

# **SUPPORTING GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN**



**RESOURCE  
BOOKLET**

**A WORK  
IN PROGRESS**

**EDITION TWO  
JANUARY 2007**

## Dedication

This publication is dedicated to the thousands of courageous and deeply committed grandparents and other relatives – who give so much of themselves so that the grandchildren they raise may live safely and with a sense of belonging and family.

## Credits

The project team was fortunate to be able to use resource material from many community and government sources with permission. Some of the material was collated from pamphlets and brochures, other information came from relevant web sites. We have made every effort to acknowledge the original source and cite the reference. If we have inadvertently omitted any such acknowledgement please accept our apology. As mentioned in the next section we were particularly fortunate to be able to review material from Washington State's Aging & Disability Services Administration and adapt it for the BC context.

Thank you to all for your generosity.

This Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Resource Booklet is a work in progress, and is not a comprehensive list of services. This Resource Booklet does not endorse any particular program or service. Every attempt has been made to ensure that the phone numbers, websites, and addresses are current. If you notice errors in phone numbers, web addresses or other information or have information to add, please let Parent Support Services know by calling 1 800 377-0212. Thanks for doing this.

We hope this Resource Booklet provides you and your family with valuable information and resources. We also hope it will be used by agencies, caregivers, and other individuals who may want to help you locate such information and services or may want to begin to offer some new programs for grandparents and other grand relatives raising grandchildren.

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## Acknowledgments

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The SGRG Project Team that guided and supported the work that was done included Leslie Brown, Pat Mackenzie and Barbara Whittington from the School of Social Work, David Burns representing AFSA, and Tina Pearson for Parent Support Services Society of BC. This community-university partnership gave the project a depth and breadth that would otherwise not have been possible. Thanks to these folks for meeting the challenges as they occurred and staying the course to achieve this outcome.

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Tremendous thanks goes to Barbara Rumson, author and educator and to Elizabeth Wolfe, parent and Director on the Provincial Board of Parent Support Services who both worked tirelessly on compiling and verifying information for this initial Resource Booklet. ..A Work in Progress. Volunteers extraordinaire! Dale McKenzie supplied the titles for the movies. She has enjoyed them with the granddaughter she has been raising for over 9 years. Thanks Dale!

We also thank the many contributors to this Resource Guide including: Forrest Nelson and Kim Shelly of Legal Services Society, Victoria; Dulcie Fernandes, Associate Child and Youth Officer of BC; Drew Smith, Supervisor of Mediation Services with the Ministry of Children and Family Development; Sherry-Lynn Lidemark, Program Coordinator, Child Care Resource and Referral; Sharon Anderson, Family Justice Centre, Ministry of the Attorney General; the Victoria Public Library, Janet Reid and Colleen Casey Stewart along with the numerous staff who answered consumer and agency phone lines and verified the information we had. We thank the reviewers who have given input into the project at various stages along the way to completion. In the 2007 edition the fine hand of Lee Harrison can be seen in the editing and Elizabeth Bell worked to create a readable format. Menno Hubregtse worked on the cover page and helped the grandmother's tree grow a bit more. Thanks team.

The template for this resource booklet, much information, and a great deal of inspiration came from Hilari Hauptman, Program Manager, Department of Social and

Health Services, in Washington State's Aging and Disability Services Administration. They have developed programs for Relatives as Parents for over twelve years including housing, respite care, legal supports, local financial aid initiatives, and many others within the education and health care systems. Hilari was totally generous in sharing whatever we asked for; including a Resource Manual called "Parenting a Second Time Around", a training for facilitators of grandparents and other relatives raising grandchildren support groups. Thank-you for this generosity Hilari!

Thanks goes especially to the grandparents raising grandchildren PSS support groups in Victoria and Port Alberni for direction on what was needed, and to the Grand Relatives Task Force Group (that evolved out of the "Gathering" November 4th and 5th, 2005) who are working to build a strong, passionate voice that will continue to educate policy makers, program planners and community leaders about the importance of support services to better the lives of grand relatives as parents and their grandchildren.

Thanks also to all the agencies and organizations from Port Alberni, Nanaimo, Duncan, Ladysmith, Sooke, the Western Communities, and Greater Victoria including First Nations, the Intercultural Association, and many others that have met with us to learn of the issues, share their knowledge and resources, and discuss how best to respond to the needs of the 1000's of grandchildren and grandparents that are raising them. May we continue to create services and programs that specifically focus on this family group.

The biggest thanks go to the grandparents and other grand relatives who are raising their grandchildren with patience and courage and determination. We acknowledge your commitment and thank-you for what you are doing to make a safe and loving home for children who otherwise might be 'lost' in the child welfare system, looking for a family and a permanent home. We trust you will find some useful information in this resource booklet, a work in progress. There are still very few supports and services specifically for you and your family, but this is a beginning and we expect more will come as you and many of the other thousands of grandparents in BC and people who now know about what you are doing mostly alone, begin to speak out together in support of the rights of your grandchildren. Thank-you for this, too.

And finally, thank-you to the grandparents that are pictured on the front cover. To the trees that make it possible to print this resource guide, that provide food, shelter, and a place for the song birds to sing and nest, and to all the other natural resources that nourish us and allow us to live on this earth. Thank-you to the Coast Salish nation, the traditional keepers of this land, for allowing us to live and work here.

Marion F. Gracey, Project Coordinator, September 2004 - May 2006

Barbara Whittington, Project Team Principal Investigator September 2004- January 2007

## Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

This resource book came into being because of what wasn't there to support grandparents and other relatives in the work of raising their grandchildren.

