-Decision-Making-095.aspx

YOU WERE BORN WITH THE ABILITY TO CHANGE SOMEONE'S LIFE, DON'T EVER WASTE IT.

EVERY KID IS ONE CARING ADULT AWAY FROM BEING A SUCCESS STORY.

—Josh Shipp

"We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future."

— Franklin D. Roosevelt

8 Foster Parent Tips for a Successful School Year

When looking to send foster children back to school, we hope foster parents remember the following tips for helping their foster kids be successful this school year. This may be all just basic common sense to most foster parents, if not, may it be a reminder of what all kids need during the school year.



- New school clothes and shoes**
Try to send your foster children to school in clothes and shoes that the kids can be proud of owning. Don't purchase noticeably used garage sale finds or give your foster kids hand me down clothes from your neighbor's children. Sometimes other children can be cruel and foster kids have enough to battle just with the title "foster kid". So, buy the kids new stuff and send them to school with some style. Learn more about foster care subsidy and the items it should provide for your foster child.
- After school activities**
Your foster child benefits from after school activities too. After gaining social worker and birth parent permission, look into sports, clubs, or other activities for your foster children. This will allow them to explore different interests and will help in building up their self esteem.

foster child interact with peers. Above all, you will validate your love and concern for the child when he sees you caring about him by just being there.

✓ Advocate for your foster child's educational needs

You are the expert on that child while he is in your home. If, for example, visitation during the school day is not working out, then report that to the child's social worker. Advocate!

✓ Buy your foster child's school picture

Some foster parents have been known to refuse to spend money on their foster children's school pictures. Buy a modest package and place the pictures in their lifebooks, give some to the birth parents, and hang one on your living room wall. Nothing will make the child feel like they truly belong more than seeing their picture hanging next to other family member's pictures. This is another item that a foster care subsidy should cover.

✓ Remember your foster child's confidentiality even at school

The teacher does not need to know every aspect of the child's case or the birth parent's issues. Ask yourself, is this important to the child's education and safety or am I just gossiping. If you're unsure about what to share, ask your child's social worker.

These are just a few ways to help build up a child's self esteem this school year.

Kids Have Stress Too!

Stress is a normal part of everyday life for children and adults. It helps to motivate us and adds a positive challenge to life. However, too much stress can be counter-productive and overwhelming.

Even the most nurturing home and school environment includes a range of stressors that can both challenge and motivate children. While stress is a necessary part of development and learning, it's clear that Canadian families now face more stress than ever before.

Stress among children is estimated to have increased 45% over the past 30 years. The good news is that building emotional health and resiliency can help children concentrate, learn, interact more successfully and deal with other stressors they may face in their lives.

Why focus on children's stress? Because too much stress:

- Makes it more difficult for children to get along with others
- Interfers with children's ability to focus, think and ultimately learn
- Has a profound effect on children's physical, emotional and mental health



By helping children learn positive coping strategies to deal with stress, you can help build their resiliency and prevent stress from escalating to distress, anxiety and meltdowns.

Developed by The Psychology Foundation of Canada, the Kids Have Stress Too! program helps parents, caregivers and educators understand childhood stress and how to provide children with the tools to deal with stress effectively. It is a broad-based primary prevention program which provides parents, caregivers, and communities with the knowledge, awareness and skills to help young people become healthier and more resilient through learning how to manage their stress.

The program includes a range of resources designed for parents, those who work with young children in early learning settings, and for classrooms.

Source: https://psychologyfoundation.org/Public/Public/Programs/Kids_Have_Stress_Too/Kids_Have_Stress_Too_.aspx

“The signs and symptoms of stress can often be seen in challenging behaviours. Children may be reprimanded for actions that are really stress reactions, rather than intentional misbehavior or poor cognitive ability”.

— Lantieri, L. 2008.

Creating Supportive Food Environments

Child care homes and centres have an important role in shaping the eating behaviours of children through the food environment they create.

