

# Advisor

Winter 2012



# Advisor

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## SAVE THE DATE!

**2013 CFFA National Conference**  
**June 10 - 16, 2013**  
**Richmond Hill, Ontario**  
*Hosted by the Foster Parents Society  
of Ontario*  
**More details to follow in the New  
Year...**

## Running Toward Home

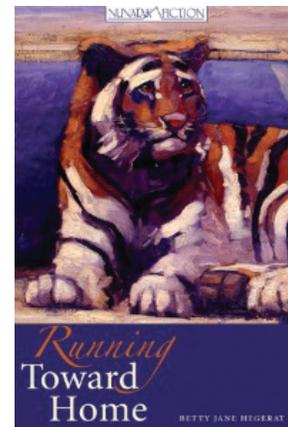
by *Betty Jane Hegerat*

**T**ransferred between foster homes for most of his life, twelve-year-old Corey Brinkman has developed a bad habit of running away. His new foster parents, Wilma and Ben Howard, are determined to make their home his for life, but old habits are hard to break.

Wilma takes Corey to the Calgary Zoo for his annual visit with his birth mother, despite her discomfort about Tina Brinkman and the fever Corey is pretending not to have. When Corey goes missing at the zoo, his two mothers are forced into an uneasy truce in the search for their son.

*Running Toward Home* reveals the complex relationships surrounding a foster child, and the fine line between protection and standing in the way of life lessons. For twenty-four hours the Calgary Zoo becomes the entire world, and the lines between the nurturing instincts in animals and humans become blurred.

ISBN 13: 978189712011, 224 page paperback, Fall 2006



## 2013 PAGM dates have been announced!

**The 2013 Provincial Annual General Meeting will be held on June 15th, 2013. More information will be provided closer to that date.**

## To all Local Committees

By contacting the SFFA with the dates and times of events happening in your region, we can post the details on our new online events calendar. It is a great tool to keep members informed of upcoming activities and events in your area.

Also, a reminder to prepare for financial year end and the upcoming AGMs.

## Season's Greetings and Merry Christmas from our Chairman of the Board, Kevin Harris

On behalf of the board of directors we wish you a merry Christmas and hope that all of the wonder and splendour of this season will be enjoyed by all.

It's been a busy year so far and we are seeing some good things happening within the circle of the foster families of Saskatchewan.

We have seen new families join us in caring for the vulnerable children and families that come into our homes.

I had the opportunity to meet



a number of representatives from various Community Based Organizations at a recent meeting with the Ministry of Social Services. It was encouraging to see the number of organizations active and involved

with the caring of children, youth and families who are in crisis in this province.

Good things are happening. I hope we can share some of these positive outcomes with you through the course of this next year.

All the best from my family to yours. I trust that the meaning of Christmas and the love and joy it brings will be felt by all.

*Best Regards*  
Kevin Harris

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## Saskatchewan Prevention Institute Parenting Programs

### Healthy Parenting Home Study Program

Parenting is a learned skill. Parents need resources that support positive parenting skills. Healthy Parenting Home Study Program is designed for parents who prefer to learn on their own. The correspondence style course is useful for parents who live in locations where group parenting programs are not offered.

Healthy Parenting Home Study Program is a program for expectant parents, caregivers, and parents of children from infancy to age five. The program is a self-led study that enables parents to expand their knowledge on parenting in the comfort of their own home. Growth and development, physical and emotional needs, and positive discipline strategies are some of the topics that are discussed in this home study program.

The Healthy Parenting Home Study Program, developed by Saskatchewan Health, was first piloted in January 1996 and revised in 1998. In June 2002, the Saskatchewan Prevention Institute was given copyright of the program.

There is no cost for those who would like to participate in the program. You can register for the home study program on the website at: [www.healthyparenting.ca](http://www.healthyparenting.ca)

### Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program

"There are no perfect parents or perfect children or perfect people. We can only do our best, and we all need help once in a while."

Nobody's Perfect is a preventive educational and support program for parents of children from birth to age five. It supports parents to

enhance their knowledge, skills and self-confidence that are vital to healthy and effective parenting. It also encourages the development of a strong and supportive social network among participants.

Developed by Health Canada, Nobody's Perfect meets the needs of young, single, low-income, socially or geographically isolated parents or parents with limited formal education. Nobody's Perfect is a primary prevention program and is not intended for families where parenting relationships are in crisis. In 1990 the Saskatchewan Institute on Prevention of Handicaps became the coordinating agency in Saskatchewan.

For more information on these programs, please visit [www.preventioninstitute.sk.ca](http://www.preventioninstitute.sk.ca)

## More support for Nipawin children and families

The Nipawin Oasis Community Centre Co-operative Ltd. will be piloting a new program to support at-risk children, youth and families thanks to a funding partnership with the Ministry of Social Services. “We are very happy to provide this funding to the Nipawin Oasis Community Centre for this important program,” Social Services Minister June Draude said. “We need to make sure that our most vulnerable citizens have access to the programming they need and this is another step in the right direction.”

“This new program will help a lot of people in our community get the support that they desperately need,” Nipawin Oasis President Garry Schenstead said. “Through this partnership with the Ministry of Social Services, we will be able to make a real difference in the lives of at-risk children and families in Nipawin and the surrounding community.”

The ministry is providing the Nipawin Oasis Community Co-operative Centre with \$59,000 in 2012-13 to pilot a counseling, support and education program. Total funding will be more than \$88,000 per year once the program is fully operational.

The Nipawin Oasis Community Co-operative Centre provides prevention, educational and intervention programming services and employment opportunities to the community of Nipawin and surrounding area.

