

# Foster Care

2006

***Federal-Provincial-Territorial  
Directors of Child Welfare Committee***



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHILDREN'S SPECIAL ALLOWANCES.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>NOVA SCOTIA.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>NEW BRUNSWICK.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>QUEBEC .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>ONTARIO .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>MANITOBA.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>SASKATCHEWAN .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>ALBERTA.....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>BRITISH COLUMBIA.....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>YUKON.....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>NORTHWEST TERRITORIES .....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>NUNAVUT.....</b>	<b>81</b>

## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this report is to summarize current foster care programs in all provinces\*. The report is based on information provided by provincial officials.

The initial version of this report was produced in January 1992 and updated on an ad hoc basis as rates changed. In December 1995, the report was restructured to provide, in addition to the existing rate information, a more detailed description of the foster care system in each jurisdiction across Canada. The summaries cover the following features: types of foster care, training and approval procedures, the review/evaluation process, appeals/complaints, foster parent associations, damage compensation, foster care rates (including mechanisms for establishing rates, periodicity of changes, basic maintenance rate components and actual basic rates), additional allowable expenses, special rates, if any, and substitute care arrangements.

\* In all instances, the term "provinces" has been used to refer to both provinces and territories.

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## **CHILDREN'S SPECIAL ALLOWANCES**

Federal Children's Special Allowances (CSA) are payable on behalf of all children under the age of 18 who are maintained by a child welfare agency, a government department or an institution authorized to be responsible for the care and custody of children. The CSA is equal to the maximum base amount of the Child Tax Benefit plus the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS). The monthly amount for a child is \$266.66 as of September 2006.<sup>1</sup>

Jurisdictions have taken different approaches in allocating the CSA. Under the National Child Benefit, jurisdictions may choose to pass on any increase to the NCBS to child welfare authorities or recover the increase and allocate it to broader NCB reinvestment strategies to assist all low-income families. As a result some distribute all or part of the CSA directly to foster families. Others consider it part of their operating revenue and it becomes part of the foster care structure or special needs rates. In all jurisdictions, child welfare authorities allocate the CSA funds as they see fit.

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<sup>1</sup> Children's Special Allowance Fact Sheet, located at: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/benefits/csa/csafact-e.html>

## NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

### Introduction

The placement of children is guided by the philosophy and principles of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA)*.

In addition to the *Act*, following policies and programs support to the placement of children:

- Permanency Planning,
- Parent Resources for Information and Development (P.R.I.D.E.)
- Model for Co-ordination of Services for Children and Youth
- Individual Support Services Planning Process (I.S.S.P.)
- Looking After Children. ( to be Implemented)

When children require protective intervention in the form of out of home placement, the placement is conducted in the least intrusive manner possible, bearing in mind the best interest of children in accordance with the principles of the CYFSA.

### Types of Placements

#### Family or Significant Other

Under section 62(2) of the *CYFSA*, the first placement consideration for a child must be with a relative or a person with whom the child has a significant relationship. A person who provides care to a child must be approved by a director of Child Youth and Family Services.

The approval process for this type of placement requires a home visit (with all persons in the home being interviewed), a prior child, youth and services record check, police checks, two non-relative references, one collateral reference, medical examinations on persons living in the home and interviews with the child on the day of the placement and seven days following the placement.

#### Non-custodial Parent

Under section 62(3), where a child is removed by a director or social worker from a custodial parent and the non-custodial parent is considered by the director or social worker to be suitable to provide care, the child may be placed with the non-custodial parent pending final determination of the application by the court.

The social worker must complete an assessment of the living arrangement which includes:

- A home visit to determine the appropriateness of the living arrangement
- Determining the wishes of the child and the relationship that exists between the child and the non-custodial parent
- Determining that the placement is suitable to meet the child's needs
- Police checks and/or certificates of conduct; and
- Determining the factors which led to the child being in custody of the other parent.

### Caregiver Service

When a child cannot be placed in accordance with section 62(2) or (3) of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA)*, the child may be placed with a caregiver who must be approved by a director of Child Youth and Family Services.

This placement option is used for children who cannot live at home and for whom a relative placement is not available. A Director of Child Youth and Family Services approves caregiver homes. Placements are made by the social worker.

The Department of Health and Community Services funds caregiver homes through a per diem rate structure paid to the Regional Integrated Health Authorities. (There are four RHAS in the Province)

### **Training and Approval**

#### P.R.I.D.E Assessment and Education Sessions

P.R.I.D.E., is the Preservice Assessment for all perspective caregivers and is mandatory before a child is placed in their home.

An application, with supporting documentation and a worker's recommendation must be submitted to the program supervisor for consideration. The social worker and the caregiver sign a caregiver home agreement at the time of the approval of the home. The approval states the maximum number of children that can be placed in a home. The supervisor may also reclassify, revoke, or refuse to approve a caregiver home.

Families/significant others approved under section 62(2) are not required to attend P.R.I.D.E. training. However, if the family wishes to attend, they may do so.

### **Newfoundland and Labrador Caregiver Association**

The Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association was established in 1982 to support caregivers.

The Association works with the Department of HCS and the RHAS to provide training to caregivers and has assisted in the development of a caregiver handbook. The Department of Health and Community Services funds the Association by providing an annual grant.

A liaison committee made up of Association the Department of Health and Community Services and RHAS meet on a regular basis concerning issues affecting the quality of care provided to children in care.

### **Review/Evaluation**

An annual report on every caregiver home approved under Section 62 of the *CYFSA* is to be submitted to the program supervisor. The report includes a recommendation regarding continued use of the home.

### **Allegations of Abuse or Neglect**

Allegations of abuse or neglect must be investigated immediately by staff of Regional Health Authorities. Investigations are conducted by staff other than the one responsible for the regular supervision of the home. Complaints of physical or sexual abuse must be referred to the police for investigation and are carried out jointly by the police and the staff of Regional Integrated Health Authorities.

### **Appeals and Complaints**

There is no formal appeal process for applicants who have been refused caregiver status. If a prospective caregiver is not satisfied with a decision made by the Director of Child, Youth and Family Services, they may ask for a review of the decision.

If a caregiver family wishes to appeal the removal of a child from their home, they may do so by taking the matter to the Supreme Court of Newfoundland.

### **Damage Compensation**

Caregivers are not required to have liability insurance. When a child in care accidentally or willfully damages property, the child is expected to try to make amends by contributing to the cost of repairs through appropriate methods such as earning extra money to cover the cost of repairs.

Payment of damages up to \$2,400 per child per incident may be approved by the program supervisor. Amounts in excess of \$2,400 must be approved by a Director of Child, Youth and Family Services.

### **Caregiver Rates**

#### Establishment of Rates



## Newfoundland and Labrador

Generally, caregiver rates are set by regulation. Caregiver services are managed by Regional Integrated Health Authorities across the Province; however, monthly maintenance payments are forwarded directly to caregivers by a director of child, youth and family services.

### Basic Maintenance

The basic maintenance rate is paid to approved caregivers and is based on the age of the child to cover food, housing, laundry/dry cleaning, personal items and additional care costs.

<b>Basic Maintenance Rates</b> (effective April 1, 1993)				
	<b>0-11 years</b>		<b>12 and over</b>	
	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Per Diem</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Per Diem</b>
<b>Total Basic Maintenance Rate</b>	\$ 474.70	\$15.81	\$548.40	\$18.28

### Additional Allowable Expenses

The Regional Health Authorities provides additional amounts to cover emergency and initial placement costs. Additional funds may be provided for school supplies, recreation, travel and other needs.

### Special Rate Provisions

When a child is placed the social worker approves the basic maintenance rate. After a 30 day period, **if deemed necessary**, a thorough assessment of the child's needs is completed to determine if additional assistance is required. This will be done in consultation with the caregiver(s) using the Special Needs Assessment Form. The Special Needs Assessment Rate is paid in addition to the basic rate.

The assessment identifies 12 key areas of possible need for a child in care. The amount of monies to be paid on behalf of the child with special needs is determined by the completion of the Special Needs Assessment Form. The Form is to be completed jointly by the social worker and the caregivers. Other professionals involved with the child may be asked to provide documentation if it is required.

Special Needs Rates will be reviewed at least every six months and adjusted accordingly at the time of the review. All rates may be reviewed at shorter intervals if it can be demonstrated that there has been a change in the child's needs. The caregiver or social worker may initiate such a review.

Reviews may indicate that a reduction is required in the payment and/or services as the child's needs have changed. Payments and services must be adjusted to reflect the assessed need. The basic rate paid to the caregiver family will not change. Any

reduction in the special needs rate as determined through the assessment, will become effective on the first of the following month.

On the last page of the Form there is a section, "*Issues identified to be explored further in the case plan*". The social worker and caregivers are encouraged to document any issues that either would like to see addressed or explored as part of the case plan for the child. This facilitates future planning and goal setting for the child.

The twelve key areas identified are:

- eating
- personal care
- socialization
- communication
- health
- behaviour management
- development
- sexuality
- life skills
- school/education
- emotional/psychiatric/psychological
- family involvement.

Medical documentation is required for the following key areas to support an increase in the rate or to maintain an increased rate: 1) eating; 2) communication; 3) health; and 4) emotional/psychiatric/psychological. The social worker is responsible for obtaining the required documentation. Any required documentation must be attached to the Special Needs Assessment Form and retained in the child's file.

### Child Welfare Allowance

In addition to the caregiver program, the Department of Health and Community Services provides financial assistance to persons caring for the child of a relative, where the child is **not** in the care and custody of a director of child, youth and family services. Under this arrangement, a "Child Welfare Allowance" may be paid to the relative/significant other caring for the child.

In addition to the child welfare allowance, a child may qualify for assistance with the cost of school books, eye glasses, dental care, prescribed drugs, special footwear or braces provided by the Department of Health and Community Services, transportation for medical purposes and transportation to return the child to the permanent custody of the parents, if the parents cannot cover the transportation cost.

A social worker can increase the allowance up to a maximum caregiver rate of \$1,038.00 per month, based upon a Special Needs Assessment. The child welfare allowance takes into consideration all other benefits the child is receiving (e.g., Canada Pension Plan).

The caregivers may also apply for the Federal Child Tax Benefit.

<b>Child Welfare Allowance Rates** (effective Nov 1, 1992)</b>	
<b>Age</b>	<b>Monthly Rate</b>
0-5 years	\$121.00
6-12 years	\$148.00
Over 12 years	\$178.00

\*\* The person receiving the Child Welfare Allowance may be eligible for the federal Child Tax Benefit on behalf of the child.

### **Substitute Care Arrangements**

#### Emergency Placement Options

As well as placements with relatives/significant others or caregivers, each of the four Regional Health Authorities have placement options, including, two emergency placement facilities for children 12-16 years of age.

#### Institutional Facilities

There are no institutional facilities in Newfoundland and Labrador for children in care. Out-of-province facilities are used when necessary. This option is used for very challenging children and youth and only when a placement option is not available within the province to meet the child's needs. There are two group homes in the province.

#### Independent Living Assistance

Residential placements are available for youth between 16 and 21 who may choose to live semi-independently or independently. Assistance in preparation for independent living is available to youth over the age of 16 who have entered into a Youth Services Agreement with a director of child, youth and family services. Youth Services Agreements are voluntary.

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## PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

### Introduction

Recent structural changes in government have taken the *Child Protection Act* (CPA) duties from the Department of Health and moved them to a new Department, Social Service & Seniors. Under the auspices of the CPA, Prince Edward Island's children/youth come into care of the Director of Child Welfare (DCW) by way of voluntary agreement, or court order. They are provided care in kinship homes, foster care homes, group homes or in residential treatment services.

The CPA provides the DCW with foster care policy making authority for the province. Children who come into care do so under the guardianship of the DCW who delegates his duties of care to Child Protection Staff in the Western or Eastern Districts. These districts collectively include five Child Protection offices across the province (two offices in the West and three in the East). The new structural changes also result in greater responsibility for the enforcement of standards by both the DCW and the Districts.

Recent structural changes have lead to reassignment of personnel and responsibilities. To aid the DCW, a High Risk Child/Youth Services Coordinator was assigned to develop and maintain foster care policy, child care policy and to fulfil the duty of care responsibilities for children in care. This coordinator acts as a liaison as well as a contract manager with the Prince Edward Island Federation of Foster Families( PEIFFF). The contract with the PEIFFF is for development and delivery of specific activities, i.e., Spring Foster Care Symposium and Fall College and specific functions such as the participation in National Foster Care Organizations.

Each of the five district offices have either dedicated resource supervisors or a senior staff person assigned for the development and maintenance of Foster Care and recruitment.

### Types of Foster Care

P.E.I. foster care policy is built on the foundation of the *Foster Care Contract*. The Contract represents the informed consent and decision of the DCW, the DCW's agents and individual Foster Caregivers to enter into a contracted relationship for the care of children in the DCW's custody and guardianship. Foster care services provided are subject to the conditions established in the Contract and the policies that direct foster care.

The foster care contract has been integrated into PEI Foster Caregiver Insurance Program. Only foster caregivers who are contracted are eligible for coverage under this insurance program. The contract provides the both foster caregiver and government of a record of the time covered by the contract/insurance which will protect foster care givers

and provide government accurate way of administrating claims that may occur in the future.

### Regular Foster Care

With respect to regular foster care there are two assessment stages that precede formal contracting. At this stage, foster caregivers are described as *potential* and *probationary*. Potential foster caregivers can be screened out before reaching probationary status and probationary foster caregivers may prove unable to achieve a contracted status. The end state of the assessment process is that a Foster Care Contract must be agreed upon and completed. If it is not, then the relationship between the probationary foster caregiver and the DCW ends.

### Kinship Foster Care

Kinship foster care is approached in a manner similar to regular foster care. The assessment process can move through the potential and probationary stages rather quickly depending on a number of relationship variables between the child and their relative. However, since the child is in the care of the DCW there must be both, an assessment and a Contract with the kinship foster caregiver.

## **Classification Levels for Foster Homes**

Upon reaching contracted status, each foster home is assessed and assigned a classification level. There are three levels which are determined by way of the Classification Level Assessment Tool.

The level to which one is assigned depends on a number of variables:

- the skill level of the foster caregiver
- the type of child they are interested in caring for
- the time, intensity, energy they feel they can provide to the child
- the willingness to learn and develop skill to provide for the children they care for
- the willingness to meet certain conditions with respect to a level and, finally
- district need.

Perhaps what is more important about the level classification process is it establishes the basic transactional expectations of the foster home for children who are placed with them. The transactional expectations allow for better matching and outcomes for children.

## **Specialized Foster Care**

Reference to the type of child for whom a foster family is interested in providing care, can lead to specialization, where by a foster family focuses their services within particular groupings.

These specialized groupings are:

- Respite Foster Care
- PAIR(Parent and Infant Resource) Foster Care
- Emergency Foster Care
- Families Helping Families Foster Care (foster caregivers work with natural family along with the child) and
- Therapeutic Foster Care (highly trained foster caregivers working with emotionally disturbed, conduct disordered children).

The end result of the contracting and classification process is that a particular foster caregiver could be described as a: contracted, Level 3; Contracted, level 2; or Contracted, level 1 Caregiver, when the three variables of contract, classification and levels are determined. There is also a contracted Non-level foster Caregiver who contract only for the very specialized situations, but maintain Foster Care Contract status while not having placements.