Parents and caregivers have the most influence on what a young child eats and drinks. Because of this, they have a big role in establishing healthy eating behaviours for children. Be a positive role model. The children in your care may adopt many of your attitudes about food, eating and health.

Part of a healthy feeding relationship is providing the children with regular meals and snacks. Allowing children to eat according to their own feelings of fullness or hunger is also very important. Encourage children to eat when hungry and stop when full.

In their early years, a child's appetite and food likes and dislikes may change frequently. Therefore, children are the best judges of how much they need to eat. Establishing good eating habits for a lifetime requires knowledge and skill. Teach the children, by way of conversation, about your menus, shopping and cooking as well as the benefits of healthy eating. You are laying the foundation for good health. Have healthy foods available for the children to practice what they have learned.

Caregivers are responsible for when, where and what foods are offered. Children are responsible for if they eat and how much.

Create a calm and pleasant environment for the children to enjoy their meals and snacks. Give positive recognition for making healthy food choices or positive eating behaviour.

Promote social development and language skills during meals and snacks by encouraging good manners and conversations. Have children talk about their families, their customs and their cultures and feel proud of whom they are. Food is a part of everyone's culture. Children may



be alike or they may be different, but certainly, they are all special. They will learn to know and respect each other.

PRACTICAL TIPS

Allow enough time for meals and snacks

Rushing meals and snacks is frustrating for both you and the children. Do kids seem to dawdle at the table? Young children do not have the skill or muscle development to eat fast. They are developing their fine motor skills. They need time to practice eating with appropriate utensils. Let them eat at a pace that they can enjoy their table time. Allow about 10-15 minutes for a snack and 20-30 minutes for a meal. It takes about 20 minutes for them to start feeling full.

Be a good role model

Children want to grow up doing what others do. Chances are, if you eat your broccoli, turnips and whole grain buns; the children will try them too – if not now, then in the future. You are a role model for them along with their parents, siblings and friends.

Choose a non-food approach

Reward the children with your attention, kind words and hugs. Show you care for them by having fun together and spending time with them.

- Choose not to reward, appease or punish a child with food. Eating for your approval creates unhealthy beliefs about food and themselves.
- Some comments may lead children to eating problems. These include “eat everything on your plate so you can play” or “stop crying and I’ll give you a candy”. These comments may lead to conflict or struggles between you and the child that are unnecessary.
- Rewarding children for a clean plate teaches them to ignore their own body signs and may encourage them to overeat.
- Giving food as a treat to make them feel better teaches a child to overcome a negative feeling by eating. This may lead to overeating later in life.
- If you do fundraising, choose healthy food items or nonfood items for selling.
- When choosing rewards, use non-food items such as free play, a story, a craft, a game or stickers for older children.

Create a nurturing place to eat that is...

...Relaxed

Plan a relaxed atmosphere with appropriate conversation. Focus on the food, mealtime and people they are eating with. Turn off the television.

...Safe

- Stay with young children who are eating, even if you have other things to do.
- Have easy to hold, child sized plates, cups and utensils.
- Have a comfortable, supportive chair (with a back) at the appropriate height for the table.
- For small children, don’t serve hard, small whole foods such as nuts, seeds, candy or popcorn. Slice grapes, carrots and wieners into small strips. Avoid marshmallows.
- Teach the children to chew foods well so they won’t choke when swallowing.
- Spread sticky foods like peanut butter or cheese-spread thinly.

Source: www.learning.gov.sk.ca



SEPTEMBER 29, 30 & OCTOBER 1, 2017

A National Celebration of Canadian Culture

Millions of Canadians engage in thousands of free activities and performances hosted by artists, cultural organizations and municipalities in communities across Canada. From Nunavut to New Brunswick, and from British Columbia to Baffin Island – and all points in between – we share all the inspiration, artistry, creativity and expression that reflects the mosaic of Canadian culture.

As a leading national voice for an active and engaged cultural life, we provide marketing and industry development resources that lead to greater cultural engagement. The Culture Days national awareness campaign culminates in a three-day celebration of the arts starting on the last Friday of September.