## New Legislation will enhance services available to Saskatchewan residents

The Government of Saskatchewan has announced that The Ombudsman Act, 2012 and The Advocate for Children and Youth Act will take effect September 1, 2012.

“This has been a great opportunity to work with the Ombudsman and the Children’s Advocate to identify improvements to their legislation,” Justice Minister and Attorney General Gordon Wyant said. “Their new powers will assist them in resolving concerns brought to them by Saskatchewan residents in a simpler, quicker and more collaborative manner.”

The Advocate for Children and Youth Act maintains all existing powers of the Children’s Advocate and better defines the position’s powers and duties. This includes furthering the distinction between ‘children’ and ‘youth,’ allowing the Advocate to conduct research into children’s rights, and clarifying the

requirement for children and youth to be given information about the services of the Advocate.

“Achieving this stand alone legislation is a significant milestone in our maturation as an independent office that coincides with our 18th Anniversary this fall,” Children’s Advocate Bob Pringle said. “We are eager to celebrate this development and look forward to realizing the expanded responsibilities found in this new Act.”

The Ombudsman Act, 2012 maintains all existing powers of the Ombudsman and better defines the position’s powers and duties.

“The Act takes several steps forward,” Ombudsman Kevin Fenwick said. “Our health jurisdiction now includes certain affiliates such as special care homes. Also, the ability to review matters at the invitation of non-jurisdictional agencies puts the Act at the leading edge of ombudsman legislation in Canada.”

## Highlights from National Foster Families Week—October 21<sup>st</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>

National Foster Families Week is a time for foster families across Canada to be recognized for their dedication, love, and commitment to children and youth in care. The kick-off event for this year was held in Prince Albert on October 22nd, 2012.

*The SFFA would like to acknowledge the following 2012 award recipients:*

**BARB BAYER AWARD – Jackie Sorowski**

**HELEN MONTGOMERY AWARD – Peggy and Dennis Grimard**

# The *Holidays* in Foster Care



**H**olidays mean family and for children who are not with their family, a time for remembering those they've said goodbye to. Your child's family is excited about the holidays and may try to "make up" for their child being in foster care. All families have good times. They can't explain it, but somewhere the memories remain.

## **What behaviors might you see during this time?**

- Frequent pouting
- Aggression—including hitting, biting or kicking
- Whining
- Inconsolable crying
- Nightmares
- Suicidal ideations
- Old fears become new again
- Increase of temper outbursts

## **Why are they doing this?**

Traditionally the holidays consist of presents and parties, decorations and dinners, but in foster care, they are also times of anger and annoyance as well as temper and trauma. Keeping a cool head and a warm heart will enable your family, including your foster child, to survive the holidays!

## **What can you do?**

1. Meet together with your child's family to plan holiday schedules. Be sure to include any school productions your child might be involved in! If one particular date or event is special to you, speak up now. When you ask for a certain date, offer something in return. Compromise!
2. Ask your foster child or his parents about their family traditions and try to incorporate some into your home.
3. Exchange family recipes with your child's family at Thanksgiving time.
4. Coordinate gift giving! Work together to determine gifts to be purchased by your family and gifts to be purchased by the family of origin.
5. Share the load. You don't have to impress anyone!

## **What about me?**

Talk to other foster parents who can give you a boost. They share your pain! Call your caseworker. He/She will help in any way possible. Accept the fact that you won't please everyone. With so many people in your life, there is no way around it. Set the example of calm. Keep the children on daily routines. This will lessen their stress, which also lessens yours! Be flexible. Your level of calm becomes stressed when plans get canceled or changed. Be prepared with alternate plans.

*From: <http://www.hsdcsf.utah.gov/PDF/Weekly%20Updates/The%20Holidays%20In%20Foster%20Care%20Brochure.pdf>*

# CANGRANDS National Kinship Support for caregiver families across Canada

CANGRANDS welcomes all grandparents and Kinship families who are raising grandchildren or extended family members. Our aim is to support grandmothers, grandfathers, and Kinship families to maintain or re-establish family ties. CANGRANDS is a not-for-profit organization devoted to providing kinship support for caregiver families across Canada.

CANGRANDS tries to assist GRG's and Kin-headed households by providing support and information when and where possible. Input from all CANGRANDS is encouraged so that we can develop programs and support applications to better serve GRG's now and in the future. Here is a 'short-list' of what we do:

#### **Online:**

- Access to a private support internet group.
- Exchange and share photos in a private group section.
- Share friendship in a nightly chat room.
- Gather information for distribution and for our web site.
- Provide a newsletter (4-6 times a year).

#### **Practical:**

- 'Court support' whenever possible.
- Exchange birthday and other special date wishes.
- Invitation to special grandparent events to enjoy

fellowship with informal afternoon or evenings out — whenever possible.

- Some telephone support when a member is in crisis.
- Some assistance in doing court papers for grands that represent themselves.

#### **Emotional:**

- Support each other emotionally.
- Develop bonds with 'like minds'.
- Prayer and encourage each other.
- Share our know how of the court system and CAS too.

#### **As a Member of CANGRANDS:**

- You receive updates on the law and information passed on as we get it.
- Be offered awesome support and friendship from those also raising kinship children

#### **Your Membership helps:**

- Cover long-distance phone calls to distressed grands who are calling for advice and support.
- Covers gas for 'court support' and so much more.