Imagine as a grandparent getting a sudden call; "Your grandchild needs to either live with you or we'll have to find a foster home." When? Often the answer was. "Now." Grandparents' questions such as, "How will I do this for a lifetime not a weekend? Where will we live? Financially what will this mean now and in the future? What help can we get to support the grandkids with all this change and trauma? Should I be considering custody and guardianship, perhaps adoption or might the grandkid's parent be able to parent again? " ...all went unanswered.

All these questions and more came to the university/community project team as we listened to the experiences of those grandparents who were raising their grandchildren. In our initial B.C. research, described in the history section of this Resource Book, we learned so much we didn't know. We found the fierceness and determination of the grandmothers we talked with quite overwhelming. They were determined to protect their grandchildren and yet they were most often doing this important work in isolation. When we asked more about this isolation, the grandparents said that their efforts to get help and relevant information were fruitless. Policies were indecipherable and services that might be in place for other parents just didn't fit with their experience and their needs.

This Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Resource Book has been inspired by our admiration for the grandparent's fierceness and determination. It is far from perfect and is definitely a work in progress- a bit like a family. Policies still need to be changed to recognize the important work grandparents are doing and many services need to be developed that fit with and are co-created by grandparents raising grandchildren.

If you have other ideas the project team needs to hear about, please contact me. We are hoping to continue working to support grandparents raising their grandchildren.

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# Introduction and Project History

## Kinship Caregivers, Relatives as Parents, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Kinship caregiving is the full-time nurturing and protection provided by relatives for children who must be temporarily or permanently separated from their parents. If you are a relative raising a family member's child, you are not alone. While the majority of kinship care families are made up of grandparents raising their grandchildren, many other relatives, aunts, uncles, older siblings, tribal members, and godparents, are raising children whose parents, for varying reasons, are unable to do so.

Kinship caregivers come from all walks of life, all income levels, and all races and include grandparents, grand auntie, uncles and cousins, or other relatives. While each family's situation is unique, kinship care families share the need for information, services, and resources.

You may feel overwhelmed by the new role you have taken on as a surrogate parent. The financial, emotional, and legal concerns can be challenging. Finding answers to questions, attempting to locate services, and dealing with social service agencies and the legal system can be a long and frustrating process. Ask for help because parenting is far too important a job to do alone.

## History

Over the past 25 years, the number of children being raised by someone other than a parent has increased dramatically, with the vast majority of these children being raised by their grandparents. According to a report based on Canadian 2001 census data, there are more than 56,700 grandparents raising their grandchildren without either of the child's parents involved. These 56,700 grandparents raising their grandchildren accounted for 12% of the more than 473,000 grandparents who shared households with their grandchildren.

The Canada Census 2001 reported that in British Columbia there were 8,780 children under the age of eighteen being raised by their grandparents without a parent in the home. Two thirds of the grandparents in these households were women, and 46% were retired. And those are only the ones that were reported in the Census!

In 2000 the University of Victoria School of Social Work began a research project called "Grandmothers Caring for their Grandchildren". This study wanted to hear the voices of grandmothers and look at the experiences of indigenous and non indigenous families where grandmothers were raising their grandchildren. The researchers, Marilyn Callahan, Leslie Brown, Pat Mackenzie and Barb Whittington interviewed these grandmothers and also studied the policies and practices relating to them. They soon recognized that there was a lot more work needed to be done to support these families. Parent Support Services Society of BC had been offering a Grandparents Raising Grandchildren support group in Victoria for about five years and was very interested in joining with the University in a joint project to create this resource booklet, get the information onto a provincial web site, and generate the interest and supports necessary to develop more grandparents raising grandchildren support groups around Vancouver Island. The Strategic Initiatives Investment Fund (Queen Alexandra Foundation/MCFD) agreed to fund this project and so began the search for resources and information which you now will find included in this booklet.

During the course of this project a key focus has been to raise the awareness of how many families there are with grandparents or other relatives raising grandchildren, how few resources there are to support these families, and how challenging the role is to be parenting for a second time around with children that often have challenging behaviors because of difficult family histories. Awareness needs to be brought into schools, community centers, churches, all levels of government, legal offices, media, medical centres, public health programs, college and university school curricula, and to individuals in every community. In the vast majority of cases, these grandparents and other relatives are providing a stable, safe, loving environment in which their grandchildren can live and learn. With some supports and services to assist them, these families will provide the best outcomes for children that otherwise may be at risk of being caught in cycles of institutional or impermanent care. **SUPPORTING GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN** is the best option we have for long term positive outcomes for children, families and communities.

This Resource Booklet is called "a Work in Progress", as policies, laws, services, and supports are always changing. With awareness, we hope and expect that more resources and services will be available soon all over the province of BC. Some programs listed may be changed, discontinued, or improved by the time you check



them out. Most of the resources we have included are not specific for grandparents and other relatives raising grandchildren as until now this family group has been called "the silent demographic". Agencies have not thought to offer services, not knowing that there were lots of families that would use such services. We encourage you to let those agencies, departments, and people that you call know exactly why you are calling, that you are a grandparent or other relative raising a grandchild and looking for information, service, and support. Speak out not only for yourself but for the 8,700 plus grandchildren that are being raised by their relatives, mostly grandparents, in BC. Grandparents and other relatives raising grandchildren deserve support; so the children will receive all that they need to grow up healthy, safe, and secure. It does take a community to raise a child!