Every Culture Days weekend features thousands of free, hands-on, interactive activities where the public can discover the world of artists, creators, heritage experts, architects, curators, designers and other creative professionals in their communities.

With thousands of activities promoted through culturedays.ca, our digital channels, and national media partnerships, we drive a multi-level national awareness campaign designed to inspire and catalyze greater public arts participation in all Canadian communities.

Culture Days is a collaborative initiative that welcomes public participation. Everyone has a part to play in Culture Days whether you’re already passionate about the arts or interested in discovering something new.

For more information visit <https://culturedays.ca/en/about-culture-days>





While the fall weather can be wonderful, it's still a great time to get the craft supplies out and create some new artwork.

This classic fall handprint tree craft is a fun and easy project for you and the kids to do. And once you have completed all of the steps, what better idea than to go outside and play while you "wait for the paint to dry."

Supplies for fall handprint trees:

- red, yellow, green, and orange paint
- brown construction paper
- white cardstock paper
- glue stick
- scissors

Fall Handprint Tree Craft



Directions:

1. Trace the child's hands and arm on the brown construction paper.
2. Cut out the handprints.
3. Glue the handprint/arm down on the white cardstock.
4. Add red, green, yellow, and orange paint to a paper plate.
5. Let the kids dip their finger in the paint and make fingerprint leaves. We had a few wet wipes close by to clean the finger off before going on to the next color.
6. Now let the paint dry.



Source: <http://www.makeandtakes.com/fall-handprint-tree-craft>

To my future foster child -

Today my thoughts have been turning towards you. Towards where you are today, tonight at this very moment. No matter where you are, I am sure life seems big. And scary. And out of control. I just want you to know that there are people who are ready to love you. Me, for one.

On my end, I am getting a place ready for you. A safe place. A quiet, loud, musical, fun place. A place with walls, and warmth in the winter and coolness in the summer. A place with toys and clothes and most of all, love. I am studying and praying and staying up late thinking about you.

I am thinking about how having you in my life will change me, and it will change you. I will become a mother. You will have another adult in your life to "come home to". I will make new "mommy" friends. You will get new cousins. I will be starting something big and new. You will be ending something, and starting something new, that is also big and maybe scary.

What a journey we are on together, already...

Someday soon we will meet and I will learn your name, your favorite activities, your favorite and not so favorite foods. Someday soon, we will talk together, probably cry together, fight together and love together. I will meet your Mom and Dad, you will meet my Mom and Dad. Our lives will become intertwined, for a season or for a lifetime. Who can predict where we will end up?

quotesgram.com

If you have a fostering story to share with our readers, please send it in!

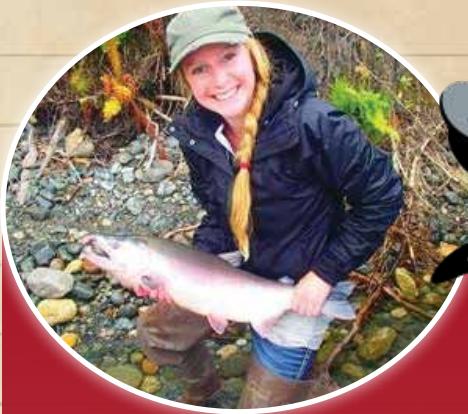
We accept stories/articles about:

- Fostering tips and tricks
- Personal stories and reflections about being a foster parent
- Long term connection with past foster children
- Challenges you've experienced and creative solutions
- How your extended family or children have responded to your fostering lifestyle
- Great resources for foster parents that you'd like to share
- Foster-related book reviews
- Foster-related movie reviews
- Foster placements resulting in a family growing through adoption
- ... other notable foster related experiences

Please submit your articles by email to: wayne@sffa.sk.ca.

SHARE YOUR STORY

Recipes from Petty's Kitchen



I'm a big fan of healthy recipes with simple ingredients you would find in your own cupboards. During the cooler months I also really like using the slow cooker since I'm always finding other things to do — so bust out those crock pots because you have to try this recipe!