For more information, contact us at:

CANGRANDS National Kinship Support

Tel: 613-474-0035

[www.cangrands.com](http://www.cangrands.com)

## Christmas allowances

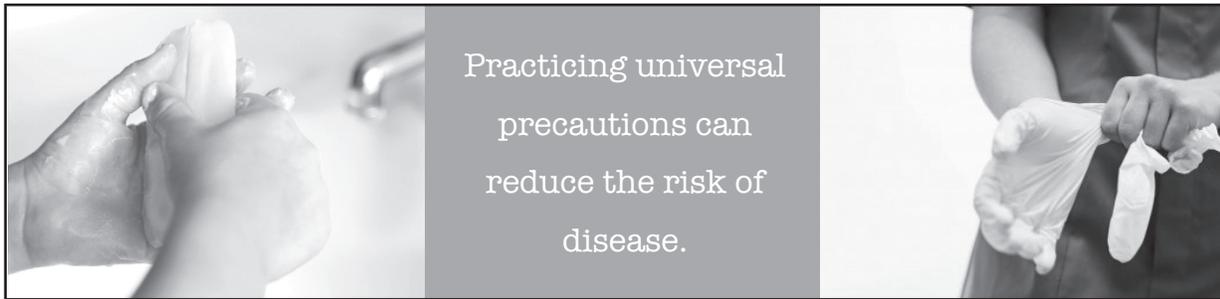
Each child in care shall receive a Christmas allowance to enable the caregiver to purchase a gift for the child and for the child to purchase a gift for their family and/or caregiver.

Payment of the Christmas gift allowance will be made automatically, in advance, through the FYAP system for children who are in care. A print-out listing the gift allowance issued is sent to each service area by mid-November and the caregivers receive the allowance by mid-November as well.

When children are missed or are admitted to care after October 31st, the caseworker arranges for payment of the allowance through FYAP as a purchase order. The Christmas allowance is \$75.00 per child.



## Universal precautions



**P**racticing universal precautions can reduce the risk of disease.

*Hand washing:*

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water.

*Washing clothing and other linens:*

- Clothing and linens soiled with blood or other body fluids should be laundered in the hottest water the fabric will allow. Soiled articles can be rinsed in cold water before washing in the hottest water allowed if necessary.

*Using protective clothing and equipment:*

- Use disposable latex gloves when handling or cleaning up blood and/or other body fluids. Household rubber gloves can be used, but they need to be cleaned with a bleach solution and rinsed repeatedly with water before using them again.

- Be sure to wash hands after removing gloves.

- Use waterproof coverings on any open cuts or sores.

*Cleaning spills of blood or other body fluids:*

- Clean contaminated surfaces with detergent and water. Disinfect all

surfaces with a solution of bleach (one part household bleach to 10 parts water). Be careful, as some surfaces may be damaged by exposure to bleach solution.

- Rinse any mops or cleaning cloths with a bleach solution.

*Disposal of contaminated waste:*

- Secure waste in a sealed double plastic bag before discarding with routine garbage. If there are any sharp objects that may be contaminated, they should be put in a puncture proof plastic or metal container that can seal firmly.

## 2011 census counts 29,590 foster children

**T**here were 29,590 foster children aged 14 and under living in private Canadian households in 2011, the latest census shows — a long-awaited new benchmark that child-welfare advocates hope is the first step on a long road towards improving the plight of marginalized kids.

The number is as significant for its mere existence — children in foster care have never before been counted in the national census — as for what it may be able to tell social workers about the foster-child landscape in Canada, experts say.

Of those households that reported having foster children, 45.1 per cent were home to a single foster child, 28.8 per cent had two foster children and 26.2 per cent reported having three or more, Statistics Canada said.

Until now, data on the number of foster children in Canada was limited to provincial and territorial estimates,

each based on different levels of funding and record keeping. Indeed, the census data likely only represents a fraction of the true number of foster kids in the country, experts warn.

“We really don’t know, without going from province to province and getting an estimate from each province at any given time, how many children are in the foster care system,” said Fred Phelps, executive director of the Canadian Association of Social Workers.

When a child protection agency is called and an investigation is triggered, First Nations children are nearly five times more likely to be investigated and 12 times more likely to be placed in foster care than non-First Nations kids, Trocme said. In some provinces, they represent more than 80 per cent of children in foster care.



## CTRI — Crisis and Trauma Resource Institute Inc.

CTRI provides professional training and consulting services across Canada for individuals, schools, communities, and organizations affected by or involved in working with issues of crisis and trauma. For more information on the format, costs, and locations of the workshops, please visit the CTRI website at [www.ctrinstitute.com](http://www.ctrinstitute.com)

The following workshop sessions will be offered throughout 2012-2013 in Regina and Saskatoon:

### Regina

- Dec. 17 – Understanding Mental Illness
- Dec. 18 – Critical Incident Group Debriefing
- Feb. 27 – Anxiety: Practical Intervention Strategies
- Feb. 28 – Depression: Practical Intervention Strategies
- Mar. 19 – De-escalating Potentially Violent Situations
- Mar. 20 – Crisis Response Planning
- Apr. 24 – Violence Threat Assessment
- Apr. 25-26 – Trauma: Strategies for Resolving the Impact of Post-Traumatic Stress
- May 15-16 – Self-Injury Behaviour in Youth: Issues and Strategies
- June 12-14 – Counselling Skills: An Introduction and Overview

### Saskatoon

- Dec. 13 – Understanding Mental Illness
- Dec. 14 – Critical Incident Group Debriefing
- Jan. 29-31 – Train-the-Trainer Certification Workshop for De-escalating Potentially Violent Situations
- Feb. 21 – Anxiety: Practical Intervention Strategies
- Feb. 22 – Depression: Practical Intervention Strategies
- Mar. 21 – De-escalating Potentially Violent Situations
- Mar. 22 – Crisis Response Planning
- Apr. 17 – Violence Threat Assessment: Planning and Response
- Apr. 18-19 – Trauma: Strategies for Resolving the Impact of Post-Traumatic Stress
- May 13-14 – Self-Injury Behaviour in Youth: Issues and Strategies
- May 15 – Disordered Eating: From Image to Illness
- June 12-14 – Train-the-Trainer Certification Workshop for De-escalating Potentially Violent Situations
- June 19-21 – Counselling Skills: An Introduction and Overview