### **Recruitment, Assessment, Contracting, Training and Management Process**

Recruitment, assessment, contracting, training and management of Foster Care resources are dealt with by the District offices according to provincial policy. The process is as follows:

- All potential foster caregivers attend a foster caregiver information night.
- At the information night, each foster caregiver who wishes to go further with the process is provided with a Self Assessment Questionnaire and Application Form.
- The self assessment questionnaire provides the non-negotiable criteria that must be present for the application to proceed further. If the potential foster caregiver passes this screening a Child Protection Record Check is carried out.
- Following a successful intake assessment, the potential foster caregiver proceeds to the Family Assessment and Preparation for Fostering group training. At this stage, criminal record checks, references, medical and other professional reports (as required) are requested.
- With all assessments, preparation for fostering training and checks completed successfully, the potential foster parent achieves *probationary status*.
- Placements are made during the probationary period and the probationary foster caregivers are evaluated after three months of the placement and/or the end of the placement. This evaluation will determine whether or not to continue with the probationary foster care givers. If it is determined to continue with the foster care givers this can be achieved by extending the probationary period or moving to formal contracting.
- Ongoing management of the foster resource and yearly reviews and re-contracting are carried out buy the assigned Foster home worker.

- The Preparation for Fostering is done by Foster Home Social Workers and experienced foster caregivers. The training involves six to eight 2-hour sessions. This is ideally done with 8 to 12 new foster caregivers. Yearly Foster caregivers have two significant opportunities for other training that the PEI Government contracts with the PEI Federation of Foster Families to put on. They are the Foster Care Spring Symposium and the Fall Foster Care College.

## **Support, Placement Evaluation and Yearly Review**

### Supports for Contracted Foster Caregivers

The duties of a Foster Home Social Worker is to be a supportive and/or directive as required and maintain an ongoing connection with the foster home. These services are required as each foster home takes placements along with the different social workers assigned to each child. The role and duty of the child's worker will be different than that of the Foster Home Worker. In turn both workers could be reporting to different supervisors who become secondary level contacts/support for the foster home.

To organize this diversity of contacts, support, duty and interests the Care Partnerships was developed. The objective of the partnership is that all know who are working on behalf of the child so in such a manner to produce a Unified Parental Effect in the care and raising of the child. To help achieve this end, the *Looking After Children* model of assessment and planning has been accepted as policy for children in temporary and permanent care.

Another form of support for contracted foster caregivers is the *Cluster Groups*. Each foster caregiver is assigned to a cluster group in their district for ongoing information sharing, support and development. Each cluster meets bi-weekly or monthly and is facilitated by a foster home worker.

### **Evaluation**

There are two types of ongoing evaluation that foster caregivers experience. The first is Post Placement Evaluations. The evaluation takes the form of a review by the child's worker, the foster home worker and the foster caregiver. The evaluation determines the outcomes achieved by the care partnership. Any issues are identified and addressed. Any matters requiring further training and development by any partnership member are also identified and planned for.

### **Yearly Review**

The second evaluation is the Yearly Contract Review. The yearly contract review is a mutual exercise of evaluation to determine if the terms and conditions of the contract were met on both sides. In addition, the review evaluates future needs and development of the foster home as part of entering into the next year's contract.

## **Federation of Foster Families/Foster Parents Associations**

Prince Edward Island has five district Foster Caregiver Associations corresponding to each district offices and a province wide -organization known as the Prince Edward Island Federation of Foster Families (PEIFFF). Membership in an association provides for membership in the federation. Financial support for the work and activities of the PEIFFF and local associations comes by way of a yearly contract with the Department of Social Services and Seniors. The Contract is managed by the High Risk Child/Youth Services Coordinator. The intention of the PEIFFF is to provide some education and the positive promotion of foster care across the province while supporting the district foster care associations.

## **Appeals and Complaints**

PEI does not have a formal appeal process for decisions made in the foster program. Foster care policy does provide for administrative procedures and processes in matters of disagreement. The Foster Care Policy Manual itself is an attachment to the Foster Caregiver Contract. As such, each foster caregiver is provided with and must become familiar with the expectations brought about by policy in order to make an informed decision to enter into the contracted relationship with the DCW.

## **Allegations of Abuse or Neglect in a Foster Home Resource**

PEI does have a well established *Allegations Policy*. The policy provides detailed steps for communication and investigating any allegation of harm to a child in care by a foster caregiver. All such complaints are dealt with promptly, the primary focus being safety of the child with due care and consideration for the foster caregiver and for the need of an objective investigation.

## **Foster Care Rates**

Monthly level payments are paid to caregivers according to the level (see section on “Foster Care Classification Levels” for description of levels) they have been assigned in their district:

- Level 1: \$200 per month per family
- Level 2: \$600 per month per family
- Level 3: \$1,000 per month per family

A “second bed fee” is also paid to these homes when a second placement is made in the home. These monthly rates are \$100 for Level 1, \$200 for Level 2 and \$300 for Level 3. There are no additional payments related to level for additional placements in the home.



**Kinship Rates**

<b>Room &amp; Board</b>	<b>Clothing</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Special Allowance</b>	<b>Total</b>
per diem	per diem	Rm & Brd		
\$20.50	\$2.00	\$700	\$125	\$825

These rates cover the direct child care costs for room and board, clothing allowances, and routine travel expenses. Infants on formula are allowed the extra cost of formula in addition to the established rates. All children in care are eligible for dental, medical and optical services and prescription drug coverage.

**Respite Care**

All caregivers are eligible for 24 days' respite per contract. The respite rate is \$45 per 24 hour day.

**Transportation**

The Transportation of children in care by foster caregivers is not specifically compensated for separately unless it is beyond normal and expected family travel or part of a specific case plan. When it is separately reimbursed the rate is calculated by kilometre at the current government mileage rate.

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## NOVA SCOTIA

### Introduction

Foster family placements are the most commonly used alternative form of care for children and youth residing outside of their birth family care. District Offices of the Department of Community Services and Child and Family Services agencies provide approval and support services for foster families.

Recruitment, pre-assessment services and education and training are delivered by the Department of Community Services through Regional Placement Resource Teams within the four regions of the Province.

The Department of Community Services provides overall policy, procedures, and guidelines for the operation of the Foster Care Program. Recommendations for policy development are determined by the Provincial Joint Committee on Foster Care. The Committee consists of equal representation from the four regions in social work, supervisory staff, and foster families. The Committee also includes the Provincial Federation of Foster Families of Nova Scotia, the Child in Care Program and is chaired by the Provincial Coordinator of Foster Care.

### Types of Foster Care

There are three categories of foster care in Nova Scotia: regular foster care homes, parent counsellor homes and special relative/non-relative foster homes.

#### Regular Foster Care Homes

These foster families have been approved by Agency and District Office staff to provide care to children and youth. They receive daily maintenance monies and reimbursable child in care expenses under the Child in Care Program.

Since 2000 the Department of Community Services began the implementation of a competency based model of foster care resulting in 4 levels of placement services. Foster parents are reviewed regularly and are assessed by the foster care worker utilizing the 5 essential core competencies required to provide care for children and youth.

- Pre-service
- Introductory
- Advanced
- Specialized

### Parent Counsellor Homes

These foster families receive additional training and therapeutic support to provide care for children and youth with a high level of special needs. They receive a monthly honorarium, as well as the per diem child in care rate when a child or youth is placed in their home. The regions administer the parent counselor program.

### Special Relative/Non-Relative Foster Homes

This category includes families who are friends or relatives of a child in care and have been approved specifically for a child or sibling group. These are child-or youth-specific homes that were initiated through child protection and eventually approved through the Foster Care Program.

### Recruitment, Pre-Service and Training

In the Fall of 2000, the Department of Community Services implemented Foster Care Resource Teams in the four regions to deliver Recruitment and Pre-Assessment Services for all potential foster parent applicants as well as the delivery of ongoing training services for all approved foster families.

General inquiries are directed through a toll free telephone number and receive prompt and personal contact from the Pre-Service Recruitment Social Worker. Criminal record checks, child abuse register checks, references, medical reports and any other professional reports are requested as the foster parent applicant progresses through the Orientation Program for foster families.

The Orientation Program is essential to the pre-assessment process and is mandatory for all foster parent applicants. The program is funded solely by the Department of Community Services and is presented jointly by the Recruitment, Pre-Service Social Worker and approved Foster Parent Trainers provided through the Federation of Foster Families of Nova Scotia. At the completion of the six session program, a prospective foster parent's application is forwarded to the local Child Welfare Agency for the Family Assessment Home Study.

Approved Regular and Parent Councillor Foster Parents are required to attend mandatory Core Training;

- P.R.I.D.E Module I - The Foundation For Meeting The Developmental Needs Of Children At Risk
- P.R.I.D.E Module II - Using Discipline to Protect and Nurture, and Meet Developmental Needs
- Two Day Non-Violent Crisis Intervention and an annual one day Refresher Program
- Two Day Sensitivity Training for Foster Families

- One Day First Aid (Level AC@)

The Department of Community Services continues to implement the P.R.I.D.E (Core) In-Service Training and now offers a total of 8 P.R.I.D.E modules with the ongoing implementation of new modules each year.

### **Approval/Review/Evaluation**

Areas of Foster Family Assessment include health of applicants and other family members, financial management, problem solving abilities, attitudes and practices towards discipline, parental skills, abilities and relationships, as well as, the general attitudes of children and youth within the current family structure. Final Foster Home Approval results in the placement of a child or youth.

The foster home is reviewed six months after approval with a competency based annual review thereafter. The review includes adjustments to fostering, changes in the family circumstances, and any problems experienced during placement. Foster care social workers are required to document performance indicators on the foster care file. If deemed necessary, help is provided to assist in the development of family strengths and coping skills.

### **Appeals/Complaints**

Foster parents who are dissatisfied with a service or case decision are encouraged to follow the local agency/district office Complaint Procedures.

### **Allegations of Abuse or Neglect**

The protocol for the investigation of allegations of abuse and/or neglect in foster care establishes the procedures for the child protection investigation. Investigations are conducted by an agency other than the home agency to avoid a conflict of interest or perceived bias.

Support can be offered to foster families undergoing an investigation from the foster care worker or through the Foster Allegation Support Services Program provided by the Federation of Foster Families of Nova Scotia and funded by the Department of Community Services.

### **Federation of Foster Families of Nova Scotia**

The Federation of Foster Families of Nova Scotia (FFFNS) is an organization for foster families run by foster parents to serve and support one another as caregivers to children requiring substitute care. The organization represents approximately 700 approved foster parents in the province and is funded through the Department of Community Services (DCS).

The Federation, the Executive Director, the office staff, and the local foster family associations promote quality foster care via advocacy, education, information sharing, policy recommendations, and maintaining the lines of communication between foster families, agencies/district offices, and government.

Expenses for foster parent participation in training is re-imbursed for foster families through the FFFNS as provided by the DCS through an annual Service Agreement and subsequent budget.

Changes in policy and procedures are relayed to the Federation for distribution to all foster families throughout the Province. Contact the Federation of Foster Families of Nova Scotia by telephone at (902) 424-3071 or by fax at (902) 424-5199 or by e-mail at [Godfrekc@gov.ns.ca](mailto:Godfrekc@gov.ns.ca).

## **Foster Care Rates**

The Department of Community Services is committed to the ongoing restructuring of the Foster Care System towards a competency based model of assessment, approval, and ongoing skill development with an Introductory, Advanced, and Specialized Levels of Care.

Regular Foster parents receive daily skill fees determined by their level of experience, training, and assessed level of competency in caring for children and youth. Daily honorariums from the DCS are provided for placement services:

### Foster Care Maintenance Rates

#### *Establishment of Rates*

Maintenance expenditures for children in care are reviewed by the Department of Community Services after consultations with agencies, and the Federation of Foster Families of Nova Scotia, and following approval by the Minister. Child in care maintenance per diem rates are the responsibility of the Child in Care Program.

### Maintenance Expenditures for Children in Care

Additional funds may be provided with prior approval based on policy, to provide services or items needed by children in care, such as therapy, youth alternative workers, tutoring, etc. Special per diem rates are also available to foster families based on the extraordinary needs of the child. Revisions to this policy were started in 2005.

<b>Child In Care Rates*</b>	
<b>Board Rates</b>	
<b>Age</b>	<b>Per Diem</b>
0-9 years	\$13.77
10+ years	\$20.02
<b>Clothing Allowance</b>	
<b>Age</b>	<b>Three times per year</b>
0-4 years	\$157.00
5-9 years	\$259.00
10+ years	\$362.00
<b>Spending Allowance (Effective March 1, 1999)</b>	
<b>Age</b>	<b>Monthly</b>
0-5 years	\$10.00
6-11 years	\$15.00
12-15 years	\$25.00 paid to child
16+ years	\$40.00 paid to child
<b>School Supplies (Effective March 1, 1999)</b>	
<b>Age</b>	<b>Annually</b>
5-9 years	\$70.00
10-20 years	\$120.00
<b>Christmas Allowance (Effective March 1, 1999)</b>	
<b>Age</b>	<b>Annually</b>
6-10 years	\$145.00 (\$125 for caregiver to buy child's gift, \$20 for child to buy gifts)
11-12 years	\$190.00 (\$150 to caregiver to buy child's gift and \$40 for child to buy gifts)

**\* An increase has been scheduled for 2006/07**

## **Substitute Care Arrangements**

### Placement with extended family

This option is explored prior to and as an alternative to a child coming into permanent care and custody. Family members may choose to apply to the courts for custody through the Family Maintenance and Custody Act.

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## NEW BRUNSWICK

### Introduction

Foster care is the general placement option for most children coming into care. The Children's Residential Services (CRS) team in each region is responsible for the provision of foster care services.

The CRS Social Worker is responsible to: recruitment, assess and approve new applicants, select placements, provide supports to foster parents, conduct evaluations and annual reviews of foster homes, ensure any complaints/grievances are investigated and liaison with the local foster families association.

The PRIDE (Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education) Regional Trainers organize and deliver the PRIDE Pre-service and Core Training and ASIST(Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)to foster families.

### Types of Foster Care

In New Brunswick, there are three types of foster homes approved by the Department of Family and Community Services:

- regular foster homes,
- therapeutic foster homes,
- young offender foster homes

When foster families are first approved they are considered novice and must complete additional training and actively foster for six months and have a positive assessment within their first year of approval to become a regular foster family.

Regular foster homes are approved for the placement of up to 5 foster children. The maximum number a home can have depends on the number of natural children at home and other dependents in the home such as grandparents. A maximum of 7 dependents in total is allowed.

Therapeutic foster families are approved for the maximum of two foster children and are prepared to combine the advanced skills of child caring with the challenges of developing a competency-based approach for treating specific needs of children.

Both regular and therapeutic foster homes can also provide the services of Emergency Home and Relief Care.

Foster homes that provide services under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* are able to accommodate a maximum of 2 youths who have received an open custody sentence under the Youth Justice Criminal Act.



## **Approval and Training**

On receipt of an application, the applicant's references are confirmed by the CRS Social Worker. A criminal record check and FCS record check with the Department of Family and Community Services is completed on all persons 19 years of age and older living in the house and a physical assessment of their home is done. There is a set of non-negotiable eligibility criteria that applicants must meet before proceeding with the assessment. Applicants are required to participate in the 27 hours PRIDE Pre-service program that provides them with information on the essential competencies needed for fostering and to assist them in making an informed decision about fostering. The process also helps social workers assess the applicant's suitability for fostering. Following the completion of PRIDE Pre-service, applicants and their family members participate in a final home assessment.