The SUPPORTING GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN Resource Booklet is intended to help British Columbia families, especially those living in the Capital Regional District of Vancouver Island and up to Port Alberni (the area designated in the project) find the services and information they need while raising a relative's child. This Resource Booklet will help you become aware of and find these services as well as provide you with some general information as you take on the responsibility of raising your grandchild or another relative's child.

Throughout the Resource Booklet we may use the term "child" to mean your grandchild, niece, nephew, sibling or other relative. We may use the term "parent" to mean the person who is raising this child as the grandparent, aunt, uncle, sibling, or other relative.



## Section One

### Child Development, Health and Safety Needs

*It's been 26 years since Susan and Tom had a young child in their home,  
and now they're caring for their 3 year old grandchild.*

*Mary and Jim made a decision not to have children of their own,  
and now they have a 7 year old grand nephew to raise.*

*Helen is a single, 56 year old, career- minded woman who is  
now planning a future for an 11-year old granddaughter.*

Many grand relatives raising children are concerned that they lack the knowledge and ability to raise a child. Some are raising a child for the first time. For others, it has been so long since they parented that they simply don't know current parenting issues. A lot has changed. New practices and new research may affect the way we raise and care for children.

#### Early Brain Development

One important area where recent research has made a difference over the last several years is in our understanding of early brain development. For information on early brain development and relevant parenting resources, go to the BrainNet website at [www.brainnet.wa.gov](http://www.brainnet.wa.gov).

*The First Years Last Forever: The New Brain Research and Your Child's Healthy Development*, a booklet available from the Canadian Institute of Child Health, [www.cich.ca](http://www.cich.ca) or call Ottawa at 613-230-8838.

The Brain Injury (Head Injury) Association can be contacted at 598-9339 or on the web at [www.biasvi.org](http://www.biasvi.org). It is for members of family on South Vancouver Island caring for family members with brain injuries.

The CHILD Project in British Columbia: The Consortium for Health, Intervention, Learning and Development (CHILD) Project is funded by Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, [www.sshrc.ca/](http://www.sshrc.ca/) through their program on Major Collaborative Research Initiatives.

The CHILD Project is the result of a collaborative research initiative that is housed in, and funded in part by, the Human Early Learning Partnership. The Consortium for Health, Intervention, Learning and Development (CHILD) is a multi-disciplinary, academic-community partnership project established to undertake research that responds to identified community needs and interests for the health of children 0 to 6 and their families.

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The Vancouver Island Health Authority, Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health offers a variety of information, programs and services for children.

Welcome to Healthy Children (<http://www.viha.ca/children/>). Here you will find health information and resources on Vancouver Island to help you through every stage of your child's health.

Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health Contact Information:

Michele Fryer, Child, Youth and Family Health Project Manager

[Michele.Fryer@viha.ca](mailto:Michele.Fryer@viha.ca) or 250 - 721 - 6731

## Child Development

Every child is a unique individual who thinks, looks, acts, and grows in a different way. Helping to raise a child to his/her potential as a human being is a very difficult and rewarding experience in the best of circumstances. Raising another's child may pose more challenges and extra worries. Children may have experienced traumatic events,

frequent moves, and little or no stability in their lives. Traumas (both physical and emotional), or a parent's substance abuse during pregnancy, will impact developmental stages for children. Because of these and other factors, children frequently experience developmental delays and need special parenting to be successful in life.

*Indicators of Early Childhood Health and Well Being in British Columbia*

[http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/early\\_childhood/index.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/early_childhood/index.htm) can provide a lot of useful information.

ACHIEVEBC, Early Childhood Development has an excellent set of print materials and resources on early childhood development that you can find at [www.achievebc.ca](http://www.achievebc.ca)

[www.idpofbc.ca](http://www.idpofbc.ca) is the site for the Infant Development Program of BC

## Parenting Information

Even if you have raised children before, a parenting class or support group can make a real difference. It is helpful to share ideas, talk with others about raising children, and find the support you need to do the best job possible. **Parent Support Services Society of BC** is a provincial organization that is working with communities to develop grandparents raising grandchildren support groups in BC. They have been offering parent support circles for over thirty years, facilitated by trained volunteers. An information and referral line is available to offer support services, answer questions about parent's rights, and provide information on what happens during child protection investigations. They can be contacted in Vancouver at 604-669-1616 or toll free at 1-800-665-6880. On the web at [www.parentsupportbc.ca](http://www.parentsupportbc.ca). Victoria Office: 1-800-377-0212; Mid-Island: 250-468-9658, Prince George 1-866-561-0607, Northwest Office, 250-635-3366.

**BC Council for Families** has a lot of useful info for parents and a new section for grandparents raising grandchildren, [www.bccf.bc.ca](http://www.bccf.bc.ca) or phone 604-660-0675, or 1-800-663-5638

**The Positive Parenting Network, Community Advocacy for the Parenting Role**, part of the **Association of Family Serving Agencies of Victoria (AFSA)** can only be reached by faxing 250-721-6837 to learn of activities and publications. They have a list of suggested reading materials for parents on child development which you can request.

**Vancouver Island Health Authority** <http://viha.ca/mho/> has information sheets on Guiding Children's Behaviour that can be found at <http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/ccf/child/>

**The Parenting Help Line** can be reached Toll Free toll free by calling 1-888-495-4440.

**The Law Courts Education Society of British Columbia** has a publication called *Parenting after Separation: for your child's future*. This can be useful as a workbook for getting through the early part of grandchildren coming to live with you, after being separated from their parents. Copies can be obtained from them by calling 604-660-9870 or fax 604-775-3476.