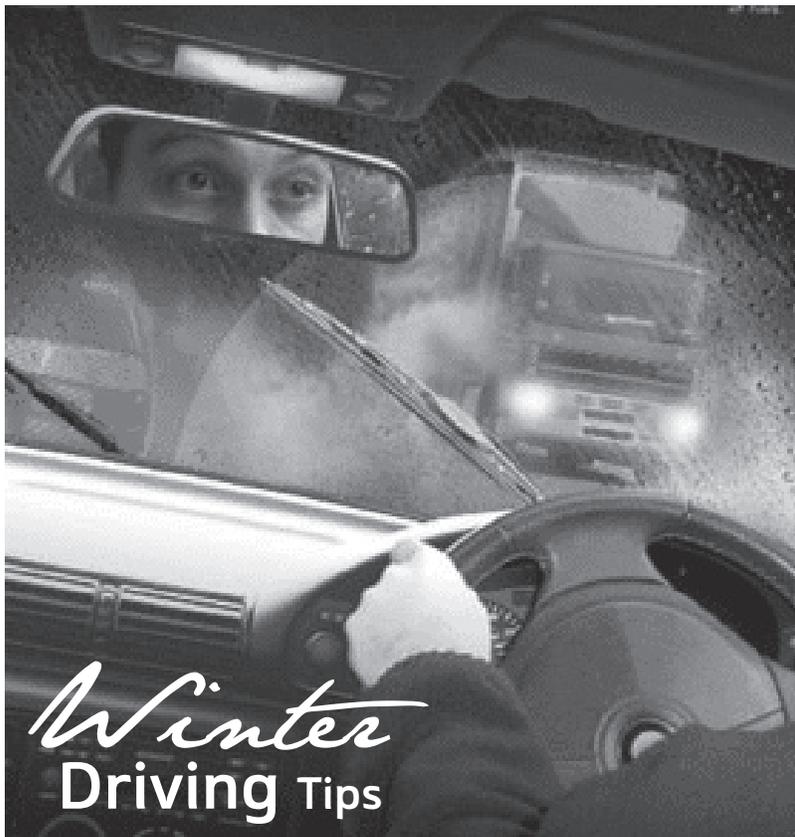
## DID YOU KNOW



If you refer a family to become foster parents and they are approved, you are eligible to receive a \$200.00 referral fee!

Following approval and child placement in the home of the new foster family, the referring family must contact their resource worker to request payment. The new foster family is responsible for verifying the referring foster family.

There is no limit on the number of new referrals that a foster family can receive payment for, provided that the new families become approved and have accepted placement of a child.



**W**inter driving can sometimes be a daunting task, especially when conditions are snowy or icy. Follow these steps to keep yourself safe and collision free during the next few blustery winter months.

### *Step 1*

#### **Make sure that your vehicle is prepared for winter driving**

- Winter tires are a good option, as they will provide greater traction under snowy or icy conditions.
- Keep a snow brush/scrapper in your car, along with possible emergency items such as a lightweight shovel, battery jumper cables, and a flashlight.
- Make sure that mirrors, all windows, and the top of your vehicle, are free of snow or frost before getting onto the road.

### *Step 2*

#### **Drive smoothly and slowly**

- Don't make any abrupt turns or stops when driving. Doing so will often cause your vehicle to

lose control and skid.

- Driving too quickly is the main cause of winter collisions. Be sure to drive slowly and carefully on snow and ice covered roads.

### *Step 3*

#### **Don't tailgate**

- Tailgating becomes much worse in winter weather. Stopping takes much longer on snowy and icy roads than on dry pavement, so be sure to leave enough room between your vehicle and the one in front of you.

### *Step 4*

#### **Brake before making turns**

- Brake slowly to reduce speed before entering turns. Once you

have rounded the corner you can accelerate again.

### *Step 5*

#### **Learn how to control skids**

- When skidding, you actually need to go against your natural instincts and turn into the skid and accelerate. Doing so transfers your vehicle's weight from the front to the rear and often helps vehicles to regain control.

### *Step 6*

#### **Lights On**

- Turn on your lights to increase your visibility to other motorists.

### *Step 7*

#### **No Cruise Control**

- Never use cruise control if conditions are snowy, icy, or wet, because if your car hydroplanes, your car will try to accelerate and you may lose control of your vehicle.

### *Step 8*

#### **Don't "pump" the brakes**

- If your vehicle is equipped with an anti-lock breaking system (ABS), do not "pump" the brakes. Apply constant pressure and let the system do its work.

### *Step 9*

#### **Pay attention**

- Manoeuvres are more difficult to make in the snow. Be sure to anticipate what your next move is going to be to give yourself lots of room for turns and stopping.

[www.canadasafetycouncil.org](http://www.canadasafetycouncil.org)

# Start Your Own • HOLIDAY TRADITIONS •

by Cheryl Tallman and Joan Ahlers

**H**oliday traditions make for fond memories and great stories. Traditional holiday meals and rituals from your past are a great place to start, but it's fun to get creative and make some holiday traditions unique to your family. Here are some ideas to get you started:

## Plan a potluck dinner party

Potluck dinner parties are great family fun, easy to put together and the host doesn't end up spending most of the night in the kitchen. Ask each family you invite to bring a dish. Specify what type of dish (i.e. pasta side dish, veggie appetizer, main dish, etc.) and let everyone know how many people they will need to serve. (Don't forget to ask everyone to bring recipe cards for the dish they are bringing!)