— Hayley Petrow



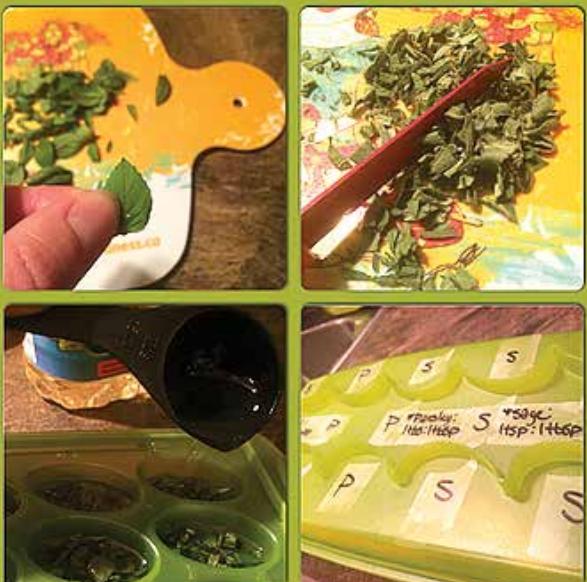
Minestrone Soup in the Slow Cooker

2 cans (430 ml)	diced tomatoes
2 tbsp	tomato paste
1/4 cup	sun-dried tomato pesto
1	Parmesan rind (the more the better! Not essential but adds flavor)
4 cups	vegetable stock
2 cups	water
1 cup	carrots, diced
1 1/4 cup	celery, diced
1 1/2 cup	white onion, diced
5 cloves	garlic, minced
1 tsp	dried oregano
1/2 tsp	rosemary
2	bay leaves
To taste	salt & pepper
1 can (440 ml)	red kidney beans, drained & rinsed
1 can (440 ml)	navy beans, drained & rinsed
1 1/2 cups	zucchini, diced
1 1/2 cups	tubular (ditalini) pasta
1 cup	green beans, frozen or fresh
2 1/2 cups	spinach, chopped
	Shredded Parmesan cheese, for serving (or Romano)

- Add all ingredients listed from diced tomatoes to salt & pepper to slow cooker.
- Cook on low heat 6-8 hours or high 3-4 hours.
- Now add in red kidney beans, navy beans, zucchini, and pasta into the slow cooker.
- Cook on high heat for an additional 20–25 minutes until pasta is tender.
- Then stir in the spinach and green beans and cook for an additional 5 minutes until heated through.
- Top with Parmesan cheese and garlic toast if desired.

Recipe inspired by littlespicejar.com

Preserving High-Moisture Herbs: freezing in oil



MATERIALS: high moisture herb(s) (such as mint, basil, lemon balm, and tarragon), sharp knife, ice cube tray, olive oil, and measuring spoons.

STEP 1: pick off leaves. Discard leaves that are discolored or dead.

STEP 2: chop up herbs.

STEP 3: think about the ratio of herbs to oil you want to have for each cube. I used 1 tsp of chopped herbs, to 1 tbsp of oil. You don't want to add too much chopped herbs in each cube- it's easier to add two cubes then evenly cut one for a smaller amount. Disperse the herbs evenly into the ice cube tray with a measuring spoon.

STEP 4: now evenly pour the oil into each cube with a measuring spoon.

STEP 5: make sure to label the ice cube tray! The herbs look the same once chopped. Pop out a cube whenever you need! Easy and convenient



Celebrate National Child Day 2017!

National Child Day is celebrated annually in Canada on November 20th in recognition of our country's commitment to upholding the rights of children. In 1959 Canada signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. The UNCRC sets out the rights of children with 54 articles that provide us with a solid road map of what is needed to raise healthy and happy children and youth.

Supporting children's rights is a key factor in improving their quality of life. It reaffirms our hard work and commitment to helping children reach their potential and advocating for change, throughout the year. Despite our abundant resources, many children and youth in Saskatchewan face poverty, bullying, discrimination, poor mental health outcomes and abuse. A community that promotes and invests in healthy childhood development, free from these adversities, raises healthier and more engaged citizens.