The approval of a foster family is finalized by the Supervisor of the Children's Residential Services Unit. A Form 1 is signed indicating the maximum number of children to receive foster care services in that home, and any stipulations or conditions relevant to that foster family's situation.

The foster family also signs a "Foster Family Resource Agreement" with the Department of Family and Community Services. The agreement outlines the roles of the foster parents as members of a multidisciplinary team and the role of the Department. Foster parents are given a set of standards for family foster care and an ID card identifying them as foster parents.

Foster families are required to maintain their competencies to foster through on-going training/development available at the regional level. They are required to take PRIDE Core Modules 1 and 9 and ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training. CRS Social Workers use the Family Development Plans that are part of the PRIDE Model on an annual basis to assist foster families in identifying their strengths and skill development needs.

The five PRIDE core competencies of fostering are:

1. protecting and nurturing;
2. addressing and meeting children's developmental needs;
3. supporting relationships between children and families;
4. connecting children to safe, nurturing relationships intended to last a lifetime; and,
5. working as a member of a professional team.

## **Approval of a Provisional Home**

A provisional home approval is a conditional placement of a specific child or sibling group with a relative or someone else known to the child. An initial assessment is completed by a Child Protection Social Worker to assess the health and safety aspects of the home, the child's desire to be placed there, relationships of the family with the child and with her/his parents, and any other factors influencing the safety or development of

the child.

The Children's Residential Services Social Worker has 60 days from time of placement to assess the physical home setting and complete a criminal record check and FCS record check. Based on these findings an approval is given. When the child leaves, the provisional home status is closed.

### **Review/Evaluation**

Once the child has been placed, the child's social worker must contact the foster family, by phone, within three calendar days and visit the child within seven days of placement. The foster family and the child in care are then visited within 30 days of the first visit and monthly thereafter, or in accordance with the plan for the child.

Foster families are evaluated annually. Where a family is fostering a child on a long-term basis or where a child has bonded with the family, the family may be evaluated once every two years after the first two years of caring for the child.

### **Complaints or Grievances**

The Children's Residential Services Social Worker will address any complaints or grievances by or against the foster family and mediate situations if needed. If the situation is not resolved to the foster family's satisfaction, the foster parent may take the matter to the worker's supervisor. If still dissatisfied, the foster family may request, in writing, a meeting with the Program Delivery Manager.

### **Allegations of Abuse or Neglect**

When an allegation of abuse is made against a foster parent, she or he is investigated in accordance with the Department's abuse protocols, in force since 1987. In the case of sexual or serious physical abuse allegations, a joint investigation with the police is conducted. A neutral worker from Children's Protective Services, conducts the investigation.

In addition, the Children's Residential Services Social Worker provides information on the process as it unfolds, keeps the foster family up to date on their status as a resource, and arranges for other supportive services as necessary. If an allegation is proven false, the Department may provide reasonable reimbursement to the foster family for legal expenses, as well as provide or pay for critical incident stress debriefing.

## **New Brunswick Foster Families Association**

The New Brunswick Foster Families Association is comprised of a provincial executive and local associations in each region of the province. The Department provides annual funding to the Provincial Association and regional offices provide funding to their local associations. The Department is represented on both the provincial and local associations. All foster parents automatically become members of the Association and are encouraged to participate in their local associations.

The NBFPA is devoted to meeting the following objectives: to work for the improvement of services to the foster child; to promote fellowship among foster families; to provide a forum for training, an exchange of ideas and mutual support; and in conjunction with the Department, to identify and determine the needs and objectives required to improve services to children and to foster families.

### **Damage Compensation**

The Department will consider any request by a foster parent for reimbursement for damage, loss or injury to the foster parent or a third party where the child in care caused the damage. Such incidents must be reported immediately to the social worker.

### **Child Maintenance Rates**

There is a basic monthly maintenance rate provincially set and paid to a foster family based on a child's age. The age groups are 0-4 years; 5-10 years; and 11 years of age and over. The basic monthly maintenance rate covers lodging, food, clothing replacement, personal care, transportation, babysitting, recreation/special occasions and includes the Federal Children's Special Allowance.

<b>Regular Basic Maintenance Rates (effective June 1, 2006)</b>			
	<b>0-4 years</b>	<b>5-10 years</b>	<b>11 years +</b>
Food	\$122.00	\$145.00	\$181.00
Lodging	\$104.00	\$105.00	\$107.00
Clothing	\$41.00	\$53.00	\$70.00
Personal Care	\$13.00	\$12.00	\$24.00
Transportation	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$35.00
Babysitting	\$45.00	\$45.00	\$45.00
Recreation/Special Occasions	\$25.00	\$30.00	\$35.00
Federal Special Allowance	\$159.67	\$159.67	\$159.67
<b>Total Monthly Rate</b>	<b>\$ 544.67</b>	<b>\$ 584.67</b>	<b>\$ 656.67</b>

Fee for Service

In addition to the basic monthly maintenance rate a foster family receives a Fee for Service based on their training, on-going training and competencies to meet the children in their care. This rate in the table below is per child/per month.

<b>Fee for service (paid monthly) according to the type of foster home</b>	
Regular foster homes	\$200.00
Therapeutic and YCJA homes	\$516.00

**Additional Allowable Expenses**

In addition to the basic rates outlined above, foster parents receive an additional allowance for clothing and school supplies. In December, a Christmas Allowance is also provided. A one-time Basic Clothing Allowance may be provided, if required, to children coming into care.

<b>Additional Care Costs as of August 2003</b>			
	0-4 years	5-10 years	11 years and older
Spring Clothing Allowance - paid in April	\$ 70	\$ 78	\$ 112
School Clothing and Supply Allowance - paid in August <i>(Supplies)</i> <i>(Clothing)</i>	- \$ 57	\$ 129 \$ 77	\$ 169 \$ 104
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 57</b>	<b>\$ 206</b>	<b>\$273</b>
School Supply Allowance Only - paid after August		Kindergarten - Grade 5 \$129	Grades 6-12 \$169
Winter Clothing Allowance - paid in October	\$109	\$144	\$168
Christmas Allowance - paid in December	\$114	\$122	\$121
Basic Clothing Allowance - may be paid when child enters care	up to \$190	up to \$245	up to \$310

Foster parents may be reimbursed for the actual costs incurred for additional items, usually with prior approval from the Department. The types of expenses covered include: health care services; recreation equipment; uniforms; graduation expenses; special lessons; school outings; camping; homemaker services; day care; kindergarten; assessment and counselling; and tutoring. Transportation to the doctor, dentist, hospital, etc., may be reimbursed at the rate of 34¢ per kilometre.

### **Emergency Foster Homes**

Persons providing emergency foster care as of July 1, 2006 receive \$50/bed/month as a retainer fee and \$50/day/child up to 7 days. If the child placed on an emergency basis remains in the home after the first seven days, the basic monthly maintenance rate for the home becomes effective for the remainder of the child's stay. The foster home can have a maximum of 4 beds for emergency purposes but cannot exceed their approved number of beds.

### **Additional Care Arrangements**

Group homes are residential facilities owned and operated by an agency or incorporated body. They provide 24 hour care for up to six youth displaying physical, intellectual, emotional or behavioural disabilities and youth involved under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. The Department of Family and Community Services stipulates certain policies and standards concerning the operation of group homes.

The Independent Living Program is meant for older youths who have demonstrated the maturity and responsibility that is required to function well when living alone independently. The youths receive financial support and guidance.

Specialized treatment resources are provided by the Department to meet the needs of hard to serve children in its care. Where a child's needs cannot be met in New Brunswick, he or she may be referred to an out-of-province treatment facility.

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## QUEBEC

### Introduction

The definition of a foster family is a person or couple providing care for one or more children entrusted by an institution that is part of the health and social services network. Foster parents are “substitute parents” to the youngster(s) and are committed to providing a family environment: shelter, care, support, security and education.

The foster family works in partnership with the child’s natural family for a period that varies according to the youngster’s needs. It plays a determinant role in the child’s physical, mental and emotional development. The foster family accompanies the child along its life path, with the ultimate aim of helping the child return to its natural family at some future time.

Foster families are sometimes referred to as “family-type resources.” Family-type resources fall into two categories: foster homes for children, and adult group homes. The family-type resource (FTR) is an important part of the continuum of services provided by public institutions of the health and social services network. It serves a range of clientele: children, mentally ill adults, mentally or physically disabled adults and frail seniors.

### Training and Approval

The training program “Techniques d’accueil,” taught at CEGEPs, is designed to help FTRs carry out their responsibilities by teaching them the skills and knowledge they need. This program therefore promotes the development of the abilities, skills and aptitudes essential for them to fulfil their role. The program focuses on six areas:

- health,
- safety,
- biopsychosocial intervention,
- communication,
- management, and
- placement.

A number of institutions also offer foster families opportunities for selected training on specific topics.

## **Qualification/Accreditation**

A family proposing to become a foster family is assessed by a social worker. This assessment takes into account the biological, psychological and environmental characteristics of the applicant family. In addition, information is gathered about every person who lives in the household: occupation, age, name, marital status, police record, financial status, etc. The assessment continues by means of interviews, role plays and visits to the home.

## **Review/Reassessment**

The foster family must undergo follow-up assessments to ensure the quality of the services provided. These assessments also serve to determine whether the contractual relationship with the institution should be maintained or changed.

The foster family must meet the same evaluation criteria and requirements that it met when it first qualified. Also, any major changes must be reviewed, such as a new spouse, or an increase or decrease in the number of places available for foster children.

Some of the factors considered are;

- the quality of interventions, care and services provided to the child;
- the particular qualifications, attitudes and interests of the foster family, with a view to making a suitable match;
- compliance with contractual terms and conditions;
- the quality of the environment and the living conditions;
- the foster family's collaboration with the placing institution, with other institutions involved, and with the natural family;
- adherence to the applicable standards (safety of the premises);
- the degree to which the foster family fulfils its mandate; and
- the revision of the work plan.

## **Appeals/Complaints**

Children in foster care

The *Act respecting the Health and Social Services Ombudsman and to amend various legislative provisions* permits users (foster children) to file a complaint when circumstances warrant.

The Act aims to:

- streamline the process for the child in foster care;
- assure the accountability of the parties involved;
- support the continuous improvement of the quality of services;



- introduce measures to protect vulnerable clientele; and
- introduce an “administrative” recourse in respect of physicians, pharmacists, dentists and residents.

A child who resides in an FTR or in a related intermediate resource, or the child’s legal representative, may file a complaint concerning the services received.

Under the *Act respecting the Health and Social Services Ombudsman*, the child may be given a hearing, for which there is a two-tiered review structure: the first tier is at the institutional level, and the second is at the Ombudsman level, from which there is no appeal.

### **Foster Family**

In the event of a misunderstanding between the foster family and its institution, the foster family may ask the health and social services agency to review a decision made by the public institution to which it is attached (section 307).

When conducting its review, the agency must give the institution and the family an opportunity to find representation. Following this review, the agency sends its recommendations to the institution and the foster family. The family may, at any time, be accompanied by its association or by a person of its choosing.

### **The Quebec Federation of Foster Families**

The Quebec Federation of Foster Families (FFAQ) is a provincial organization that represents the regional associations to which foster families belong.

The mandate of the FFAQ is to:

- represent all regional associations generally, and regional members specifically; and
- promote and create awareness of the role of foster families in Quebec.

It has also adopted the mission of:

- training and providing information to FFAQ members;
- in the context of its mandate, steering the files of foster families requesting special assistance from the Quebec ministry of Health and Social Services (MSSS) to health and social services agencies and other collaborators;
- cooperating with other organizations that share all or some of the objectives of the FFAQ; and
- protecting the interests of FFAQ members.

## Compensation for Family Placement

The regulation respecting *Classification of services offered by family-type resources and the rates of compensation applicable for each type of service* determines the compensation for foster families. Most of the amounts in this regulation are indexed annually.

There are two types of compensation: basic compensation, for room and board (the amount varies according to the age of the child), and the supplement (based on the needs of the child). Needs are assessed using the “Identification of User Characteristics” document to assess the traits of a user (or foster child) placed in an FTR.

### Basic Compensation for Support and Maintenance (January 1, 2006)

Age	Basic compensation per day for support and maintenance
0 to 4	\$17.23
5 to 11	\$19.84
12 to 15	\$24.89
16 to 17	\$26.85

**Supplement** (January 1, 2006)

In addition to basic compensation, a foster family that provides services at levels 2 - 5 or rehabilitation services is entitled to the following daily supplement, for each foster child:

<b>Level of services<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Daily supplement</b>
for level 2 services (15 to 24 points)	\$2.72
for level 3 services (25 to 32 points)	\$7.62
for level 4 services (33 to 39 points)	\$13.96
for level 5 services (40 to 50 points)	
(a) in category 1 (40 to 42 points)	\$18.68
(b) in category 2 (43 to 56 points)	\$21.82
(c) in category 3 (47 to 50 points)	\$29.18
rehabilitation services	\$18.68

<sup>1</sup> The levels and, if applicable, the categories of services provided to users (or foster children) are determined using the "Identification of User Characteristics" document. The user's state and functioning are assessed in the following areas: physical; cognitive; affective; behavioural; relational and social.

**Special Compensation**

In addition to the daily basic compensation and the supplement, foster families are also entitled to special compensation to maintain and further the quality of the services provided to the child(ren) in their care.

Special Compensation: Reimbursement to the foster family of expenditures made to meet a foster child's special need, or reimbursement of an expenditure arising from his or her presence in the foster family.

<b>Allowance for clothing</b>			
<b>age 0 to 4</b>	<b>age 5 to 10</b>	<b>age 12 to 15</b>	<b>age 16 to 17</b>
\$300.29	\$354.89	\$416.70	\$474.18
<b>Allowance for school supplies</b>			
	<b>Nursery/Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	
Supplies	<b>\$115.89</b>	<b>\$195.76</b>	
Cafeteria expenses	\$2.88	\$2.88	
<b>Pre-authorized child-care costs</b>			
The institution will reimburse a maximum hourly rate of:	\$5.73		
Up to a monthly amount of:	\$71.82		
Reimbursement of child-care costs related to participation in the "Techniques d'accueil" training program	\$86.22		
<b>Final departure of a user</b>			
Daily availability allowance for a maximum period of 60 days ending when the user is replaced	\$5.49		
<b>Sports and cultural activities</b>			
<b>Age</b>	<b>Allowance</b>		
0 to 4	\$64.66		
5 to 11	\$143.70		
12 to 15	\$211.20		
16 to 17	\$244.26		
<b>Progressive placement</b>			
For the days during which the user is in the other living environment, the foster family receives basic compensation, less:	\$2.88		

**Daily Allowance for Personal Expenses**

The foster family receives an allowance of \$5 per day, per child, for that child's personal needs. This is in addition to the special allowances for clothing and recreation. Eventually, once the allowance amount for personal expenses becomes sufficiently high, the special allowances for clothing and recreation will be eliminated.