**Parents Together Parentline** in Victoria is 474-6468. Parents Together offers support groups and information for parents raising teenagers. If you are interested, inquire about starting a support group for grandparents and other relatives raising teenagers. They recommend a book called *How to Deal With Your Acting-Up Teenager* by Drs. Robert and Jean Baynard as a practical guide for parenting teenagers. For further information call **Boys and Girls Clubs of BC** at 604-321-5621 or go to <http://pt2.nfshost.com/index.php>

**The Federation of Child and Family Services of BC** is a non-government, not-for-profit organization that represents hundreds of family-serving organizations in BC. You could contact them to see where you might find services for grandparents raising grandchildren in your area, and they may be able to refer you. See [www.fcfs.bc.ca](http://www.fcfs.bc.ca) or phone 250 - 480 - 7387 in Victoria.

**Family Services of Greater Victoria** has free parent-teen mediation services covering Vancouver, Burnaby, and New Westminister. Call 604-526-0755, or online at [www.fsgv.ca](http://www.fsgv.ca)

**The Need Crisis and Information Line** provides a safe place for people to talk about their parenting concerns and to receive the support they need to become better parents. Service is immediate, confidential, and free. The Need Crisis Help Line can be reached 24 hours at 386-6323 in Victoria, or for the Gulf Islands and Port Renfrew Toll Free at 0-2262, or visit their website at <http://needcrisis.bc.ca>

**The Hanen Centre** has resources and programs around language development for parents and professionals: [www.hanen.org](http://www.hanen.org)

**Washington State University Cooperative Extension** has a parenting website with extensive resources for parents and caregivers. The website address is <http://parenting.wsu.edu/>. Click on the "Resources" button in the grey column at the left of every page to access resources. Although this website is from Washington State University, it does provide some excellent information on parenting that is also relevant in Canada.

**University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension**, has a set of Fact Sheets called Through the Eyes of a Child, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren that are worth checking out at [www.uwex.edu/relationships/](http://www.uwex.edu/relationships/).

**Generations United**, [www.gu.org](http://www.gu.org) and the **American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)**, [www.aarp.org/families/grandparents/](http://www.aarp.org/families/grandparents/) have some interesting and useful information on grandparents raising grandchildren.

**Cangrands** is an email support group for Canadian grandparents raising their grandchildren or seeking access to their grandchildren. Their website is [www.cangrands.com](http://www.cangrands.com)

**Grandsplace**. Information, resources and chat room for grandparents parenting grandchildren. [www.grandsplace.com](http://www.grandsplace.com)

**The Ministry of Attorney General** has a program called Families Change, [www.familieschange.ca](http://www.familieschange.ca) for families in BC experiencing separation or divorce. Although there is nothing specifically on this site YET for grandparents raising grandchildren, there is good information that may be helpful to you and your family. There are "flash" versions for the teens and kid's guides that include music and motion graphics and some good links. You can also visit the Family Justice website for services offered by the Ministry of Attorney General, [www.ag.gov.bc.ca/family-justice/index.htm](http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/family-justice/index.htm) for more information. There are more than 50 communities in BC that have Parenting After Separation sessions. If lots of you call and ask specifically for sessions focused on for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Grandchildren after separation .....it might get something happening! Call 1-800-663-7867.

### **Still Parenting the Parent of Your Grandchild**

If you require assistance in working through how you and the child's parent will work out details of custody, care, guardianship and other legal matters you can contact a FAMILY JUSTICE CENTRE in your area. They are operated by the Ministry of

Attorney General and can be reached in Vancouver at 604-660-2421, in Victoria at 250 - 387 - 6121, and elsewhere in BC toll free at 1-800-663-7867. Working in collaboration with others enhances the family's commitment to keep the child safe. Where agreement cannot be initially reached on how to achieve this mediation, family group conferencing and traditional dispute resolution processes are offered and promoted to support the involvement of the child's family and community in developing a plan to keep the child safe. Mediation is one option available to help families through this planning process. Used effectively, mediation can help everyone agree on what's best for children, without having to go to court. Mediation can help in child protection cases where family members and social workers disagree on the best way to meet a child's individual needs. Child protection mediation typically involves the child's parent(s) or guardian, a social worker and mediator, and in cases of grandparents raising grandchildren it would involve you and if the child is old enough, it could also involve them. This is a free service; mediators are on contract with the Ministry of Attorney General. You may check out the Roster of Mediators at [www.ag.gov.bc.ca/dro/child-protection/roster.pdf](http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/dro/child-protection/roster.pdf) or ask a social worker more about this option.

Also see **The South Island Dispute Resolution Centre and Mediation Place** in Victoria; 383-4412 between 9am and 1pm. It is a non-profit agency funded by the Provincial Employees Community Services Fund and affiliated with the United Way.

Family Group Conference is a way offered to the children, parents and extended family, and significant others close to the child "to come together to make some decisions and a plan for the child that will protect the child from harm, serve the best interests of the child, respect the wishes, needs and role of the family and respect the child's culture and community." Family Group Conferencing is a community project sponsored by the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Kwumut lelum, Vancouver Island Métis Child and Family Services, Nanaimo Family Resource Programs and Comox Valley Family Services Association. Contact the coordinator, Bonnie Murrell in Nanaimo at 250-753-2177 or by email at [bm.nfrp@shaw.ca](mailto:bm.nfrp@shaw.ca), or coordinator Leah.Hilt at [Leah.Hilt@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Leah.Hilt@gov.bc.ca) for more information. Or call the District MCFD Supervisor, Steve Hancock at 741-5701 or email [Steve.Hancock@gems5.gov.bc.ca](mailto:Steve.Hancock@gems5.gov.bc.ca) and inquire about this program and how you as a grandparent raising a grandchild can be included.