When children experience safe, stable, and nurturing relationships, they develop the strength necessary to cope with significant stressors or challenges. When they are placed in unsafe environments that do not uphold these rights, children are at risk for toxic stress, hindered brain development, and negative physical and mental health outcomes later in life.

At the core of respecting a child's right to safety is their voice being heard, believed, and valued in their community. Whether children and youth are at school, at home, on a sports team, with friends, or online, fostering a safe community involves creating positive relationships with caring peers and adults. We respect a child's right to safety by:

- being approachable;
- listening to, and believing their concerns; and
- advocating for safe spaces for them to learn, grow and play.



We encourage all community members to learn about children's rights and to make plans to celebrate the day. Wear blue, invite a speaker to your space to speak about safety, plan an event that highlights a social justice issue impacting the children you work with, read a story or watch a film on children's rights, or write an article for your local community newsletter. Please visit www.nationalchildday.ca for more ideas and to learn more about National Child Day. The 2017 theme is a child's right to be safe.



@Natlchildday #NCD2017 #RightToBeSafe

The Four Tendencies: The Indispensable Personality Profiles That Reveal How to Make Your Life Better (and Other People's Lives Better, Too)

by Gretchen Rubin (Author)

In this groundbreaking analysis of personality type, bestselling author of Better Than Before and The Happiness Project Gretchen Rubin reveals the one simple question that will transform what you do at home, at work, and in life.

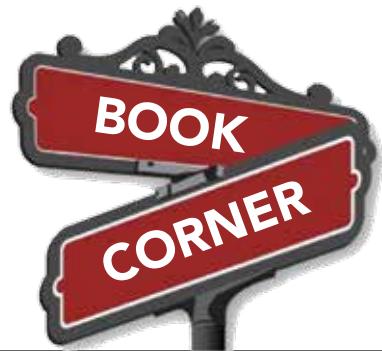
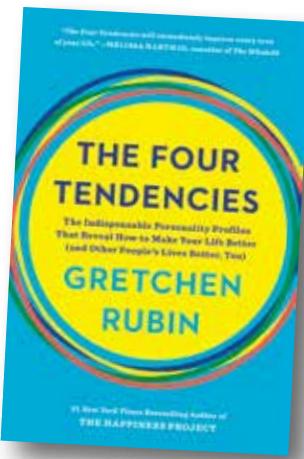
During her multibook investigation into understanding human nature, Gretchen Rubin realized that by asking the seemingly dry question "How do I respond to expectations?" we gain explosive self-knowledge. She discovered that based on their answer, people fit into Four Tendencies: Upholders, Questioners, Obligers, and Rebels. Our Tendency shapes every aspect of our behavior, so using this framework allows us to make better decisions, meet deadlines, suffer less stress, and engage more effectively.

More than 600,000 people have taken her online quiz, and managers, doctors, teachers, spouses, and parents already use the framework to help people make significant, lasting change.

The Four Tendencies hold practical answers if you've ever thought...

- People can rely on me, but I can't rely on myself.
- How can I help someone to follow good advice?
- People say I ask too many questions.
- How do I work with someone who refuses to do what I ask—or who keeps telling me what to do?

With sharp insight, compelling research, and hilarious examples, The Four Tendencies will help you get happier, healthier, more productive, and more creative. It's far easier to succeed when you know what works for you.



Gretchen Rubin is one of the most thought-provoking and influential writers on habits and happiness. Her New York Times bestseller, Better than Before, is about how we change our habits. The Happiness Project and Happier at Home were both instant bestsellers, and The Happiness Project spent more than two years on the bestseller list, including at #1. Her books have sold more than two million copies, in 30 languages. She has a popular podcast, Happier with Gretchen Rubin. Here, she writes about test-driving ideas from contemporary science and ancient wisdom about building good habits and a happier life.



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