## **Refresher Period**

A foster family is entitled to a maximum refresher period of twenty (20) days per year. In the event the family is not given the refresher period to which it is entitled, it will receive a lump sum payment of \$8.63 per refresher day, per foster child present in the family on March 31 of the previous year. This amount, however, cannot exceed \$718.42.

## **Emergency Placement: Standby**

Matching children and families is difficult when making an emergency placement. The principles of integration, protection of the child and quality of care must be adhered to. Therefore, the FTR must be informed as soon as possible of the characteristics, needs, intervention plan, and summary report of the child being placed there.

A monthly allowance of \$179.61 is paid to keep a place available 24/7 on standby in case of an emergency. When a foster family is called upon to provide emergency services, it is entitled to receive \$9.25, in addition to the daily basic compensation, for a period of thirty (30) days, which is renewable for another thirty (30) days.

## **Compensation for Material Damages**

The FTR (for both children and adults) is entitled to a reimbursement of \$500 when it suffers material damages attributable to the child to whom it provides services. This special compensation is not subject to disclosure.

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## ONTARIO

### Introduction

In Ontario, a foster home is an approved home in which parent-model care is provided to four or fewer unrelated children, under the supervision of an operator licensed to provide foster care services. Foster care provides protection, safety, and care to children whose family of origin is unable to provide for them.

As the preferred model of out-of-home care in Ontario, foster care provides children with both temporary and longer-term options for growth and development, and safe, nurturing, and stable relationships in a familial setting. Foster care services are provided by several types of agencies, including children's aid societies, children's mental health centres, youth justice services, and privately operated agencies.

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services licenses service providers to provide foster care under the *Child and Family Services Act*. The ministry supports the foster care system through policy development, monitors the system through the licensing process and provides the framework for the service through legislation. Each licensed agency is responsible for the recruitment, approval, and management of foster homes in its own jurisdiction.

Most foster homes in Ontario are affiliated with the 53 Children's Aid Societies (four of which are Aboriginal) located throughout the province. Children's aid societies (CASs) are independent, non-government agencies governed by locally elected Boards of Directors. CASs are designated under the *Child and Family Services Act* to provide child protection services to children up to the age of 16. Children already in the care of a society may receive child protection services up to age 18, if there is an existing court order. A society may provide care and maintenance up to age 21 for former Crown wards that are in care at the age of 18, under an extended care and maintenance agreement.

### Types of Foster Care

Foster care provided by children's aid societies is categorized as follows.

#### Regular Foster Care

Regular foster care refers to the provision on a daily basis of all the essential elements of family life that a child needs. In a regular foster home, the child can quite readily be integrated into the foster family and have his/her needs met by following the family's daily routines.

#### Specialized Foster Care

Specialized foster care is designed to meet the needs of children with identified developmental, emotional, medical, or physical exceptionalities. The program's primary objective is to accommodate the child within a foster home setting which addresses the special needs of the child and encourages him or her to function to their maximum potential. It is preferable in Specialized Foster Care to have one foster parent providing care and supervision on a full-time basis.

### Treatment Foster Care

Treatment foster care is the placement of children with exceptionalities requiring community-based treatment and professional staff to meet their specialized needs. The children require individual programs developed by their foster parents, who work to assist them in modifying behaviour. This type of care expects that there is at least one foster parent providing care and treatment on a full-time basis.

### Kinship Service and Kinship Care

Ontario is in the process of policy and standards development with respect to kinship service and kinship care. Kinship service refers to the full-time care and nurturing of a child or youth by a member of the child's extended family or community, and the child is not in the care of a children's aid society. In these cases a formal admission to care may be prevented through the use of kin as a temporary care provider. Kinship care refers to kin who are caring for a child who has been admitted to children's aid society care and could be eligible for similar support and compensation available to foster parents, when approved and eligible to meet foster care licensing regulations.

### **Training and Approval**

To achieve the permanency policy goals of resilience and permanence for child and youth in foster care or placed on adoption, a consistent framework was needed for assessment, training of families and case planning for children and youth in care.

A practice model has been developed that supports Children's Aid Societies to implement three tools: SAFE (Structured Analysis Family Evaluation) for foster, kinship care and adoption homestudy assessments; Pre-service PRIDE (Parent Resources for Information, Development, Education) for education and support to caregivers and adoptive applicants; and OnLAC (Ontario Looking After Children) for consistent strength based assessment and case planning for children to achieve positive outcomes. The Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies holds the licenses to the three programs and funding is provided to OACAS by the ministry to develop training processes including train the trainer and agency based training. The ministry is currently developing an implementation plan for all three programs in Children's Aid Societies with phased implementation dates.

### **Appeals/Complaints**

Under the *Child and Family Services Act* the ministry has established, as outlined in the Foster Care Licensing Manual, a requirement that covers the investigation of complaints against foster families. The Licence Appeal Tribunal provides an appeal mechanism under the Act and makes decisions on residential placement, and the refusal, revocation, non-renewal, suspension or contested terms and conditions on licenses for children's residences.

### **Foster Parent Society of Ontario (FPSO)**

The Foster Parent Society of Ontario is an incorporated, provincial non-profit organization that represents foster parents providing service under a Children's Aid Society. The FPSO conferences and training sessions are open to both member and non-member foster parents across Ontario. The FPSO maintains contact with both the Canadian Foster Family Association and the International Foster Family Association, and has provided input on a number of initiatives of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

### **Ontario Association of Residences Treating Youth (OARTY)**

OARTY is a provincial network of children's residential services representing more than 72 agencies and licensed under the CFSA. It provides residential care and treatment for children and youth, who are physically and sexually abused, emotionally disturbed, developmentally challenged, autistic, medically fragile, young offenders and a wide range of other hard to service children and youth.

### **Foster Care Operators' Association of Ontario**

FCOAO is comprised of private foster and group care operators and advocates on behalf of its members. Additionally, it works to enhance the practices and quality of service provided by private operators.

### **Foster Care Rates (only applicable to child welfare)**

Under the child welfare funding framework announced in 1999, the Ministry established a new minimum daily rate (\$25.71) for foster care providers. This revised daily rate structure included a higher base rate than the previously-established minimum. The basic minimum rate covers food and lodging for a child. It does not include extra costs of clothing, spending allowances and other specialized services that may be needed by children in foster care – which may be provided by the agencies at their discretion.

The funding model establishes an annual benchmark for funding for children that are placed in foster care within a Children's Aid Society. The funding model also establishes an annual benchmark for funding for children that are placed in private foster care placements.



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## MANITOBA

### Introduction

A foster home is defined in the *Child and Family Services Act*<sup>2</sup> as "a home other than the home of a parent or guardian of a child, in which the child is placed by an agency for care and supervision, but not for adoption". Each mandated Child and Family Services (CFS) agency or regional office of the Department of Family Services and Housing is responsible for the development, utilization, maintenance and co-ordination of the foster care program within its jurisdictional boundaries. The work of the agencies is overseen by one of four culturally-based CFS Authorities.

### Types of Foster Care

The maximum number of children that may be placed in a foster home is four. This number may only be exceeded if all the children are siblings. Further, a foster home may not provide care for more than seven dependent persons including all children and any adults requiring care and supervision. In addition, of all the children in the home, no more than three may be under five years of age and no more than two may be under two years of age.

All foster homes require a licence issued by a mandated child and family services agency that indicates the number and gender of the children and any other terms and conditions that apply. Foster homes may be specialized to provide short-term care while decisions are being made as to the long-term placement needs of the child; to provide care for children with special needs or to provide care for specific children (includes extended family members).

### Kinship Care

Manitoba acknowledges the importance of placing children with extended family member when possible. This is considered "kinship care". The family must still be licensed as a foster home. An example of the Kinship Care program in Manitoba is one that is offered through Winnipeg Child and Family Services. Kinship assessments are completed only where children are already in the Agency's care, and a private guardianship application is being advanced by extended family. Families who are providing care for a child under this program may also receive financial assistance.

### Training and Approval

Interested families must have an orientation to the foster care program and undergo an approval process that includes a family assessment, a building review, a medical reference, personal references, an abuse registry check, a prior contact check and a

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<sup>2</sup> The Child Protection Branch of the Department of Family Services and Housing is in the initial stages of a legislative review of The Child and Family Services Act, The Adoption Act and The Child and Family Services Authority Act as of March 2006. The scope of this review has yet to be finalised.

criminal record check. A foster licence is issued to the home indicating the maximum number and sex of children to be accommodated. A foster home must be approved before a child may be placed there, though a home can be temporarily designated as a “place of safety” as an interim measure.

Funding is provided to the CFS agencies for initial and ongoing training for their foster parents.

Some foster parent training is also provided by the Manitoba Foster Family Network (see below).

### **Review/Evaluation**

All foster homes are reviewed at least annually; the home's foster licence may be cancelled if it does not conform to departmental standards. The child's service plan contains provisions for review of her/his placement.

### **Appeals/Complaints**

Complaints against a foster home may involve physical conditions, approval standards or service provided. A foster child may place a complaint or foster parents may state complaints or grievances concerning a child in their care or the service they are receiving. All complaints should be made directly to the agency concerned where they are handled through an internal review process. Complaints may also be made to the Director, the Children's Advocate, or the Ombudsman.

### **Allegations of Abuse or Neglect**

A departmental standard describes the process to follow when there is an allegation of abuse made against a member of the foster family where the foster child is currently residing. The standard clarifies the roles of the various workers involved. The responsibility for co-ordinating the investigation and any other agency involvement belongs to the agency that issued the foster home licence. The foster family receives written confirmation of the results of an investigation and the status of the home within three weeks following the completion of the agency investigation.

Legal services through Legal Aid are available to foster families only when it is clear that a criminal investigation is underway, or criminal charges are actually laid, or when a foster parent is to be listed on the Provincial Child Abuse Registry without a criminal conviction and wishes to object to the listing.

### **Manitoba Foster Family Network**

The Manitoba Foster Family Network, began operation in April 2001. The purpose of the association is: to establish strong and co-operative working relationships between foster families, mandated CFS agencies, government, and other agencies and professionals

providing service to foster children to improve foster care in Manitoba; to support foster parents who are involved in a dispute, disagreement or conflict with an agency; to work with other organizations to provide training opportunities for foster parents; and to support the creation of a local Foster Family Associations.

### **Damage Compensation**

The Foster Parent Intentional Damage Compensation Plan is funded by the Province and administered by the Child Protection Branch of Manitoba Family Services and Housing, and the Insurance and Risk Management Branch of the Department of Finance. The plan provides coverage for intentional damage done by foster children and occurring in foster homes/open custody homes and includes an appeal process. It does not cover losses covered by a comprehensive homeowner's policy, or motor vehicles, aircraft, or other property for which insurers write specific coverage.

Foster homes are not required to have an existing home insurance policy. The plan does have limits on the coverage for specific items, and there is a \$100 deductible for each claim. An adjusting firm hired by the plan assesses claims.

### **Liability**

Foster parents are covered by liability insurance if an action is brought against them by a third party as a result of a foster child's action, either under an agency's third party liability insurance policy, or under the province of Manitoba's general liability policy.

### **Foster Care Rates**

#### Establishment of Rates

Manitoba's basic maintenance rates for foster care are authorized annually by the provincial Treasury Board. The rate includes two components: a portion paid directly to foster parents, and a portion retained by the mandated agencies (including the five regional offices of the Department of Family Services responsible for foster care). The latter portion is to be disbursed on behalf of children, based on their needs. In addition, agencies have available to them, in the form of a grant, monies to cover service fees and other special care costs.

#### Basic Maintenance Rates

The basic maintenance rate is intended to cover the costs identified through a chart of accounts; components are shown on the following page. In recognition of the increased costs of living in northern communities, rates for communities north of 53° and communities with no road access are higher.

<b>Foster Care Rate 2006/2007 (Effective April 1, 2006) Payable to Foster Parents</b>						
<b>Chart of Accounts</b>	<b>South of 53</b>		<b>North of 53 (road access)</b>		<b>North of 53 East of Lake Winnipeg N51 12' (no road access)</b>	
	<b>0 – 10</b>	<b>11 – 17</b>	<b>0 – 10</b>	<b>11 – 17</b>	<b>0 – 10</b>	<b>11 – 17</b>
Household Allowance	0.47	0.47	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49
Bedding and Linen	0.48	0.48	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51
Repairs and Equipment	0.95	1.05	0.99	1.11	0.99	1.11
Utilities	1.12	1.12	1.17	1.17	1.17	1.17
Food	5.58	7.39	6.41	8.14	8.45	10.73
Health and Personal Care	0.55	0.87	0.58	0.91	0.58	0.91
Transportation	1.65	1.65	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72
Respite	1.91	1.91	2.02	2.02	2.02	2.02
Replacement Clothing	1.95	2.41	2.04	2.55	2.04	2.55
Personal Allowance	0.70	1.63	0.73	1.69	0.72	1.68
Babysitting/Child Care	1.24	1.24	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32
Damage/Deductibles	0.97	1.91	1.04	1.97	1.04	1.97
<b>TOTAL TO FOSTER PARENT</b>	<b>17.57</b>	<b>22.13</b>	<b>19.02</b>	<b>23.60</b>	<b>21.05</b>	<b>26.18</b>
Agency Allowance Gifts	0.30	0.30	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31
Activities Education Special Occasion Other Special Costs	1.17	1.17	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>1.47</b>	<b>1.47</b>	<b>1.53</b>	<b>1.53</b>	<b>1.53</b>	<b>1.53</b>
<b>*TOTAL RATE</b>	<b>19.04</b>	<b>23.60</b>	<b>20.55</b>	<b>25.13</b>	<b>22.58</b>	<b>27.71</b>
Northern Food Allowance			0.30	0.36	2.33	2.94

\*includes Northern Food Allowance

**Additional Allowable Expenses**

Upon prior approval by a worker, and/or submission of the applicable bills, foster parents may receive payment for additional costs. In addition, the costs of homemaker services, transportation, and special medical items may be covered in special circumstances.

## **Special Rate Provisions**

A service fee is provided when extra services are required to meet the high needs of the child; this is known as special rate foster care.

## **Substitute Care Arrangements**

Residential care resources include group homes and treatment centres. Group homes, which may accept between four and eight children, provide care and treatment for children, ranging predominantly from 12- to 17-year-olds, whose needs cannot be adequately met in a substitute family setting. These children have usually experienced a range of abuse and/or neglect and exhibit emotional or behavioural difficulties as a result. Treatment centres provide similar services to six or more children. In addition, clinical assessment and support services are available to the residents. On site school programs are also available at some treatment centres.

The majority of the province's residential care placements are managed through a provincial placement desk which prioritizes (all) referrals for residential placement. Universal per diem rates are provided on the basis of the number of residents, the size of the facility, the level of care provided and the geographical location. A facility at any level may be designated as a receiving home, to be used for emergency placements. Receiving homes receive a combination of grants and per diem funding, which generally represents fixed and variable costs.

Independent living programs are available for youth 16 to 18 years of age who have demonstrated a willingness and some ability to move into independence with supports.

The Youth Emergency Crisis Stabilization System (YECSS) was established in 1997/98 with funds redirected from the closure of Seven Oaks Centre, a reception facility used for high-risk children. YECSS provides services on a 24 hour basis. These services include:

- Intake
- Mobile crisis capability (mobile crisis teams consisting of a clinically-trained person and a youth care worker)
- Crisis stabilization units (one six-bed unit for boys; one six-bed unit for girls)
- Brief treatment capability for children/families at the time of or following the crisis until the regular system can respond
- Case management function, particularly where the child/family is in crisis for a longer period of time and where the regular system is unable to meet the child/family's needs
- Home-based crises support/homemaker services.