The parent/grandparent/grandchild relationship is very complex especially when there is a breakdown in a family unit. Know that to seek for and ask for help is a sign of strength and will be the most effective way of supporting your grandchild. Check out local family serving agencies for counselling and supports. The more grandparents and other relatives ask for help, become visible, and know they deserve the supports they are asking for, the more agencies will recognize the need and begin to provide these



services. Thank you for helping to get this started by asking for what you need to provide the best care for your grandchildren and take the best care of yourself, and help your parent/child in the process.

If you feel you are being abused by the parents of the grandchild you are raising, or feel unable to make some of the required decisions alone, you may call the **Assessment and Investigation Services of the Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia** at 604-660-4444 whose mission is "to safe-guard and uphold the legal and financial interests of children; manage the legal, financial and personal care interests of adults needing assistance in decision making; and administer the estates of deceased and missing persons". Their website is [www.trustee.bc.ca](http://www.trustee.bc.ca).

## Infant Toddler Early Intervention

The program, Success by Six, is an early intervention for infants and toddlers. Contact Jan White, Program Coordinator, Success By 6® /Early Childhood Community Coalition, South Vancouver Island, at [earlyyears victoria@shaw.ca](mailto:earlyyears victoria@shaw.ca), or phone 250-216-4889.

**Partnership in Learning and Advocacy for Young Children (PLAY)** is an excellent website that will keep you informed on resources and activities for you and your grandchildren. [www.playvictoria.org](http://www.playvictoria.org). Ask about information specific for grandparents and other relatives raising grandchildren to make them aware that there are special needs and interests for this family group.

**ROSCO (Regional Out of School Care Organization)** Contact Information: Cindy [care@ceos.shawbiz.ca](mailto:care@ceos.shawbiz.ca), Anita Vallee (Success by 6 coordinator for Nanaimo and area) [anita.vallee@cvihr.bc.ca](mailto:anita.vallee@cvihr.bc.ca), Tracy Smyth, Children First Coordinator, in Port Alberni [smyth@cvihr.bc.ca](mailto:smyth@cvihr.bc.ca).

Also, [www.caringforkids.cps.ca](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca) has infant/child health and care information.

## Special Needs and At-Risk Children

*James was very anxious as he waited for the report from the doctor on his grandson. Dean was only 5 years old and had already been exposed to more than any child should be. His father was in jail for selling and using drugs and his*

*mother had disappeared. James wanted to do everything he could for Dean, but if Dean didn't "settle down", he knew he would need to find some professional help for them both.*

Children with special needs include those with physical or mental disabilities, emotional/behavioural problems, or those considered at risk for developing disabilities. Children who may have been exposed to drugs and alcohol are considered at risk and often develop symptoms that require further assessment and treatment.

There are programs that can help families who are concerned about their child's walking, talking, crawling, vision, speech, hearing, or comprehension skills. Early intervention services exist for infants, toddlers, and preschool age children.

## Dealing with Emotional or Behavioural Problems

Every child has problems at some time. How do you know whether your child's problems are serious enough to warrant help? When evaluating your child's emotional or behavioural problems, you and others working with your child should concentrate on two questions:

- Is this behaviour normal for my child's stage of development?
- Are any of his/her life areas affected including family and home, community and neighbourhood, school, peers, and learning behaviour?

### Warning Signs

If your child exhibits these warning signs, you will want to get help from a professional in evaluating and treating him/ her:

- Marked personality change over time
- Confused thinking
- Prolonged severe depression, apathy, or extreme highs and lows
- Excessive anxieties, fears, suspiciousness, or blaming other
- Withdrawal from society, unfriendliness; abnormal self centeredness
- Denial of obvious problems; strong resistance to help
- Thinking or talking about suicide
- Numerous unexplained physical ailments, marked changes in eating or sleeping patterns

- Anger or hostility out of proportion to the situation
- Use of alcohol or drugs
- Hoarding behaviour, involving food, clothing, etc
- Change in school performance
- Growing inability to cope with problems and daily activities such as school, job, or personal needs

## Mental Health Services

For crisis mental health services look in your local telephone book (usually inside the front cover) for a Crisis Clinic or Crisis Line. You can also ask the telephone information operator or go to the **Vancouver Island Health Authority** web site [www.viha.ca](http://www.viha.ca) where there are lots of links to health services for children, families and youth. You may also go to the **Canadian Mental Health Association** web site which has a lot of information about mental health services and some good links at [www.cmha-bc.org](http://www.cmha-bc.org) or call 1-800-555-8222.

**Mood Disorders Association of BC** is at [www.mdabc.ca](http://www.mdabc.ca)

**Depression** may be affecting many grandparents raising grandchildren who are coping with the challenges you are facing. Some on-line resources include PsychDirect (Canada) which includes a self-test quiz for depression that can be found at [www.psychdirect.com/index.htm](http://www.psychdirect.com/index.htm). NHS Direct Online (UK) depression website is aimed at answering your questions about depression and can be found at [www.cebmh.warne.ox.ac.uk//cebmh/elmh/depression](http://www.cebmh.warne.ox.ac.uk//cebmh/elmh/depression)

**British Columbia Mental Health Information Line** provides information about mental health and mental illness 24 hours a day. In the lower mainland call 604-669-7600 or elsewhere in BC call 1-800-661-2121. You can learn about causes, treatments, support groups and publications for a wide range of mental health related illnesses. On the web at [www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental\\_health/help.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental_health/help.htm)

*Self-Care Depression Patient Guide*, a 44 page booklet published by the University of British Columbia can be downloaded free from [www.mheccu.ubc.ca/publications](http://www.mheccu.ubc.ca/publications) or call 1-604-822-7314.