At dinner, keep things simple by setting the table buffet style. Collect all the recipe cards and send each family home with a "mini" cookbook from the evening.



## Make homemade gifts

Preserves, salsa, relishes and candies make thoughtful gifts. Find one of your grandmother's famous recipes and bring it back in her honor. The kids can help cook and they can also help decorate the packaging.

## Volunteer during the holiday

The holidays can be very lonely for people without family. Volunteering as a family is a great way to show children of all ages the true meaning of Christmas. Whether it is Christmas caroling in a hospital,



helping at a soup kitchen, or visiting the elderly, volunteering will leave a great impression on you and your children.

### Take advantage of the snow

After a big snowstorm, take the whole family sledding. Plan special extras like bringing along a Thermos of hot chocolate or having homemade soup when you get home. Then, make a fire, serve hot cider or holiday punch and play board games for the afternoon.



Here's a cider recipe from my mom that's a holiday hit:

### *Charlotte's Hot Spiced Cider*

#### Ingredients:

1/2 gallon apple cider  
1 quart cranberry apple juice  
1/2 cup orange juice  
Juice of a lemon  
8-10 whole cloves  
4 cinnamon sticks  
1/4 - 1/2 cup sugar, to taste



#### Directions:

It is best to make the cider a day ahead. Heat all ingredients in a large pan and stir it until the sugar melts. Refrigerate overnight. When ready to serve, reheat and ladle into cups. (Remove the cloves and cinnamon sticks.)

Reprinted with permission from [www.justthefactsbaby.com](http://www.justthefactsbaby.com)

## Dealing with the Common Cold

Allison's grandmother was shocked to see the five-year-old going off to kindergarten with freshly-washed, wet hair. "That's why she gets so many colds," Grandma said.

Allison has had her share of colds. But Grandma's wet-hair theory — although a popular one — is technically all wet. Wet hair or cold weather or drafty rooms do not directly cause colds, but such conditions can make the body more susceptible to catching them.

Viruses cause colds.

Allison likely catches her cold viruses in kindergarten. Cold viruses are contagious, especially during the first three to four days a child has a cold. When one child in school has a cold, several classmates often catch it.

There is no vaccination for a cold. But you can take steps to minimize the risk of your child catching one.

Hand-washing kills germs. You, your child's caregivers, and your child should wash hands regularly and thoroughly with soap, especially after using the toilet and before eating. Discourage your child from touching his or her nose, mouth, or eyes, especially if your child has a



When to call the doctor depends on several factors, including the symptoms and your child's age.

habit of placing fingers in the mouth. Also, teach your child to sneeze into a handkerchief or tissue. This will help keep your child's hands relatively clean and virus-free.

There is no cure for a cold and antibiotics do not help. While several over-the-counter medications may provide temporary relief for some symptoms, consult your doctor before giving medications. Use an alternative to aspirin to treat a virus-related illness, such as a cold. Aspirin is associated with Reye's syndrome,

a rare but potentially fatal nerve disorder.

Plenty of rest and fluids often help speed recovery from a cold, which usually last 5-7 days. Removing the mucus that accumulates in the nose may help your child sleep and eat better. Try to have your child gently blow his or her nose. Use a cool mist — not steam — humidifier to help keep mucus loose.

When to call the doctor depends on several factors, including the symptoms and your child's age. Ask your doctor what symptoms should prompt a call to the office.

The cold is the most common childhood illness and is usually not a serious health problem. But your child should be made as comfortable as possible and watched carefully to make sure he or she is making a steady recovery.

*This column is written by Robert B. McCall, Ph.D., Co-Director of the University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development and Professor of Psychology, and is provided as a public service by the Frank and Theresa Caplan Fund for Early Childhood Development and Parenting Education.*

## Have you checked out our NEW and improved website?

The new Saskatchewan Foster Families Association website has been launched! On the new site you'll find:

- a new and improved look and design
- a user-friendly site that's easier to navigate
- a community events calendar listing relevant events taking place each month
- a blog where foster parents can post things that matter to them. As foster parents, you will also be able to highlight important events happening in and around your community. Connect with other foster parents around the province with this incredible new feature!



**www.sffa.sk.ca**

## Carbon Monoxide

As the colder weather starts to settle in, people use fuel-burning appliances more frequently in order to keep themselves warm. People need to be extremely vigilant when using these appliances to prevent deadly exposure to the serious hazards of carbon monoxide (CO).

Carbon monoxide is often called the “silent killer” – its victims cannot see it, smell it or taste it. It is an invisible, odorless gas that can poison, and even kill you. Breathing in carbon monoxide can make you feel sick, and feel as if you have the flu. You may experience headaches, nausea, dizziness and shortness of breath. People most at risk are infants, small children, pregnant women, elderly people, and people with heart or lung problems.

Breathing in carbon monoxide can make you feel sick, and feel as if you have the flu.

Carbon monoxide gas is produced by the incomplete burning of fuels. It can be released by gas furnaces, hot water heaters, cars, fireplaces, wood stoves and kerosene heaters. Faulty burners or clogged chimneys are often part of the problem. To avoid the production of CO, you should have your chimney, furnace and gas-fired appliances checked by professional technicians every year.

A carbon monoxide detector is the best way to protect you and your family from this potentially deadly threat. Install CO alarms where they can be easily heard, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. When installing a CO alarm, always follow the manufacturer’s instructions. Test CO alarms at least once a month and replace batteries according to manufacturer’s instructions.