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## SASKATCHEWAN

### Introduction

The Department has adopted a family centred approach that is strength-based and serves to strengthen and empower families. This approach is founded on the principle that the first and greatest investments in children are time and resources. These investments should be in the form of services to children in their own home when it is safe to do so.

However, there are those circumstances where this is not possible and following exploration of extended family and alternate care, other out-of-home placement options must be considered. When a child/youth must be placed in the care of the Minister, a foster home is usually the preferred placement.

A number of factors are considered in the selection of a caregiver for each child that is placed in the Department's (Minister's) care. These factors range from the child's age and developmental level to the caregiver's willingness and ability to support the reunification or permanency plan.

Given the range of needs that children/youth present while being placed in out-of-home care, the Department has responded by providing a continuum of resources that support the child's developmental needs. A high population of our children/youth will be placed in a foster home setting either within the Regular Foster Care or Therapeutic Foster Care level, depending on need.

### Types of Foster Care

#### Regular Foster Care Program

The Regular Foster Care program provides care for a wide range of children and youth between the ages of newborn to 21 years. There are approximately 750 Regular foster homes located throughout the province of Saskatchewan providing care for approximately 1750 children/youth on any given day. Intern and Practitioner level homes comprise the range of care found within the Regular Foster Care program.

The maximum number of children that can be placed in a regular foster home, regardless of level, at any given time, is four except under specific and approved circumstances.

#### Intern Homes

All new applicants having successfully completed the Department's approval process will commence fostering at the intern level. These homes will have attended an orientation session and successfully completed the homestudy process, which includes pre-service training, prior to placement of any children in their home.



Foster families at the intern level will be required to complete practitioner training within two years of fostering in order to be classified at the practitioner level. However, intern foster families have the option of obtaining their practitioner level status earlier, at their one year anniversary.

### Practitioner Homes

Practitioner level homes are those foster families who have successfully fostered for a minimum of one calendar year at the intern level and have completed the Practitioner training. The expectation would be that these homes have acquired a higher level of skill and experience than that of the intern level and as such could manage a more challenging child/youth.

### Emergency/Receiving Homes

Within the Regular Foster Care program, some foster homes may be designated for emergency placement purposes by the Regional Director. Such homes shall receive a rate above the basic maintenance rate.

These homes must be available on a 24-hour basis and may receive up to 12 hours notice prior to placement. Receiving homes will receive emergency rates for all placements as per the Department's policy. These emergency rates can be paid for a maximum of 15 days.

Where designated emergency/receiving homes are not available, Practitioner level homes may be used on an emergency basis. These homes will receive the emergency rates only if they receive less than 12 hours notice.

### Therapeutic Foster Care Program

Therapeutic Foster Care provides both a care and treatment function for children/youth who present ongoing behavioral, social, developmental and emotional problems that cannot be adequately met in the Regular Foster Care program.

Delivery of treatment services in Therapeutic Foster Care continues to be the best alternative for challenging children and youth requiring out-of-home care that would otherwise be placed in an institutional setting. Throughout Saskatchewan we have 95 therapeutic foster homes providing care and treatment for approximately 120 children/youth. Model capacity is staff-determined; each TFC worker can carry a maximum of 8 homes. Staff are expected to spend 10% of their time in recruitment of new foster families.

The Therapeutic Foster Care program limits the number of children per home to two. Standards reflecting intensive support, training, and individualized treatment plans are in place to ensure provincial program consistency and high quality service.

## Extended Family Care

The Department is committed to this approach of involving extended family and persons of sufficient interest in caring for the child when family reunification is not possible.

Policy directs placement planning for children to focus on exploring all possibilities for extended family when a child requires an out-of-home resource, before proceeding to other care responses such as foster home placement. Extended family caregivers have opportunities for training and receive financial and casework support.

*The Child and Family Services Act* also has a provision that allows for guardianship of the child to occur under an order titled: "Persons of Sufficient Interest" (PSI) pursuant to Section 37 (1)(b). This order allows for permanency to be achieved for the child with either relatives or a person(s) who have a meaningful relationship with the child and it is in the best interests of the child.

There is a monthly payment provided to the child's caregivers where they have been designated as Persons of Sufficient Interest through the provision in *The Child and Family Services Act*. This payment amounts to \$270.00 per month for central and southern areas of the province and \$320.00 per month for northern areas of the province.

The Department is currently working jointly with First Nations authorities on extended family care program development.

## **Training and Approval**

The Department of Community Resources has a formal mandatory foster care training program which was developed by the Department and the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association (SFFA), with the assistance of the School of Social Sciences at Nova University, Florida. The NOVA program combines approval of foster parent applicants with preservice and practitioner level training. Training is provided by specially-trained teams made up of one caseworker and one experienced foster parent and is available across the province. Three themes are emphasized throughout the program: teamwork, dealing with separation and grief, and working with the natural family. Topics range from impact of the placement, cultural awareness, family dynamics, and behaviour management, to alcohol and drug abuse. In a two-parent home, both parents must take the training.

Persons interested in fostering are given a three-hour orientation, at the end of which they decide whether or not to complete an application and proceed with a six-module (24-hour) preservice training package. While the applicants are completing the preservice package, a home study report is done. The home study generally takes from three to four months and includes self-assessment, several interviews, reference checks, and completion of a medical report. A criminal records investigation is required. Issues discussed during the home study include use of alcohol and drugs, physical and emotional problems of applicant(s), marital problems, finances, previous involvement with child protection services, disclosure of physical or sexual abuse, child management

practices, fire and home safety standards. This home study report is shared with the applicants. Persons not suited to fostering generally select themselves out.

A foster family that is approved following completion of the home study process (including preservice training) is classified as an intern home and may accept their first foster child. The intern home is then required to complete the ten module (40-hour) practitioner level of training within two years. Therapeutic Foster Families are required to complete pre-service and practitioner training prior to placement of children/youth in their homes. While in the program they are also required to complete an additional therapeutic training curriculum that is delivered on an ongoing basis by the therapist workers.

### **PRIDE Training**

The Department of Community Resources purchased the PRIDE package (Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education) – a program for recruitment, training and support of foster family and caregiver resources. This package was purchased from the Child Welfare League of America in 2002, following consultations with all regional offices and other key stakeholders including the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association (SFFA), First Nations Child and Family Services Agencies, and the Saskatchewan Youth in Care and Custody Network (SYICCN).

The department is currently developing an implementation plan to support the roll-out of this program throughout the province. The department has hired a dedicated full-time provincial coordinator to complete this work. Prior to finalising the implementation plan, there will be a review of the experience and progress of other jurisdictions where PRIDE has been introduced. PRIDE will eventually replace the current NOVA training, through a phased approach. Key stakeholders (as referenced above) will continue to have an integral role in planning.

### **Review/Evaluation**

A written review of each foster home is completed by a caseworker, reviewed with the foster parents and signed by them, at least annually as a minimum standard. Upon completion of a formal review, a written report is completed using a standard format.

Foster homes are formally reviewed immediately following allegations and investigations of abuse or neglect; when there has been a significant change in the family's circumstances; if the age, number, and special needs of children that are appropriate to the family, as established at the time of approval or established at subsequent annual reviews, are to be changed; where there are concerns that children placed in the home may not be safe and/or well cared for; at any point where there is reason to believe that the foster family is unable or unwilling to meet the terms of the foster home agreement.

In a formal review the caseworker must assure that all standards of the original approval are met and assess whether the foster home should continue to be approved for ongoing

care.

### **Appeals/Complaints**

A conflict resolution process has been established jointly by the Department and the SFFA to address those situations where disagreement arises between department staff and foster parents.

If, when a conflict arises between foster parents and departmental staff, the foster parents are not satisfied with discussions with the caseworker, they must notify the worker who informs the supervisor. If a meeting with the supervisor is unsuccessful, the parents may request a meeting with the regional director.

Foster families may access support during times of conflict resolution through their Saskatchewan Foster Families Association (Family Support Coordinator) or local support persons (Regional committees composed of departmental and SFFA personnel select support persons who are trained to mediate concerns).

If the problem is not resolved at the regional level, the foster parents and support person or Family Support Coordinator may refer the matter to the Executive Director of the SFFA who arranges a review by informing the appropriate Regional Director and the Senior Program Consultant, Foster Care. A meeting of all relevant parties is scheduled within ten working days. The participants normally include the foster parents, the support person and Executive Director of the SFFA, the caseworker, the supervisor, the Regional Director and the Senior Program Consultant, Foster Care.

A joint letter documenting the final decision is forwarded to all participants from the Senior Program Consultant, Foster Care and the Executive Director, SFFA.

This process is currently under review by the Department and the SFFA.

### **Allegations of Abuse or Neglect**

When a complaint of abuse or neglect is received about a foster parent, it must be investigated immediately by a caseworker. The investigation must be completed in 30 days. If there appears to be a basis for the complaint and it involves physical or sexual abuse of a child, the police are notified immediately. The Regional Director or designate advises the Senior Program Consultant, Foster Care by e-mail when an investigation is being initiated. The notice shall include the name of the child(ren) who have allegedly been abused, name of the foster family, brief description of the allegation, and whether there has been a referral to the police.

The Senior Program Consultant will then notify the Executive Director of the SFFA. The foster family is offered support throughout the investigation process by the Association.

## **Saskatchewan Foster Families Association**

The Saskatchewan Foster Families Association (SFFA) works closely with the Department of Community Resources to promote public recognition of fostering, to strengthen recruitment and support of foster parents, to improve care for foster children, and to assist in delivering the orientation and training packages to prospective and new foster families. All approved foster families automatically become members. The Association is run by a provincial board of directors and operates through 17 local associations. Each departmental regional office has a caseworker who is designated as the liaison with the local SFFA branch. The SFFA is fully funded through a departmental grant.

### **Damage Compensation**

Foster parents are eligible for coverage under the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association's insurance rider, provided that they carry insurance on their property and possessions. The rider applies when a claim is not collectible under regular insurance due to the criminal or willful act of a foster child.

In exceptional circumstances, when a claim is not otherwise collectible, the Department may pay compensation for damage caused by children in care. The Department will also pay all or part of any deductibles and/ or increased premiums, depending on the number of previous claims in a year.

### **Foster Care Rates**

#### Establishment of Rates

Foster care rates are reviewed periodically by the Minister of Community Resources and are authorized and paid through the regional offices. Basic maintenance rates are based on a 1993 independent study, "The Cost of Raising a Child in Saskatchewan". There have been cost of living adjustments since 1993 (with increases averaging 2% annually during the past several years).

#### Basic Maintenance Rates

The basic maintenance rate is paid to intern and practitioner foster care families who provide daily care to children with a variety of needs. The basic maintenance rate is intended to cover food, clothing, education, personal care, transportation, household expenses, recreation and a spending allowance.

<b>SOUTHERN FOSTER CARE RATES (effective April 1, 2006)</b>								
Age	Food	Clothing	Education	Personal Care	Transportation	Household Operations	Recreation	Total
<b>0</b>	174.13	196.30	6.31	0.00	64.74	112.14	0.00	553.62
<b>1-5</b>	133.68	50.49	6.32	8.72	64.74	125.51	33.83	423.29
<b>6-11</b>	175.43	73.72	12.62	8.40	64.74	124.02	55.50	514.43
<b>12-15</b>	199.72	80.98	12.63	28.69	64.74	124.02	68.52	579.30
<b>16</b>	222.03	112.23	12.62	37.21	64.74	124.02	81.13	653.98

<b>NORTHERN FOSTER CARE RATES (effective April 1, 2006)</b>								
Age	Food	Clothing	Education	Personal Care	Transportation	Household Operations	Recreation	Total
<b>0</b>	175.07	204.27	7.57	0.00	69.70	112.14	0.00	568.75
<b>1-5</b>	166.71	50.79	7.57	13.23	69.70	125.51	33.83	467.34
<b>6-11</b>	224.91	76.88	15.14	12.45	69.70	124.00	55.56	578.64
<b>12-15</b>	257.10	83.23	15.14	35.76	69.70	124.00	68.52	653.45
<b>16</b>	299.90	112.23	15.14	46.56	69.70	124.00	81.13	748.66

In addition to the basic maintenance rate, a Skill Development Fee of \$100/month per child is paid to all approved practitioner foster families who have completed training. When a fee-for-service is in place and payment exceeds \$75.00, the fee-for-service will remain and a \$25.00 skill fee will be paid.

**Additional Allowable Expenses**

Payments are also available for children with special needs, on a request basis, to cover items such as training expenses, babysitting and respite care costs. Actual costs are covered for items such as medical travel, school supplies, sports or musical equipment and clothing purchased at the time of admission to care, as required.

**Special Rate Provisions**

**Fee-for-Service**

In addition to the basic maintenance payments, a fee may be paid for the care of children with increased needs resulting from physical or behavioural difficulties. Fees may range from approximately \$100 to \$500/month.

In some cases, an Exceptional Fee may be paid for children with very extreme physical or medical conditions. The *Daily Living Support Assessment (DLSA)* was designed as a means of standardising the exceptional fee-for-service payments for children and youth with physical, medical, intellectual and developmental disabilities who are in care of the Department of Community Resources. The assessment has been designed to assist in determining the skill and support needs of children and adults with physical, medical,

intellectual and developmental disabilities, and assessed financial compensation based on five possible increasing levels.

**Respite**

All foster families at the intern and practitioner level are eligible for 5 days of respite per year commencing from the date of first placement after approval as a foster home. Respite days cannot be carried over between years.

Families in other program areas are subject to the respite provisions of that program. Policy allows for paid respite days up to 30 days per year for Therapeutic foster parents, accrued at the rate of 2.5 days per month while the home is in use. Families eligible for respite based on the Daily Living Support Assessment, an assessment tool for compensation to foster families, are provided respite on a case by case basis.

**Therapeutic Foster Care**

Therapeutic Foster Care is an intensive application of foster care and treatment services for children who have specialized needs that cannot be adequately met through Regular Foster Care. Training requirements, in-home treatment plans, and intensive support provided by the Therapeutic foster parents make their job such that compensation beyond the cost of the child's daily care is essential. Higher payments and higher expectations encourage the development and perception of a professional therapeutic parent. The rates include a daily maintenance per diem as set per policy for teens (12-15 years) and a skill development fee which is based on completion of training and experience. Payment increases in 5 equal steps, to acknowledge TFC caregivers' increased experience and encourage completion of mandatory training modules and supplemental training opportunities:

<b>Therapeutic Foster Care Rates</b> (Effective April 1, 2006)	
	<b>Per Diem</b>
Step One	\$42.91
Step Two	\$46.40
Step Three	\$49.88
Step Four	\$53.37
Step Five	\$56.85

Emergency/Receiving Home

The designated homes receive a specific per diem rate when a child is placed in their home on an emergency/receiving basis. Emergency use of foster homes or receiving homes (maximum of 15 days) only paid when less than 12 hours notice given to practitioner foster home; designated and situational use (effective April 1, 2003).