## **Mental Health and Addictions**

[www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/mhd/infoline.html](http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/mhd/infoline.html) provides further information and resources. What You Can Expect: You can learn about symptoms, causes, treatments, support groups and publications for the following mental illnesses: anxiety disorders (phobias), depression, eating-related disorders, manic depression, and schizophrenia. Additional topics include: abuse of older adults, brain injury, child and youth mental health, choosing a psychotherapist, consumer involvement in planning mental health services, couple relationships, family involvement in planning mental health services, seniors' assessment and diagnosis, sexual assault, stress, substance misuse and mental illness, and support for caregivers.

For information and services related to addictions call **BC Alcohol Drug Information and Referral Service** on the lower mainland at 604-660-9382 or elsewhere in BC call 1-800-663-1441.

**Mental Health and Addictions Preventions Services**, funded by the Vancouver Island Health Authority, can be reached in Victoria for adult addictions, 727-3544; prevention services 370-8678; and for youth addiction services at 721-2669.

The **Regional Addictions Advocacy Society** can be reached at 217-0355.

**Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention** website is [www.suicideprevention.ca/](http://www.suicideprevention.ca/).

**The Eating Disorders Resource Centre** can be reached at 1-800-665-1822 , or in Vancouver call 604-806-9000 or in the Capital Region, 250-387-0000.

[www.camh.net](http://www.camh.net) is the **Centre for Addiction and Mental Health**, affiliated with the University of Toronto.

To make an appointment for community-based out-patient mental health services, look in the Yellow Pages under "mental health" or "counselling". Fees are sometimes on a sliding scale basis or you may qualify under your Medical plan, if you have one. Do get your grandchild registered on your MSP or other medical plan as a dependant as soon as possible.

## Where to Get Help:

- **Pediatricians:** can do a thorough medical examination and can talk with you about whether your child's behaviour is appropriate for his/her current age. Ask for a referral from your doctor. The Canadian Pediatric Society has information about childhood healthy active living at [www.cps.ca/eng/kihs/publications/HealthyActiveLiving.htm](http://www.cps.ca/eng/kihs/publications/HealthyActiveLiving.htm). Copies of Canada's Physical Activity Guides for Children and Youth are available free by calling 1-888-334-9769 or by visiting [www.paguide.co](http://www.paguide.co)
- **Schools:** You can request in writing that your child's school complete an evaluation on your child's need for special education services. Ask for an IEP or individual education plan for your grandchild.
- **Mental Health Professionals:** psychiatrists, psychologists, and other certified professionals can do a comprehensive evaluation of your child. This kind of evaluation may also be helpful to have in addition to other evaluations. Contact your local mental health center, or seek referrals from your child's school counsellor, your clergy, or a friend or relative who has had counselling.

**Early Childhood Mental Health Program**, Port Alberni, 250-723-1141

**Children's Health Care Needs:** [www.healthychildren.ca](http://www.healthychildren.ca) is for people parenting children from birth to adolescence. It has key messages, local resources for Vancouver Island, and where to go for more information. You can call your provincial public health department. Look in the Provincial Government section of the White Pages, (they are blue), in your phone book under "Health Authorities", "Frequently Called Numbers", under "Public Health Offices/Child, Youth and Family". Or, call **ENQUIRY BC** AT 1-800-663-7867 and tell them what you are looking to find and they will give you the correct number to call.

**BC Health Files** is a web site that includes fact sheets on over 180 health and safety topics such as: common illnesses, environmental health concerns, problems with pests, and health and safety tips. They are regularly updated with the latest BC health advice. <http://bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/index.stm>.

## **Disabilities**

**The BC Coalition of People with Disabilities** is a non profit organization and "umbrella group" whose mandate is to raise public and political awareness and to work

toward the goal of full participation of all people with disabilities in all aspects of society and to promote independence. [www.bccpd.bc.ca](http://www.bccpd.bc.ca), email [feedback@bccpd.ca](mailto:feedback@bccpd.ca) or call 1-604-875-0188.

**Community Options for Children and Families Society** is for families who have a member with a developmental and/or physical disability. [www.communityoptions.bc.ca](http://www.communityoptions.bc.ca), or call 250-380-6363. They provide respite services and family support programs.

**Nisika Community Services** offers counseling services to children and families, mental health services to youth, services to children and adults with developmental disabilities, supervised visitation and services for people with acquired brain injury. E-mail [admin@nisika.bc.ca](mailto:admin@nisika.bc.ca) or call 383-4821.

**Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health** at [www.viha.com](http://www.viha.com) or call 250-477-1826 For infants, children and adolescents with complex physical, intellectual, social or emotional challenges who require assessment, treatment, consultation, long-term or short-term follow-up or coordination of services. Available to all people in the Capital Regional District, and, in some cases, referrals are accepted from other areas across the province.

## Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) & Fetal Alcohol Effect (FAE)

FAS is a birth defect syndrome, a permanent and life long brain injury caused by the child's mother consuming alcohol during pregnancy. There is also early research that says it can be caused by the father's alcohol drenched sperm as well. Prevalence studies indicate over 315,000 people in Canada have FASD. Very few have a diagnosis. In the absence of accurate identification and support it is common for people with FASD to have damaging and limited school experiences, incomplete medical care, and inadequate legal representation. Isolation, depression, homelessness, unemployment, and incarceration are among the results. Diagnosis and support makes a positive difference in the lives of individuals with FASD, their families, and communities. FAE children have some of the complications associated with maternal alcohol consumption. Not all children exposed to alcohol in utero are born with FAS/FAE, but these children are at risk for FAS or other physical, cognitive, or behavioural problems. Early FAS/FAE diagnosis can protect against secondary disabilities such as mental health problems, dropping out of school, trouble with the law, and substance abuse.

There is a new Kinship Care & Grandparents Raising Grandchildren page on the FASD Connections pages. <http://www.fasdconnections.ca/id111.htm>. Thanks to Jeri Keil for this! Check it out.

There are support groups for parents raising children with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder or fetal alcohol effects: <http://www.fasdconnections.ca> is a wealth of information and good links. Although we do not know of any groups for grandparents and other relatives raising grandchildren with FASD/FAE....yet...You may be the one to start a group! Let us know at 1-800-377-0212.

**FASD Community Circle** - Victoria, call Janet Christie at 250-388-7940 offering FASD awareness, education and support.

Special Needs publications related to FAS Intervention, attention deficit disorder/attention deficit hyperactive disorder, parents handbook, parents guide to individual education plans (IEPs), teachers guide to individual education plans, and gifted students, with a focus on First Nations, published by First Nations Education Steering Committee/First Nations Schools Association can be ordered by calling 1-877-422-3672 (toll free) or to access the resource line to a special education resource person call toll-free 1-877-547-1919

The **BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society** can be reached at 250-381-7303 or [www.bcands.ca](http://www.bcands.ca). Toll free in BC 1-888-815-5511 (TTY accessible).

*Journey Through the Healing Circle*, is a video series that helps parents and families deal with fetal alcohol syndrome. This award winning series is presented using traditional Native American storytelling techniques. Developed in Washington by DSHS the series is available from the Foster Parent Training Institute at 1-800-662-9111. Books accompanying the video can be downloaded from the website at <http://fosterparent.dshs.wa.gov/>

If the parent of the grandchild you are raising has FASD/FAE there is a video, produced in 2005 that you can order from University of Victoria called Parenting with FASD: Challenges, Strategies and Support. Call Deb Rutman at 250 - 721 - 8202 or by email: [drutman@uvic.ca](mailto:drutman@uvic.ca). Highlighted are strategies, suggestions and resources found to promote positive parenting. It comes with a guide book.

**Whitecrow Village Society** says "We have fun while learning about FASD". Whitecrow Village Camp is unique in providing hands on, practical experience. To find out more about the camps and services contact [whitecrow@telus.net](mailto:whitecrow@telus.net) or call Executive



Director Kee Warner at 250-655-1531. "Whitecrow Village provides participants with the opportunity to build hope, to experience success, and to belong."

[www.gov.bc.ca/mcf/](http://www.gov.bc.ca/mcf/) is the website for the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development. The site has documents such as *The FAS Community Action Guide* and *FAS: A Guide to Daily Living* under their publication section.

[www.ccsa.ca](http://www.ccsa.ca) is the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse and has information related to FAS/FAS.

## Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) & Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

ADHD is a diagnosis applied to children and adults who consistently display certain characteristic behaviours over a period of time. The most common behaviours fall into three categories: inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. ADHD, the most commonly diagnosed behaviour disorder in young persons, affects an estimated three to five percent of school-age children.

**Invisible Disabilities Parent Support Group** is a Victoria based group for parents who have children with invisible disabilities such as ADHD, learning disabilities, bipolar or others. For more information contact Lisa Hansen, [daaeash@shaw.ca](mailto:daaeash@shaw.ca) or call 250-479-1192 or at 604-878-3400. They will be able to refer you to resources in other communities or have information that will be helpful. Their work involves working with parents and children with these disabilities. They have many grandparents that they assist in understanding how to give the best support to both parents and children.

**In Your Grasp** is British Columbia's Family Resource Database developed by the BC Federation of Foster Parents, the Adoptive Families Association of BC and the Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents. [www.InYourGrasp.bc.ca](http://www.InYourGrasp.bc.ca) is a regional and provincial database of available community resources.

## Children with HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS may affect children differently than it affects adults. It is essential that relative caregivers raising a child with HIV/AIDS have current, accurate information about effective treatment options, services, and new techniques for daily care.



Caregivers may also want help in talking to child care providers or teachers about their child's health. Contact **AIDS Vancouver Island** at 384-2366 in Victoria or outside of Victoria call 1-800-665-2437. Their website is [www.avi.org](http://www.avi.org). If your grandchild has been living in a drug addicted environment you may want to have him/her checked. Early treatment and awareness are extremely important

[Hepcbc.ca](http://Hepcbc.ca) is a grassroots organization dedicated to educating those infected and affected by Hepatitis C Virus. There are a number of links on that site that can give you lots of information about living with HepC or helping you and your grandchild to understand what it is and how to be safe around parents that may be 'at risk' or infected.

You may also call the AIDS Hot Line at 1-800-661-4337 and get recorded information about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STD).

The **Canadian HIV/AIDS Information Source** website is [www.aidssida.cpha.ca](http://www.aidssida.cpha.ca) or call 1-877-999-7740. They have a very helpful booklet, *Talking to Kids about HIV/AIDS* that you can order or download from this site.