To reduce the chances of you or a loved one getting carbon monoxide poisoning, follow these tips:

- Eliminate CO at the source. Make the maintenance of your furnace, fireplace, and all fuel-burning appliances an absolute priority. Have them checked and cleaned each year.
- Install a certified carbon monoxide alarm in your home and check it regularly to make sure the battery is working.
- Know the symptoms of CO poisoning. If they appear, it is important to get everyone, including pets, outside to fresh air immediately.
- Never heat your home with a gas stove.
- Never use a barbeque, charcoal or hibachi grill in the home or in an enclosed area.
- During and after a snowstorm, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove and fireplace are clear of snow.
- Never use a gas-powered generator inside your home.
- If your CO alarm sounds, make sure to get out of your home immediately and call 911 from a safe place.

[www.canadasafetycouncil.org](http://www.canadasafetycouncil.org)

## Quotes:

***A baby is born with a need to be loved - and never outgrows it.***

— Frank A. Clark

***We never know the love of a parent until we become parents ourselves.***

— Henry Ward Beecher

***The well-being and welfare of children should always be our focus.***

— Todd Tiahrt

## Mileage Rates

Effective October 1st, 2012, mileage rates are now 40.86 cents per kilometer or 44 cents per kilometer north of the 54 parallel.

# Home Fire Safety Tips for the Holidays

## The Christmas tree

- Get a freshly cut tree. It will stay green longer and be less of a fire hazard. Try to pick a tree with a strong green colour and noticeable fragrance.
- Always test for freshness before buying. A tree with high moisture content is safer. Very few needles should fall when the butt of the tree is tapped on the ground; needles should bend, not break; and the stump should be sticky with resin.
- Place the tree in a stand that will hold 2 to 3 litres of water and top it up daily. Make sure it is always immersed in water: If water drops below the trunk, the stem may reseal itself, requiring a fresh cut. Use a tree stand that has widespread legs for better balance.
- Do not set your tree up near a heat source such as a radiator, television, fireplace, heating duct or sunny window. It should not block doors or windows.
- Never use lighted candles on the tree.
- Remove the tree within 10 to 14 days. After that amount of time in a heated building, even the freshest tree can start to dry out.

## Decorations

- Choose decorations that are flame-retardant, non-combustible and non-conductive.
- If there are young children or pets in your home, avoid very small decorations.
- Avoid using angel hair (glass wool) together with spray-on snowflakes. This combination is highly combustible.
- Do not use metallic ornaments on the tree. If they make contact with defective wiring they could become a shock hazard.

## Lights

- Use Canadian Standards Association (CSA) certified light strings/sets.
- Use the proper lights for the environment. Indoor light strings/sets should not be used outdoors because they lack weatherproof connections. Some outdoor light strings/sets burn too hot indoors.
- Inspect light strings/set before use. Check for cracked bulbs and for frayed, broken or exposed wires, and discard if faulty.



- Do not use electric light strings/sets on metallic trees. A faulty system could energize the tree and shock or electrocute anyone coming into contact. Illuminate metallic trees with colored floodlights placed at a safe distance from the tree and out of reach.
- Turn off all tree and display lights before retiring for the night or before leaving the house.

## Candles

- Place candles away from absolutely anything that could catch fire.
- Never leave burning candles unattended.
- Burn them only when a responsible adult is overseeing the flame.
- Put candles in sturdy holders on a stable surface, well away from drafts, curtains, children and pets.
- Snuff them out before leaving the room or going to sleep.

## The Fireplace

- Never burn gift wrappings, boxes, cartons, or other types of packing in the fireplace. They burn too rapidly and generate far too much heat.
- Don't hang Christmas stockings from the mantel when the fireplace is in use.
- Always use a screen in front of the fireplace to protect against flying sparks.
- Never use gasoline or any other flammable liquids to start a fire.
- Use only seasoned and dried wood.

- Never leave the fire unattended or let it smoulder.
- Clean the ashes regularly. Place the ashes in a metal container and store outside away from flammable materials.
- Don't use Christmas trees for firewood.

### Electrical Outlets

- There is often a tendency to overload wall outlets during the holiday season. This is an unsafe practice and should be avoided even for short durations.
- Inspect all cords before using. Make sure they are

CSA certified. Look for loose connections or frayed or exposed wire. Discard any defective cords. Read the labels and manufacturer's instructions to ensure proper use.

- Insert plugs fully into outlets. Poor contact may cause overheating or shock.
- To avoid possible overheating, do not coil or bunch an extension cord which is in use and do not run it under carpets or rugs.

[www.canadasafetycouncil.org](http://www.canadasafetycouncil.org)

## Counselling made available for Foster Families

### DID YOU KNOW



Where it is determined that a foster family is experiencing trauma as a result of a serious event directly related to providing foster care, the department will help foster families access counselling services as required.

Traumatic effects may include a deep and pervasive sense of grief, loss, poor self-image, thought disorder, psychosomatic illness, or impaired social functioning.

#### POSSIBLE TRAUMATIC EVENTS:

While not all serious events will lead to trauma it should be recognized that events such as the following may trigger a traumatic response:

- Death of a child while in the care of the foster family
- Death of a child who is no longer in the care of the foster family but where there has been significant and strong attachment to the child.
- Loss of a child through family reunification, adoption or removal from the foster family home where there has been a long-term, significant and strong attachment to the child.
- Serious physical or emotional harm to an immediate family member by a child placed in the home or as the result of a child being placed in their care.

#### PRACTICE AND PROCEDURES:

Where it is determined that a family or some of its members are exhibiting traumatic reactions, the family wishes to seek formal counselling and it is determined

by the department that formal counselling is required, managers, supervisors and staff are expected to help foster families access counselling.