<b>Emergency/Receiving Homes (effective April 1, 2006) Per diem</b>	
Ages 0 – 11	\$31.00
Ages 12+	\$43.08
Exceptions	Extension of time only

**Care Arrangements – Other Substitute**

Residential Resources for Children

Community based organizations operate 11 group homes that provide care to youth, generally between 12 and 16 years of age. Most homes provide care for five to six children, with programs emphasizing individualized case planning and reunification with family. Homes are grant funded by the Department of Community Resources on an annual contract basis.

The Department of Community Resources operates a provincial continuum of specialized residential children's programs. Dales House (15 co-ed spaces) in Regina and the Red Willow Centre (16 co-ed spaces) in Saskatoon operate assessment and stabilization programs for high needs children and youth, with service mandates to assess the personal, educational, medical and family needs of troubled children and youth, stabilize behaviour, and develop plans in partnership with regional caseworkers to successfully return to family, whenever possible. Where a return to family is not possible at this time, assessment and stabilization programs assist regional caseworkers by recommending appropriate out-of-home resources that will meet the needs of the young person.

The Department also operates two adolescent treatment group homes located in Saskatoon and Prince Albert. These intensive family-centred treatment programs work extensively with high risk youth and their families. They are limited to 4 youth in each home. The Department also operates a specialized 4 space treatment program in Regina for boys under the age of 12 years.

Ranch Ehrlo Society and the Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC) Child Care and Education Centre provide long-term residential treatment programs for exceptionally high needs children and youth. Ranch Ehrlo has developed a broad range of specialized treatment services for youth who exhibit severe conduct disorders; sexually intrusive and offending behaviours; drug, alcohol and solvent dependencies; psychiatric disturbances and serious behavioural problems related to serious histories of abuse, neglect and victimization. Ranch Ehrlo operates a number of youth group homes programs at their



main campus' in Pilot Butte and Buckland (Prince Albert), with residences in Regina and Prince Albert. They also offer residential care services for developmentally delayed adults. Future plans involve development of two 10 bed facilities in Saskatoon.

The PAGC Child Care and Education Centre operates a residential care and treatment program in Prince Albert that serves the needs of high risk northern Aboriginal children. This Centre incorporates strong traditional First Nation cultural values, activities and teachings into their program and actively involves family in the treatment process wherever possible.

First Nation community-based agencies currently operate two 5 space Safe House programs for sexually exploited children involved in the sex trade in Regina and Saskatoon. Both residential programs ensure that children are provided safety, care, support, supervision, and counseling towards the goal of safely exiting the street and reconnecting with family, school, and community.

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## ALBERTA

### Introduction

The Alberta foster care program is based on the belief that a family unit and parent model is the most beneficial and desirable setting for raising a child. A foster family is a temporary family for a child whose birth family is unwilling or unable to assume full responsibility for the child.

The supportive atmosphere of the foster home assists a child in developing health, self-esteem and offers a positive role model for whom a child can pattern values and behaviours.

Child and Family Services Authorities and First Nations Child Welfare Agencies are responsible for delivering foster care services in Alberta.

### The Foster Care Model

The current foster care model was introduced in September 2004, with two fundamental classification levels and a stand-alone level for foster parents who bring existing professional expertise to their role.

The classification system is as follows:

- Level One
- Level Two
- Specialized

Newly licensed homes are classified during the licensing and approval process. New homes will generally be classified at Level One. To qualify for a Level Two classification, foster parents must complete all of the Core Training Program, be able to demonstrate the skill and knowledge and abilities described in the Foster Care Classification Expectations and be willing to accept children requiring placement at their classification level.

To qualify for classification at the specialized level, foster parents must have completed the required Orientation to Caregivers Training, and have demonstrated a specialization or skill set which enables them to provide care to children with exceptional needs and be willing to accept children requiring a “specialized” home.

## **Types of Foster Care**

### Level One

Level One foster parents provide care for children who require both developmental care and professional resources to resolve or meet the needs of a moderate disability. The maximum number of children permitted is two.

### Level Two

Level Two foster parents provide care for children presenting with serious emotional or behavioural problems, medical conditions, physical or mental handicaps who are at risk of requiring institutional care. The maximum number of children permitted is four.

### Specialized Foster Care

Foster parents classified as specialized provide care for children with many problems that are frequent, intense and enduring and who would normally require treatment in a residential treatment or nursing facility. These include children with extreme emotional/behavioural problems, severe psychiatric problems, or children who are medically fragile. A special Foster Care Support plan will be developed for these foster parents who are caring for these very high needs children.

Note: This classification level is currently under review.

### Kinship Care

Kinship care providers are extended family members or persons with a significant relationship with a specific child. Kinship care providers go through the same approval process as regular foster parents with the exception that they are not licensed and they do not have to attend the same amount of training. Kinship care providers receive basic maintenance to support the child in their home and they receive the same casework supports as regular foster parents.

## **Training and Approval**

Training is a regulated requirement to maintain a foster home license. Foster parents are required to participate in ongoing training to maintain their license, update their knowledge, skill and enhanced ability to better respond to children who are placed in their care.

In a foster home with two parents, both parents are required to attend the training required for Level One and Level Two homes.

Orientation to Caregiver Training is mandatory during the application, licensing and approval process.

Training required during Level One is the Core Training<sup>3</sup> which must be completed within four years of approval as a foster home. Training for homes classified as Level Two homes is based on the unique needs of the child in the foster parent's care and the individual learning plan of the foster parent.

Specialised foster care training is based on the specialised needs of the child.

Each foster parent is required to undertake additional supplementary training each year as follows;

Level One: At least 9 hours per year

Level Two: At least 12 hours per year

Specialised Homes: At least 12 hours per year

### Approval

The approval process involves a confirmation that the applicant is 18 years of age or older; a Child Welfare Information System check (for past abuse or neglect); three reference checks; a medical report; a home assessment; a list of agencies the applicant fostered with before, if any; and a criminal record check. The home study assesses attitudes, values and potential to foster and is the deciding factor in determining an applicant's suitability. The criminal record check is conducted prior to the home study.

The screening and approval process should not extend beyond 60 days after the applicant completes Orientation to Caregiver training. All applicants are advised in writing of the Child and Family Service Authority's/Delegated First Nation Agency's decision. Approved applicants are advised of their foster home classification, the number of beds approved and the age and sex of children approved for placement. Applicants who are refused must be advised of the reason and of their right to appeal to the internal administrative review or the Appeal Panel.

### Foster Home Licensing

Issuing of the foster care licence is coordinated with the approval process for foster care to simplify the process. The standards identified through regulation and policy are based on the current approval process in which a licence and approval occurs at the same time. The licence will be renewed annually during the foster home reviews to ensure the process is streamlined for foster parents.

A "licensed foster home" indicates to the community that the home meets the Ministry's licensing requirement standards and criteria for providing supplemental care to a child in the custody of the director.

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<sup>3</sup> The core training for foster parents is currently being reviewed (August 2006) to support the new foster care model and requirements under the *Enhancement Act*. The intent of the review is to streamline the training requirements based on the assessment of the core competencies foster parents require.

## **Review/Evaluation**

Foster homes must be reassessed where changes have occurred in the home that may impact on foster care services provided (e.g., move, new child, etc.). Each adult living in the home must provide the results of a criminal record check every three years. All foster homes must be evaluated annually to ensure they are meeting program standards. Homes that are found to be unsatisfactory may be closed, put on a probationary period or suspended for up to six months. If a home is closed, the foster family must be advised in writing of the reasons for the closure.

## **Appeals/Complaints**

Foster parents may appeal the Department's refusal to accept an application for foster care or withdrawal of approved foster home status. In addition, a foster parent who has cared for a child for six months or more may appeal a child's removal from the home. A child may appeal his placement in or removal from a foster home.

In April 1991, the Protocols and Guidelines for Resolution of Issues in Foster Care were implemented. These outline the procedures to be followed where there is a disagreement between the foster parent and social worker or the foster parent has concerns regarding a practice issue or the child's services plan. The Protocols and Guidelines were reviewed and revised in August 2006.

### Allegations of Abuse or Neglect

A child welfare worker, child in care or other person may lodge a complaint about the services a child is receiving, or allege neglect or abuse. In all cases of alleged neglect or abuse, the Children's Advocate must be notified. Child welfare staff determines whether an investigation is needed; if so, it is conducted by staff with no involvement in the case. Foster families who are the subjects of abuse or neglect allegations are referred to the Foster Allegation Support Team (F.A.S.T.) for support. F.A.S.T. is a support offered by the Alberta Foster Parent Association and its regional associations.

## **Alberta Foster Parent Association**

The Alberta Foster Parent Association (AFPA) is a non-profit society that was registered in 1974 to act as the collective voice and central resource for all foster parents in Alberta. The AFPA has membership throughout Alberta and represents foster parents on an individual, local, regional and provincial level. The over 40 district associations are represented by 15 Regional Directors, four of which are Aboriginal, that have been elected by the foster parents in their region to sit on the Provincial AFPA Board of Directors. This structure enables the AFPA to work closely with Alberta Children's Services at all levels throughout the province. The AFPA is a member of the Canadian Foster Family Association.

## **Damage Compensation**

The basic maintenance rate provided to foster parents includes an amount to cover extra household insurance. In addition, Alberta Children’s Services provides funds to the Alberta Foster Parent Association for a rider policy to cover certain willful damage by a foster child. This rider policy covers only those items not covered by the foster parents’ own policy. A foster parent who can demonstrate that every reasonable effort to obtain insurance was unsuccessful may request an ex gratia payment.

## **Foster Care Rates**

### Establishment of Rates

Alberta's basic maintenance rates for foster care are reviewed on an ad hoc basis by the Minister of Alberta Children’s Services.

### Basic Maintenance Rates

Basic Maintenance is a per diem rate paid to foster parents to cover all of a child’s day to day needs. Each foster parent receives the Foster Care Compensation Guide that describes general responsibilities and the method of receiving payment for expenses. This guide includes the current amount of the basic maintenance rate.

Basic maintenance is paid for every day a child is in the home including the day of arrival and day of removal. Included in the basic maintenance rate are: food, clothing, personal care items, general household costs and spending allowance.

<b>Basic Maintenance Rates</b> (Effective April 1, 2006)	
<b>Age</b>	<b>Per Day</b>
0-1 year	\$17.58
2-5 years	\$19.66
6-8 years	\$21.56
9-11 years	\$22.76
12-15 years	\$25.79
16-17 years	\$29.49

### Additional Allowance Expenses

Additional costs may be covered, with the approval of the social worker. Allowable expenses may include:

- a) educational costs such as school pictures, bus passes, student union and locker

- fees, tutoring costs, etc.;
- b) homemaker support services to foster parents in special circumstances;
- c) special medical items, such as artificial limbs, prosthetic devices, hearing aids or other such items;
- d) summer camp fees or other holiday expenses (up to \$325.00 per child per year effective April 1, 2002);
- e) recreation and cultural funds (up to \$525 per year for children aged 0 – 11 years and \$625 per year for children aged 12 – 18 effective April 1, 2005); and
- f) respite (up to \$2.60 per day per child).

All medical, hospital, optometric and basic dental services are also covered through the province's Health Care Insurance Plan and a Treatment Services Card is issued on behalf of the child.

**Skill Fees/Special Rate Provision**

Skill fees are provided to foster parents in acknowledgement of their skills and abilities, training and experience. In recognition of this skill base, skill fees will be provided to foster homes based on the classification of the home.

<b>Skill Fees</b> (effective July 1, 2006)	
Level One Skill Fee	\$12.50 per day
Level Two Skill Fee	\$25.00 per day
Specialized	Special rates based on individual needs of the child

**Other Placement Types**

Alberta's residential resources provide specialized services with professional staff. Group care provides out-of-family care in a community setting. Residential facilities provide a continuously supervised environment for children with multiple problems who cannot be placed in a family setting. The Supported Independent Living Program assists youth in moving towards independence. Secure treatment facilities provide the most intensive care to children who are considered to be a threat to themselves or others.

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## BRITISH COLUMBIA

### Introduction

Foster homes provide substitute parenting in a family home for children in the charge, care, custody or guardianship of “a director” designated under Section 91 of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*. The goal for children in foster care is to return them to their own families, where possible. This goal may be successfully met when there is a cooperative partnership between the fostering family, the child’s family and staff of the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Each foster home is the administrative responsibility of the MCFD district office, or delegated Aboriginal agency in whose jurisdiction the home is located.

### Types of Care Settings

#### Range of Care Setting Options

A child in the charge, care, custody or guardianship of the director must be placed in a director-approved resource. The director chooses from two main types of directly funded residential services: family care homes and specialized residential services.

#### Family Care Homes

Family care is the out-of-home living arrangement which most closely replicates the preferred environment for a child’s upbringing. Most family care homes offer interim substitute parenting to children while supporting important relationships of children to their parents and extended families. Long term family care homes meet the permanency needs of children under continuing custody orders when adoption is not the option being pursued in the child’s plan of care for specific reasons.

Additional services are available to family care homes on an as-needed basis according to each child’s plan of care. The type of service offered and its intensity varies according to the level of the home and the needs of the children placed.

There are five kinds of family care homes: restricted family care, regular family care, and specialized family care, Levels 1, 2, and 3.

All types of family care homes may provide respite and relief services (relief services are discussed in detail later under *Relief/Respite Care*). Restricted family care homes may provide respite or relief only for a child already approved to reside in that home.

#### *Restricted Family Care*

Restricted family care homes are director-approved families who provide care for a child already known or related to them. Approval is restricted to the specific child placed in



the home, and terminates when that child leaves or is discharged from care. A restricted home may be re-approved if the child previously in care at that home returns to it, or to provide respite or relief services for that child.

### *Regular Family Care*

Regular family care homes are director-approved families who provide care for children of varying ages and needs. Unlike restricted family care homes, the child placed in the home is not normally known to the caregiver.

### *Specialized Family Care Homes*

Specialized family care homes provide care in a family setting for children placed by the director who may present with special needs including complex health needs, moderate to extreme challenging behaviours or developmental delay. Each of the three levels of specialized family care homes has specific approval, experience, training requirements, and Level 2 and 3 homes may also provide specialized assessment and intervention services.

Generally, a foster home may not have more than six children, including the foster parents' own children. No more than two of the six children may be under two years of age.

### Bed Subsidy Homes

The Ministry contracts bed subsidy services with private individuals or non-profit societies. Generally, the services include only basic care and nurturing. Services are typically provided on a 24-hour basis, with guaranteed emergency placement for individuals or family groups.

Under exceptional circumstances, when it is clearly in the best interests of a child, a bed subsidy home may be used as a family care home.

A bed subsidy home may have capacity for between one and six children.

### Respite Resource Services

Respite resource services assist families by providing parents with periods of rest giving daily care to their children. Services are child-focused and designed to meet the day-to-day needs of specific children during the period of respite. The broader aim is to relieve family stress and enhance long-term family stability. Respite may take place in a contracted resource or family care home or in the family's own home.

### Relief for Family Care Homes

Relief is a support service that is available for all foster homes for up to 3 days per month. Relief services must be provided by approved caregivers and is most commonly

arranged between foster parents.

### Supplementary Relief

In situations where more than three days per month relief is required to maintain a placement and the cost would require the caregiver to spend an unreasonable or disproportionate amount of the service payment, supplementary relief may be approved for both in-home and out-of-home relief.

### **Training and Approval**

Provided the references, criminal record check, medical report and home study are satisfactory, the supervisor will, on the recommendation of the social worker, approve the home for placement. Where a home is found to be unsuitable, the Ministry advises the applicants in writing of its decision. The applicants have the opportunity to have the decision reviewed.

Once a family care home is approved, a Family Care Home Agreement is signed by both the family care providers and the director (or designate). The agreement for Regular Family Care Homes (and level one) is renewed every three years, whereas a Restricted Family Care Home agreement is valid for one year only. Specialized Family Care Home Agreements, levels 2 and 3, are renewed every 18 months.

All foster parents must participate in a 15-hour pre-service orientation program prior to their first placement. They must also complete a 53 hour standardized BC Foster Care Education Program. The local foster parent associations also offer workshops to help family care providers develop their parenting skills. The director may also provide funding to individual family care providers to meet additional training needs. The BC Foster Care Education Program is currently delivered under contract by regionally based foster parent support agencies.

### **Review/Evaluation**

All family care homes must be evaluated annually to ensure a high quality of care. Reviews occur within 30 days of the anniversary date of approval. Reviews include a file review and a home visit where the family care providers are interviewed.

Where a family care home has been inactive for two months or more, a review of the home must be conducted to determine if it should be kept open.

### **Appeals/Complaints**

Disagreements between individual foster parents and social workers are dealt with by a dispute resolution mechanism developed between foster parents and each region. The processes are guided by the *Protocol for Resolving Issues Between Foster Parents and Ministry Staff Framework*.

All children-in-care have specific legal rights under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*. Allegations of abuse of these rights may be taken to the Office of the Ombudsman.

### Allegations of Abuse or Neglect

Any allegations of child abuse in a family care home are to be reported immediately to the director. The Ministry has developed a provincial Protocol Framework for investigating such reports for regions to use in the development of Regional Protocols. Such protocols are developed in collaboration with foster parents in the region and the two provincial foster parent Federations.

### **British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations (BCFFPA)**

This registered, non-profit association maintains a working partnership with and is funded by the Ministry of Children and Family Development. It assists foster parents through support, consultation and information and improves public understanding about foster parenting. The federation encourages foster parents, social workers and other interested people to work together to improve services for children. The Federation consists of representatives from the local and regional foster parent associations.

### **Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents (FAFP)**

The Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents listens to, supports, and advocates for Aboriginal Foster Parents. It works with the Ministry to develop processes that are consistent with its goals and beliefs as Aboriginal people. It also develops and provides education and training for Aboriginal Foster Parents, and works to educate mainstream society to the specific needs of Aboriginal caregivers and the children in their care.

### **Insurance**

The British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations has a group insurance rider for extended property damage caused by a child placed by the director. This rider is limited to the extent of the foster parents' current property damage coverage. The Ministry for Children and Family Development funds the insurance coverage through an agreement with the federation. In addition, there is a third-party liability policy coverage provided under the province's Master Insurance Program for all foster parents for actions related to carrying out their fostering responsibilities. All foster parents with a signed agreement are automatically covered; this coverage is in addition to their regular insurance policy.

Motor vehicles used to transport children placed by the director must have at least \$1 million third party legal liability coverage.

**Foster Care Rates**

Establishment of Rates

Foster care rates are established and reviewed by the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

**A. Restricted and Regular Family Care Homes**

Restricted and Regular Family Care Homes both receive the foster family care payment which is intended to cover the day-to-day costs incurred in caring for a child over an extended period of time. The payment covers expenses such as food, household expenses, transportation, education, clothing, health, personal care and family recreational outings.

<b>Family Care Rates</b> (Effective January 1, 2001)		
<b>Age</b>	<b>monthly</b>	<b>per diem<sup>1</sup></b>
0 – 11	\$701.55	\$23.39
12 - 19	\$805.68	\$26.86

1. Based on a 30 day month.

Additional Allowable Expenses

The payment for Regular and Restricted Family Care is intended to be all-inclusive, covering the day-to-day needs of the child in care. However, there are provisions for annual clothing payments, or one-time only or exceptional ongoing monthly payments to meet exceptional or unusual costs.

One - Time Only Payments

Examples of situations that may warrant such payments are:

- long distance travel for recreational, cultural, medical and visiting purposes;
- exceptional medical requirements not covered by the Medical Services Plan
- exceptional clothing needs;
- cost of insurance deductible; and
- other exceptional and unusual costs that the caregiver cannot be expected to manage.

A review of the family care payment rate is required before additional funding is approved, to ensure that the family care payment rate has been committed or expended.

Exceptional Ongoing Monthly Payments

Some caregivers require ongoing additional monthly payments, for example to pay for

shelter, transportation, relief, day care or child and youth care workers directly related to a child in their care. These monthly payments to meet known ongoing exceptional costs are based on the needs of a specific child, negotiated with the service provider, and must fall within an accepted pricing range.

Before additional payments are made, the family care payment rate is reviewed to ensure all available funds are either committed or expended.

#### Annual Clothing Grant Payments

This payment is provided when a child entering care or moving from one resource to another has an inadequate clothing supply.

### **B. Specialized Family Care Homes - Levels 1, 2 and 3**

The Specialized Family Care Home Rates are all-inclusive and consist of the Foster Family Care rate and a Service payment. The Foster Family Care rate provides for the child's basic needs and the Service payment covers all direct program costs of the caregiver in providing service, including relief, transportation capital/leasing costs and insurance costs. The Service payment varies according to the designated level of care and the number of children or beds in the home.

For Level 2 and 3 Homes, the Ministry may enter into a "child-specific" or a "bed-specific" agreement. Bed specific agreements are the most common, and are used when a home will be used on a regular basis. Child specific agreements are occasionally used to purchase one bed for a specific child.

**Specialized Family Care Home Rates**

(Effective January 1, 2001)

<b>Level 1</b> for each child (maximum number of children per home is six (6), including caregiver's own children)				
<b>Age</b>	<b>Service Payment</b>	<b>Foster Family Care Rate</b>	<b>Total Monthly Rate</b>	<b>Per Diem* Per Child</b>
0 - 11	\$358.02	\$701.55	\$1,059.57	\$35.32
12 - 19	\$358.02	\$805.68	\$1,163.70	\$38.79
<b>Level 2</b> maximum number of beds is three (3)				
<b>(i)</b> for each Child-Specific agreement or each Bed-Specific agreement for one bed				
<b>Age</b>	<b>Service Payment</b>	<b>Foster Family Care Rate</b>	<b>Total Monthly Rate</b>	<b>Per Diem* Per Child</b>
0 - 11	\$1,040.40	\$701.55	\$1,741.95	\$58.07
12 - 19	\$1,040.40	\$805.68	\$1,846.08	\$61.54
<b>(ii)</b> for two children – Bed-Specific				
<b>Age</b>	<b>Service Payment</b>	<b>Foster Family Care Rate</b>	<b>Total Monthly Rate</b>	<b>Per Diem* Per Child</b>
0 - 11	\$1,768.68	\$1,403.10	\$3,171.78	\$52.86
12 - 19	\$1,768.68	\$1,611.36	\$3,380.04	\$56.33
<b>(iii)</b> for three children – Bed-Specific				
<b>Age</b>	<b>Service Payment</b>	<b>Family Care Rate</b>	<b>Total Monthly Rate</b>	<b>Per Diem* Per Child</b>
0 - 11	\$2,392.92	\$2,104.65	\$4,497.57	\$49.97
12 - 19	\$2,392.92	\$2,417.04	\$4,809.96	\$53.44
<b>Level 3-</b> (maximum number of beds is two)				
<b>(i)</b> for each Child-Specific agreement or each Bed-Specific agreement for one child				
<b>Age</b>	<b>Service Payment</b>	<b>Foster Family Care Rate</b>	<b>Total Monthly Rate</b>	<b>Per Diem* Per Child</b>
0 - 11	\$1,716.66	\$701.55	\$2,418.21	\$80.61
12 - 19	\$1,716.66	\$805.68	\$2,522.34	\$84.08
<b>(ii)</b> for two children – Bed-Specific				
<b>Age</b>	<b>Service Payment</b>	<b>Foster Family Care Rate</b>	<b>Total Monthly Rate</b>	<b>Per Diem* Per Child</b>
0 - 11	\$2,913.12	\$1,403.10	\$4,316.22	\$71.94
12 - 19	\$2,913.12	\$1,611.36	\$4,524.48	\$75.41

Relief / Respite Care

“Relief” means both in-home and out-of-home relief for the family care home. “Respite” means out-of-home care provided by the director to a child’s parents with whom there is a support service agreement.

Costs for three days of relief (per child or bed) are part of the service payment component of the Specialized Family Care Home rates. The following rates are paid to the home

\* Based on a 30 day month

providing the service and apply to both relief and respite care (under intermittent care agreements).

<b>Relief/Respite Care (Per Diem)</b>	
Level 1	\$48.79
Level 2	\$61.54
Level 3	\$84.08

**Additional Allowable Expenses**

The Specialized Family Care Home rates are intended to be all- inclusive; however, the following provisions for additional payments exist.

**One - Time Only Payments**

Level 1, 2 and 3 homes are eligible for one-time only payments according to the Regular Family Care Home policy. However, supplementary relief or professional support services are assessed differently.

**Exceptional Ongoing Monthly Payments**

Specialized Family Care Homes are also eligible for ongoing additional monthly payments, for example to pay for shelter, transportation, relief, day care or child and youth workers directly related to a child in their care. These monthly payments, to meet known ongoing exceptional costs are based on the needs of a specific child, negotiated with the service provider, and must fall within an accepted pricing range.

**Professional Support Services**

Where the Specialized Family Care Home is unable to meet some of a child's service requirements, external supports to support the placement can be authorized.

**Substitute Care Arrangements**

Independent living placements can be provided to 16-18 year-old youth in care.

**Kinship Care**

Under section 8 (Kith and Kin Agreements) of the CFCSA, the director may enter into a written agreement with a person who has established a relationship with a child or has a cultural or traditional responsibility toward a child and is given care of the child by the child's parent. It is considered a temporary care providing arrangement until such time as

the parent(s) is able to resume care of their child (hence, supporting permanency planning for a child).

Under section 54.1 of the CFCSA, guardianship can be transferred from the director to a relative or significant adult. In addition, these individuals may obtain custody and guardianship under the *Family Relations Act*.

Financial assistance may be available to:

1. Ministry approved individuals who care for a child under an out of care provision of the CFCSA e.g. section 8, section 35(2)(d), 41(1)(b), and,
2. Ministry approved persons to whom permanent custody is transferred from the ministry pursuant to section 54.1.

### Specialized Residential Services

Specialized residential services include bed subsidy homes, group homes, staffed/specialized residential child care resources, intensive child care resources, receiving, assessment and planning programs and therapeutic network homes (also known as satellite homes). A non-profit society, private agency or an individual may operate them.

### Group Homes

Group home services are contracted on an annual or more frequent basis with private individuals (private group homes) or non-profit societies (society-operated group homes).

Generally, group home core services include 24-hour skilled parenting and child care services, group and individual counselling and activities, and programming for individual children designed to achieve the specific goals of the child's comprehensive plan of care.

In addition to these core services, individual group homes may also offer certain specialized services such as receiving services, longer term care, or respite and relief care.

A group home may have capacity for between three and eight children.



Residential living for pregnant and young mothers

Services may be offered to pregnant young women, usually in the last trimester of pregnancy, and young mothers who require a stable and supportive residential environment before and after giving birth. The service provides a place in a residential facility suitable for the accommodation of young mothers and their infant children, along with a program of assistance and guidance before and after the birth of their child. The counselling component addresses the training needs of the mother and the developmental needs of the children.

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## YUKON

### Introduction

The objective of foster care is to provide a child in care and custody of the Director of Family and Children's Services with a family setting and a healthy parent role model when the child's birth family is unable to care for the child. The substitute family environment is intended to facilitate the child's development and provide a positive, learning environment for the healthy functioning of the child.

The Child Placement Services Unit of the Department of Health and Social Services is responsible for the recruitment of foster homes, the placement of children in foster homes and the provision of financial support and counselling/support services to foster parents in Whitehorse. Regional offices develop their own foster care resources using the central office for consultation and support services.

### Types of Foster Care

The types of foster care in use in the Yukon are summarized below. No foster home may have more than four children in care at any time unless the children are siblings. No foster home may care for more than two infants under the age of 18 months including their own, on a regular 24 hour basis. All foster homes may provide short- or long-term care.

#### Regular Foster Home

These homes are recruited from the community. The foster parents receive the prevailing basic maintenance payment for each child in their care. Regular foster parents generally specify the sex and age of children they prefer to foster.

#### Relative Home (also known as Kinship Home)

A relative foster home is approved to care only for children in the Director's care and custody who are related to the foster parent(s). Relative foster home parents receive the basic maintenance payment for each child in their care.

#### Restricted Foster Home

This type of foster home is approved for the placement of one specific child only, usually a relative or a neighbour. A restricted foster home is usually used when no approved foster home is available and placement of the child in the home is in the child's best interests. This home may be used only for the specific child placed, for a specific time period.

### Special Rate Foster Home

This type of home is intended to provide additional care and services to a child with special physical, mental or emotional needs. The home receives a negotiated special rate over and above the regular maintenance rate for providing specific services to a particular child. The rate is specified in the Foster Home Special Rate Agreement that is signed by the foster parents, the worker and the Director. The rate is determined by a point system outlining specific services or needs.

### Boarding Home

Boarding homes are intended to provide a safe residential setting and adequate food and lodging for teenagers in care. Boarding home parents are not expected to provide the same level of care and supervision as foster parents. Boarding home rates vary according to circumstances, but should not exceed the basic foster care rate.

### **Training and Approval**

Once the completed *Application for Fostering* form is received, the Department initiates the approval process. This involves exploring three personal and/or community reference checks, a medical reference, a public health nurse reference (in Regional offices), an RCMP criminal record check, an inquiry of the Child Protective Services files for all family members over 18 years of age, and completing a home study.

The home study is a vital component of the screening process. It is intended to assess the applicants' values, attitudes and potential as foster parents, including compliance with the foster home program standards. All members of the family should be interviewed at least once and also be seen as a group. The worker may recommend approval of a foster home; however, only a program manager or the Director has the authority to approve a home.

Once a home is approved, both the foster parents and an Assistant Director or Director sign the Foster Home Agreement that is renewed annually. Where applicant is found to be unsuitable for fostering, the worker notifies the applicants in person, and writing, and then advises them of their right to appeal to the worker's supervisor, the Manager of Child Placement Services, or the Director of Family and Children's Services.

Training is the responsibility of the Child Placement Services Unit in Whitehorse and of the social workers in the Regional Offices. Potential and approved foster parents are encouraged to attend group PRIDE pre-service training sessions in Whitehorse.

In Whitehorse, a 27-hour orientation training (Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education, PRIDE) was initiated in 1999 and all foster parents are encouraged to attend. Further essential training must be completed when the Department and/or foster parents identify it as a requirement. Other training is optional for approved foster parents but is encouraged. A foster parent support group has been established in

Whitehorse.

## **Review/Evaluation**

Monthly contact is required with all approved foster parents when a child is placed in a home. All approved foster homes must be reviewed every six months, regardless of whether a child in care is in the home. An annual review, to ensure compliance with the Foster Care Standards, includes at least one home visit, completion of a health and safety checklist and discussions with all workers who have placed children in the home. A review of departmental staff services to the foster family, to ensure compliance with standards, is also completed at this time. When the foster family's circumstances change, a review must be conducted immediately. All reviews must be documented on the foster home file. Supplements to the home study are required every three years, at which time new references may be requested.