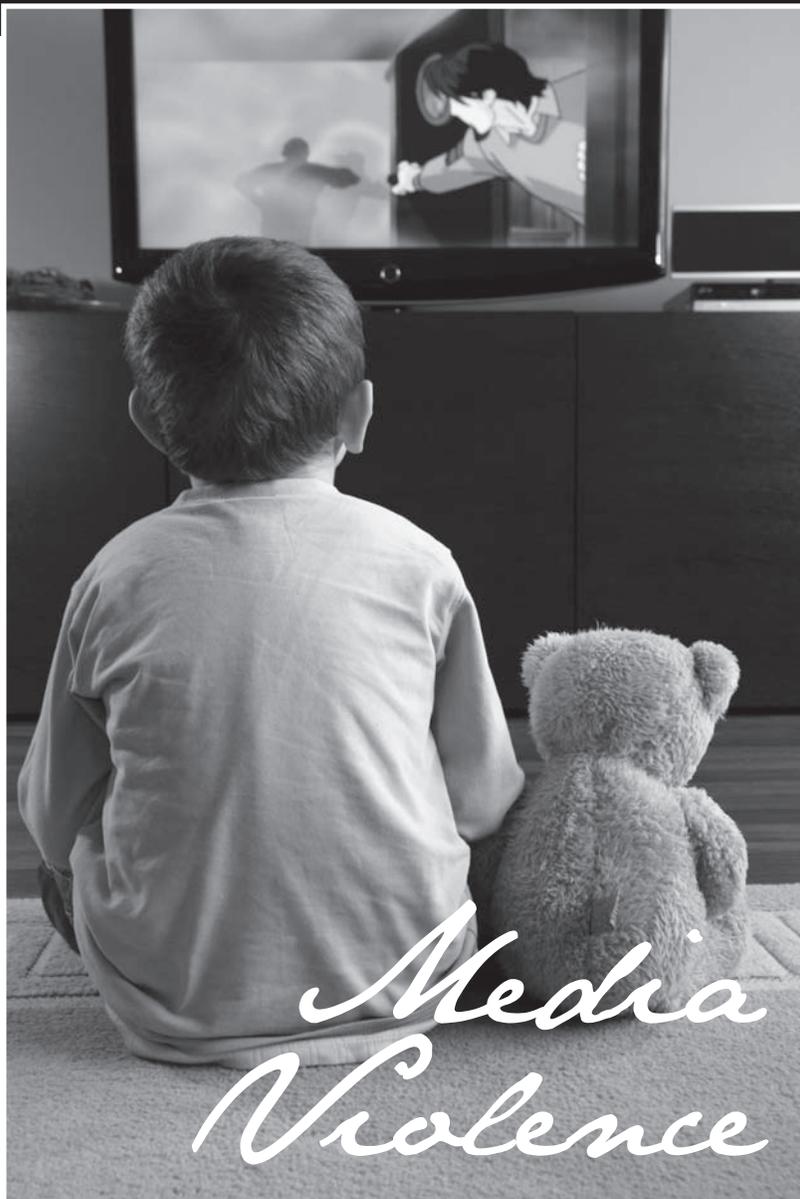
If it is determined that counselling is required it should be provided through public funded agencies wherever possible. Where a foster family has access to employee assistance programs through their place of employment or access to other support services, they should be encouraged to explore such services as they may apply to the situation.

The department will only pay for counselling through publicly funded agencies where counselling is not available within a reasonable distance from the foster family's home or where such agencies cannot meet with the foster family within a reasonable period of time. Prior approval for the services must be received.

#### PRIVATE COUNSELLOR OR AGENCY:

Where the department determines that counseling services need to be obtained from a private counsellor or agency:

- The counsellor and agency must be recognized by the department as qualified.
- Rates charged must be within the range of a reasonable community standard
- The department will pay for a maximum of five sessions. Time per session should be limited to 2 hours or less.
- A formal service contact must be entered into with the counsellor or agency with a clear statement of purpose and cost.



Another side effect, the “Mean World Syndrome,” can result in children becoming unreasonably fearful of the world around them.

Rob’s son wanted nothing to do with the animated movies that earned a G-rating. The video he wanted to rent was an action movie, the kind filled with special effects and wholesale slaughter.

It was R-rated. And Rob, who had seen the promo for this film a few months earlier, recalled how, in the span of some 30 seconds, the

automatic-weapon-toting hero killed roughly a dozen terrorists in front of an unblinking camera. “I’m sorry,” he said to his son. “That’s too violent.”

“But all my friends have seen it,” his son replied, adding that one of his schoolmates claims to have gotten the video for his birthday. Rob stood firm. No violent films, and no R-rated films.

His son didn’t like it. He sniffed at the G-rated video Rob rented. He pouted and stomped. Rob didn’t like disappointing his son, but took comfort knowing he did the right thing.

Nearly four decades of published research clearly shows that a steady diet of violent television, movies, and other media is unhealthy for children.

As early as the 1960s, studies suggested violence on television contributes to children behaving more anti-socially and aggressively. Since then, The American Medical Association, American Psychological Association, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the National Institute of Mental Health have gone on record warning that exposure to media violence contributes to the development of aggressive behavior.

Studies also report that a diet of violent programming can render people numb to the consequences of real violence and less sympathetic to its victims. Another side effect, the “Mean World Syndrome,” can result in children becoming unreasonably fearful of the world around them.

As a parent, you should control the hours your children spend in front of the television as well as the programs they watch. Don’t allow young children to watch violent programs or play violent electronic games. Remember, cartoons are among the most violent type of programming on TV.

Use film and television rating systems to help select the programs

and movies your children watch, or screen them yourself. Use the V-chip if you have it. If you allow your child to watch a violent show, watch it together and discuss it with him or her, especially the distinction between make-believe and reality. And encourage your children to watch socially positive programs, perhaps together.

It's up to you to make sure that violent television, movies, and games do not influence your child's attitudes or behavior.