## Appeals/Complaints

A foster child, foster parent, birth parent, or community member may make a complaint concerning the child's placement in or removal from a foster home; a foster parent may also state complaints concerning Departmental services a child is or should be receiving. Complaints should be made directly to the worker but may be directed to the Supervisor and appealed to the Manager, or Director.

## Allegations of Abuse or Neglect

A child protection worker, according to standard departmental procedures, investigates any reports of abuse in a foster home. The foster care worker provides supports to the foster family throughout the investigation.

## **The Association of Yukon Foster Parents**

A foster parent support group, the Association of Yukon Foster Parents, was established in the fall of 1989 and became a registered non-profit society in October 1990. It provides monthly support and information meetings for foster parents. In addition, it was active in responding to the Foster Home Review Committee's request for feedback on proposed standards.

## **Damage Compensation**

The Department of Health and Social Services does not usually cover the cost of damages caused by a child in care. Foster parents are encouraged to ensure that their own household insurance provides them with adequate protection in the event of damage. Yukon foster parents are covered for extended coverage through an agreement with the British Columbia Foster Parent Insurance Plan and the Department will cover the deduction of this rider. The Director has authority to provide compensation in exceptional circumstances.

## **Foster Care Rates**

### Establishment of Rates

The following rate structure is currently under review. Foster care rates are established by the Department of Health and Social Services. Effective September 1991, a new rate which applies to all age groups but varies according to regional location, was introduced; prior to this time, rates varied by age and region. The Department's regional offices are responsible for managing foster care resources in their areas; payments for foster parents are made by cheque from the central office (Whitehorse).

### Basic Maintenance Rates

The basic rate, which varies depending on geographic location, is intended to cover the normal costs of food, transportation and personal care items. In addition, an annual allocation to cover the costs of maintaining a basic wardrobe is provided in two instalments (spring and fall). A further winter clothing allowance is issued in the fall to cover the costs of a winter jacket and boots for each foster child. Foster parents also receive, on behalf of each child in their care, a monthly allowance for personal spending, hair cuts, club fees, birthday gifts, etc. The basic maintenance rates are currently under review for a cost of living increase.

<b>Foster Care Rates</b> (Rates effective April 1, 2001)		
<b>A. Basic Maintenance</b>		
<b>Area of Residence</b>	<b>Per Diem</b>	
Area I (Whitehorse)	\$26.97	
Area II (Dawson, Pelly Crossing, Mayo, Watson Lake, Faro, Ross River, Carcross, Teslin Carmacks, Haines Junction)	\$28.86	
Area III (Old Crow)	\$49.70	
<b>B. Clothing Allowance</b>		
<b>Age of Child</b>	<b>Basic Annual Allowance<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Winter Clothing Allowance</b>
0-23 months	\$390.00	\$49.00
2-5 years	\$437.00	\$79.00
6-12 years	\$678.00	\$116.00
13-18 years	\$777.00	\$159.00
<b>C. Child's Allowance</b>		
per month/per child	\$150.00	

**Additional Allowable Expenses**

In addition to the basic rates, foster parents may also receive the following:

- i) allowances for school supplies - paid once a year for foster children enrolled in school. The amount payable is \$25.00 per child in kindergarten, \$70.00 per child in grades one to seven and \$90.00 per child in grades eight to 12.
- ii) dental treatment - up to \$100.00 per child per visit. Payments exceeding this amount must receive supervisory approval.
- iii) orthodontic treatments - up to \$5,000.00 per child, on prior approval by the supervisor only. Amounts exceeding this must receive advance approval from the Director.
- iv) glass frames - \$100.00 per child. Payments exceeding this amount must receive prior supervisory approval or be covered by the child's allowance.
- v) Christmas allowance - birth to four years receive \$50.00, five to eleven years receive \$70.00 and 12 to 18 years receive \$100.00.
- vi) respite care services - approved on a special need basis.
- vii) day care services - approved on a special need basis.

<sup>4</sup>. This Allowance is paid in two instalments - one in the spring and one in the fall.

- viii) extra transportation costs - approved on a special need basis.
- ix) holiday allowance – provided once per year if travel for the holiday is outside the Yukon.

### Special Rate Provisions

Parents caring for a child who has physical, mental or emotional special needs receive a special rate in addition to the basic maintenance and other amounts outlined above. The amount is determined by the social worker and foster care worker, using a point rating system based on the child's special needs and the extra services required to meet these needs. Special rates are authorized for a maximum period of six months, and reviewed at the end of that period. A new Special Rate Needs Assessment was developed and implemented during 1999-2000.

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## **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

### **Introduction**

The Foster Care program in the Northwest Territories offers a substitute family environment for children who come into the care of the Director of Child and Family Services. The objective of every foster care placement is to provide children with an experience of positive family life while maintaining birth family involvement and cultural identity.

Seven Health and Social Services Boards across the NWT deliver foster care programs through legislation and standards administered by the Department of Health and Social Services. Child Protection Workers guide applicants through an established approval process while Child Protection Supervisors approve homes on behalf of the Director of Child and Family Services.

### **Types of Foster Homes**

The Northwest Territories provide a variety of types of foster homes, such as regular, provisional, extended family and emergency, in order to meet the varying service needs of the children in care. Recognising the importance of cultural and personal identity to children and youth, the NWT *Child and Family Services Act*, proclaimed in 1998 and amended in 2003, mandates Child Protection Workers to look to provisional/extended family foster homes as a primary placement resource.

#### Regular Foster Homes

Standards are currently being updated for the entire foster care program, including the policy around number of children in the care of the Director per foster home. Current practice encourages sibling groups to remain together whenever possible, with the approval of the Director of Children and Family Services. All regular approved homes are reviewed on an annual basis.

#### Provisional/Extended Family Foster Homes

The home of a relative or other appropriate individual who has a positive relationship with the child may be approved to provide services to a specific child or children. A provisional home is subject to a shorter, but thorough, approval process and is closed when the specific child for whom it was opened, leaves.

If the foster family wishes to continue fostering the standard approval process for a regular foster home, must be completed prior to additional placements. All Provisional/Extended Family foster homes are reviewed on an annual basis.

#### Emergency Foster Homes



Emergency foster homes deliver services in some communities. They must be available 24 hours a day to provide care to two or more children. Emergency homes are required to successfully complete the approval process prior to the placement of any children.

### **Approval and Training**

All foster parents in the NWT are required to successfully complete an established screening and approval process prior to providing services to children in the Director's care. This process is completed within 60 days of the initial application. The home study process completed by Child Protection Workers is at the heart of the approval process.

The following documentation is required for final approval:

- Application to foster form
- Criminal record check
- Release/receipt of information form
- Medical exam forms
- Oath of confidentiality form
- Foster home agreement form
- Three positive references
- Home study

The home study process allows the Child Protection Worker to find out how the family operates and to learn more about their attitudes toward children and parenting. It is also a chance to further describe what is expected of foster parents and to assist applicants in making a final decision about fostering.

Issues that are addressed include emotional maturity and stability of the applicants, positive parenting techniques, physical suitability of the home, finances and expected relationships with the Department and family members of children in care. Each family member must be interviewed during the process and a minimum of one interview is held with the entire family.

Regional Health and Social Services Authorities provide mandatory and voluntary training to foster parents in the NWT. The Foster Family Coalition of the NWT and local associations have partnered with Health and Social Services Authorities to provide training.

### **Foster Family Coalition of the NWT**

The Foster Family Coalition of the NWT was founded in June 2002. All foster families approved by their Regional Authority are automatically members of the FFC-NWT, including both regular and provisional homes although participation is voluntary. The Coalition is funded through the Department of Health and Social Services and makes available numerous supports to foster families throughout the NWT. It also serves as a source of new information on best practice foster care methods and trends. The Coalition also operates a toll free telephone support line and circulates a quarterly newsletter to all

foster homes in the NWT.

### **Foster Care Rates**

Basic maintenance foster care rates are currently established by individual Health and Social Services Authorities. Basic maintenance rates are intended to cover expenses including food, personal care items, household costs and miscellaneous items. Basic per diems range from \$24 in most communities up to \$47 in more isolated locations.

In addition to the basic rate, a monthly clothing rate is paid for each child. Other expenses that may be reimbursed with prior approval and submission of receipts include education and recreation expenses, childcare equipment and travel costs. The Health and Social Services Authorities cover health expenses not covered by Territorial Health Insurance.

### **Special Rate Provisions**

Foster parents caring for children and youth with special needs are compensated for the additional time, effort and skills that are required to provide services. Child Protection Workers undertake an assessment process with the foster parent to determine which level of special rate is applicable in each child's case. Once completed and approved by the Supervisor, the special rate is added to the child's basic maintenance rate.

### **Substitute Care Arrangements**

Group homes are designed to present a family-like environment for children in care for whom placement in a foster home is inappropriate. Group homes offer consistent structure, discipline, instruction and emotional support to assist children and youth in returning to a family environment. Most group homes have a receiving function for emergency placements when an appropriate foster home cannot be immediately located.

The Territorial Treatment Centre in Yellowknife and the Trail Cross Treatment Centre in Fort Smith make available specialized treatment services to children who are at high risk and display emotional, behavioural and/or psychological difficulties. The Territorial Treatment Centre provides services to children between the ages of 8 and 12 while Trail Cross serves children and adolescents between the ages of 12 and 16. Referrals to facilities in Southern Canada occur when NWT resources are unable or unavailable to meet the needs of children in care.

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## NUNAVUT

### Introduction

In Nunavut, foster care is a placement option for children who are living away from home. The Regional Supervisors of Social Programs under the *Child and Family Services Act* approve foster homes through delegated authority from the Director of Child and Family Services. Placements are made by social workers in the community offices. There are three regions in Nunavut, Baffin, Kivalliq and Kitikeot. The Department funds the foster homes through the budgeting process.

### Types of Foster Care

Nunavut has three types of foster care: Extended Family, provisional foster homes (child-specific homes) and regular foster homes. Some of the regular foster homes may have developed additional skills with difficult children and may be assigned such children.

#### Extended Family Foster Homes (Kinship Care)

The *Child and Family Services Act* states that placement with extended family is a priority and specifies the preference for this type of placement where possible. The homes are expected to follow the approval process just like regular foster homes but a child can be placed prior to the approval.

#### Provisional Foster Homes

These are child-specific homes that are approved by the Regional Supervisors of Social Programs in the regions.

#### Regular Foster Homes

Are pre approved foster homes allowing for the placement of any child under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

### Training and Approval

The home study is the basis of the evaluation process for any foster home for children. The home study is prepared by the community social worker and submitted to the Regional Supervisor of Social Programs for review and ultimate approval.

The home study collects information on the applicant's motivation to foster a child, their education, employment history, income, residence, skills, their health, marital relationship, and relationships with their own children, attitudes towards raising children, to religion, to education, and to community standards.

The home study explores the attitudes towards contact with family of origin and ability to deal with pressures from the family of origin should this become a reality. References

are required from a minimum of two non-related persons on the subject of the family's ability to parent.

The foster home agreement is signed yearly after approval has been completed. The Regional Supervisor of Social Programs may approve, approve with conditions or revoke an approval as a foster home.

Approval as an extended family or provisional foster home as with a regular foster home includes a criminal record check, reviews of departmental records, medical examinations, and an in-depth home study. Yearly reviews of the home are required. Extended and provisional homes are closed upon the child leaving the home.

Some of the foster parents may be identified by the social worker as having special skills in handling difficult and challenging children and as such they may be assigned such challenging children. No universal standardized training for foster parents is available to date in Nunavut.

### **Review/Evaluation**

Yearly updates of foster homes are required and are submitted to the Regional Supervisors of Social Programs.

### Appeals/Complaints

Appeals of decisions may be made to the Director of Child and Family Services although most decisions made are in the best interest of the child. Any foster parents who are not satisfied with the services are encouraged to communicate with the worker or failing that the community supervisor, the Regional Director of Social Programs and Services, then to the Director of Child and Family Services.

### Allegations of Abuse or Neglect

A community worker not directly responsible for supervision of the home must investigate allegations of abuse or neglect immediately. Physical or sexual abuse complaints must be referred to the police for investigation of possible criminal charges.

### Damage Compensation

Foster parents do not have to carry liability or homeowners insurance. When a child willfully or accidentally causes damage to property an application must be made to the Regional Supervisor of Social Programs for reimbursement from Child Protection funds. In matters of any significant amounts the Regional Supervisor of Social Programs would request approval from the Director of Child and Family Services.

### **Community Foster Parent Associations**

Nunavut is currently supporting the creation of community foster parent associations with

the goal of linking the community associations together to form regional associations, and over time, to create a Nunavut association. The National Foster Parent Association has indicated its support to Nunavut in this regard.

**Foster Care Rates**

Foster Care rates vary in Nunavut to a maximum of \$100.00 per day. The child’s needs are assessed and through negotiation a rate is established

Basic Maintenance Rates

The Department has a basic maintenance rate for Foster Care Homes. The rate is to cover food, housing, laundry, personal items and additional care costs for the child placed and are not deemed to be payment for services rendered. All foster care payments remain tax free.

<b>Basic Maintenance Rates</b> (effective June, 2005)		
<b>Geographic Area</b>	<b>Base Daily Rate (minimum)</b>	<b>Maximum Daily Rate</b>
Rankin Inlet, Cambridge Bay, Pangnirtung, Sanikiluaq, Iqaluit, Kimmirut, Whale Cove, Arviat, Cape Dorset and Kugluktuk	\$43	\$100
Qikiqtarjuaq, Hall Beach, Repulse Bay, Cheserfield Inlet, Cyle River, Igoolik, Baker Lake and Coral Harbour	\$45	\$100
Pond Inlet, Artic Bay, Resolute Bay	\$47	\$100
Taloyoak, Gjoa Haven, Grise Fiord, Kugaaruk	\$50	\$100

### Additional Allowable Expenses

The Department of Health and Social Services may provide additional amounts to cover emergency and initial placement costs. Additional funds may be provided for initial and seasonal clothing, gifts at birthday and Christmas, spending monies, recreation, sports, vacation travel, project related travel, land activities, day care, medical costs not covered through NIHB or accepted health care program and summer programs. Other items and services may be approved based on need.

### Respite Care

Respite care may be arranged by the social worker when requested if there are sufficient resources available.

### Special Rate Provisions

Upon placing the child in foster care the social worker approves the basic rate or requests approval of the Regional Supervisor of Social Programs for a special rate. Identification of a special rate would require justification based on the child's behaviours, the physical or mental challenges presented by the child and the amount of time required by the foster family to address the child's needs.

### **Substitute Care Arrangements**

There are a number of alternate care placements in Nunavut to meet the needs of special children. There are two contracted group home facilities for challenged children 0-16 years of age with a total of 16 beds. There is one receiving home with a total of 6 beds and one long term care facility with up to 12 beds.

There are no institutional facilities in Nunavut for children in care. Out-of-territory placements are used when necessary where space is available. Voluntary Services Agreements are available for youth aged 16-19 who have entered into agreement with the Directors of Child and Family Services, to assist with independent living or other similar services.

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