*This column is written by Robert B. McCall, Ph.D., Co-Director of the University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development and Professor of Psychology, and is provided as a public service by the Frank and Theresa Caplan Fund for Early Childhood Development and Parenting Education.*

The Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children (CCRC) is a network of Canadian organizations and individuals who promote respect for the rights of children. Its purpose is to: exchange information; provide public education materials about the Convention on the Rights of the Child; monitor implementation of the Convention in Canada; and engage in dialogue with government officials on child rights issues.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the guiding framework for all activities of the coalition. To learn more, visit: [www.rightsofchildren.ca](http://www.rightsofchildren.ca)

# CHILDREN'S Discovery MUSEUM on the Saskatchewan

## Kinsmen Day at the Museum

Kinsmen Day at the Museum will be held the fourth Sunday of each month in 2012, with admission to the Children's Discovery Museum in Market Mall free to everyone, courtesy of the Kinsmen Club of Saskatoon.



We look forward to seeing you there!

## Science Saturdays

Every Saturday from now until December 29th, the Children's Discovery Museum will have science themed activities for the children, along with the usual exhibits. Each Saturday, there will either be shows put on by the Saskatchewan Science Centre or there will be various science exhibits out with activities led by staff. All of these events and times can be found on our online calendar at [www.museumforkids.sk.ca](http://www.museumforkids.sk.ca).

CHILDREN'S DISCOVERY MUSEUM & PotashCorp  
PRESENT  
**SCIENCE**  
SATURDAYS

**DATES:**  
Every Saturday from October 13  
to December 29, 2012

**LOCATION:**  
Children's Discovery Museum

Check our website, [museumforkids.sk.ca](http://museumforkids.sk.ca),  
or our facebook page for times and details

Science Saturday activities included in general admission price

SASKATOON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION SASKATCHEWAN SCIENCE CENTRE



## Inexpensive Christmas party favour ideas

Are you looking for inexpensive Christmas party favour ideas to give out on your next Christmas party? Well, here are several options for you to take into consideration.

Give out Christmas trees made out of chocolate. That's right—melt some green chocolate melts and let it pour into candy molds shaped like Christmas trees. Then, lay sucker sticks into them while they're still warm. After they harden, pop the trees out and wrap them in cellophane before tying them off with ribbons.

If you want a different variation of these cheap Christmas party favour ideas, paint out each Christmas tree with decorations with the help of a craft brush before pouring out the chocolate. Several candy melts out there happen to exist in various colours, making it even easier for you to melt your chocolate and paint on any lights, ornaments, or garlands that you want.

You can also buy several small wreaths and put Christmas berries, ribbons, dried flowers, holly and cinnamon sticks on them. Make hangers by gluing ribbon loops onto the back. As an alternative, it would also be possible to decorate every wreath so that it matches the interests of your guests. If you know someone who

likes sewing, for example, you can decorate a wreath with thread spools, ribbons and scissors.

You can also print your favourite recipes for cookies on cards and place cookie cutters in decorative bags of cellophane along with your recipe before tying them off with ribbons of various colors.

Another idea would be to download Christmas songs (preferably your favourite ones) to make CDs for each guest. Then, add a CD label and place it into a red or green CD sleeve before closing it with a sticker.

These Christmas party favour ideas are guaranteed to add fun to any Christmas event!

## Christmas Word Search

S	N	O	W	M	E	N	P	G	I	G	Y
X	S	A	M	T	S	I	R	H	C	O	I
B	S	L	E	D	D	I	N	G	W	R	N
E	N	A	C	Y	D	N	A	C	O	N	R
C	H	Y	Z	A	Q	S	I	T	N	A	H
A	R	Y	G	K	Y	U	I	Q	S	M	T
R	Y	P	R	E	S	E	N	T	S	E	A
O	P	C	H	I	M	N	E	Y	S	N	E
L	S	T	H	G	I	L	G	L	T	T	R
S	R	E	E	D	N	I	E	R	V	S	W
U	E	S	A	N	T	A	E	T	G	E	K
N	K	L	D	L	J	E	N	N	M	W	S

SANTA  
SNOWMEN  
CHRISTMAS  
PRESENTS  
ORNAMENTS  
TREE  
LIGHTS  
WREATH  
REINDEER  
SLEDDING  
SNOW  
CHIMNEY  
ELVES  
CAROLS  
CANDYCANE

## Sweet Cereal Candy Cane

### Supplies:

Cheerios or fruit loops (any O shaped cereal)  
Pipe cleaner (chenille stem)

### How to:

1. Make a small spiral at the end of the pipe cleaner to hold the cereal in place
2. Bend it into a candy cane shape
3. String cereal onto the pipe cleaner, make another small spiral on the opposite end to hold the cereal in place.

## Chocolate Candy Cane Cookies

1 pkg. (250 g) cream cheese, softened  
3/4 cup butter, softened  
1 cup sugar  
2 tsp. vanilla  
2 1/2 cups flour  
1/2 tsp. baking soda  
4 squares semi-sweet chocolate, melted  
1 pkg. (6 squares) white chocolate  
12 hard peppermint candies, crushed

Heat oven to 350°F. Beat first 4 ingredients in large bowl with mixer until well blended. Add flour and baking soda; mix well. Blend in semi-sweet chocolate.

Shape tablespoonfuls of dough into 52 balls; roll each into 3-inch rope. Place 2 inches apart, on baking sheets, bending top of each to resemble candy cane.

Bake 10 to 12 min. or until lightly browned; cool 5 min. on baking sheets. Remove to wire racks; cool completely.

Microwave white chocolate as directed on package; drizzle over cookies. Sprinkle with crushed candies. Let stand until chocolate is firm.





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Watch for our next issue of the *Advisor*.



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