## Immunization

It will be important to make sure all of your child's immunizations are current. You can go directly to <http://bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/hfile50a.stm> for information about immunization. Call the Public Health Nurse nearest you by checking the phone book.

The following table provides guidelines from the **Public Health Agency of Canada**.



























### National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) Recommended Immunization Schedule for Infants, Children and Youth

March 16, 2005

Age at vaccination	DTaP-IPV	Hib	MMR	Var	Hep B	Pneu-C	Men-C	dTap	Flu
Birth									

Infancy

6 months					or  Pre-teen/ teen 2-3 doses if not yet given		 or		6-23 months  1-2 doses
12 months						12-15 months	 if not yet given		
18 months									
4-6 years			or 						
14-16 years							 if not yet given		

-  **DTaP-IPV** Diphtheria, Tetanus, acellular Pertussis, and inactivated Polio virus vaccine
-  **Hib** Haemophilus influenzae type b conjugate vaccine
-  **MMR** Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccine
-  **Var** Varicella vaccine
-  **Hep B** Hepatitis B vaccine
-  **Pneu-C** Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine
-  **Men-C** Meningococcal C conjugate vaccine
-  **dTap** Diphtheria, Tetanus, acellular Pertussis vaccine (adult formulation)
-  **Flu** Influenza Vaccine

## Nutrition and Healthy Eating Tips

Children learn from watching adults. If you practice good, healthy eating habits, it will be much easier for your child to do so as well. Establish a consistent eating routine. Keep healthy snacks on hand for your child and limit the amount of junk food and sweets. Read food labels carefully. Visit B.C. Health Guide On Line [www.bchealthguide.org](http://www.bchealthguide.org) or Dial a Dietitian 1-800-667-3438 for more information.

Copies of Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating are available by visiting [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/nutrition/pube/foodguid/index.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/nutrition/pube/foodguid/index.html).

## Medical Check-ups

It is important for babies and children to have regular medical check-ups to make sure they are growing right and are healthy. These visits are a good way for your grandchildren to be screened for hearing or vision problems. Infants up to 18 months should have frequent check-ups, children from 18 months to school age should have a check-up once a year, and children of school age should have a check-up every other year. Here are some useful pointers:

- Make sure your children know to tell you about any pains, even in his/her teeth and gums.
- Teach children good health habits like brushing their teeth, and remember that they learn from you – so take care of yourself as well!
- To help your children understand why healthcare is important, read books about going to the doctor or dentist.
- Make sure that vision and hearing tests are done during your children's regular medical check-ups.
- If you notice that your child is having trouble seeing or hearing, make an appointment with a healthcare provider.

The **BC Centre for Disease Control** can be viewed at [www.bccdc.org](http://www.bccdc.org) with lots of info and links about health and disease control.

[www.factsoflifeline.com](http://www.factsoflifeline.com) is a good site for options for sexual health or call 1-800-739-7367 outside the lower mainland or 1-604-731-7803 on the lower mainland.

## Dental Health: Keeping Your Children's Teeth Healthy

Did you know that good dental care begins before you can even see the child's first tooth? Infants need to have their gums wiped with a soft, damp cloth after each feeding. Never put a baby to bed with a bottle - the sugar in milk, formula, and juices can cause tooth decay before a tooth appears.

- Teething children begin getting their first tooth sometime between 4 and 9 months. Drooling, fussiness, and the need to chew on everything are usually signs of a baby who is teething. Pay close attention to what your child puts in

his/her mouth while they are infants, and be sure to have lots of appropriate toys for them to chew on.

- Arrange an appointment with a dentist when the child is three to four years old. Not only does this help you make sure their teeth are coming in correctly, but your child gets used to visiting the dentist on a regular basis.

Children in families who receive income assistance or MSP premium assistance are eligible for basic dental care through the Healthy Kids Program. For more information call 1-800-748-1144 or visit the Web site at [www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/programs/other.htm](http://www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/programs/other.htm).

## Safety: Car, Home and Personal Safety

*Karen and Bill are on their way to pick up the grandchildren at the police station. As they are leaving, Karen looks around the house. It is in no way "childproof". All her decorating accents and her comfortable living area now seem like accidents waiting to happen.*

### Car Safety

Keeping children safe may seem like a full time job, and often it is. Here are some tips to keep your child safe

- Use the right seat for your child's weight and development.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for correct car seat installation and use.
- Be sure to secure your child correctly. Make sure harness straps are snug and tight. Use a tether strap with a forward-facing car seat. Keep children away from active air bags. Children 13 years of age and under are safest in the back seat.
- Use caution when buying or using a pre-owned child car seat. Buy new, or from someone you know, and check it carefully.
- Make sure the car seat has:
  - instructions and all necessary hardware
  - not been in a collision
  - a Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (CMVSS) sticker
  - not expired or is not older than 10 years
  - no discoloured (stress) marks or cracks and the harness is not worn or torn.

### **Child Car Seat Quick Guidelines**

Rear Facing Seat	Less than 9kg (20lb) & a minimum of 1 year old
Forward Facing Seat	9 - 18kg (20 - 40lb) & an anchored tether strap
Booster Seat	18 - 36kg (40 - 80lb) or less than 145cm (4ft 9")
Children under 13	Sitting in the rear seat of the vehicle is the safest

For more information about Child Care Safety Contact:

**Ministry of Transportation** - MTOINFO - 1 800 268-4686 (TTY: 1-866-471-8929)

### **Home Safety**

- Never let children play with plastic bags.
- Prevent poisoning by keeping all cleaning supplies, chemicals, medicines, and cosmetics out of reach or in childproof cabinets.
- Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and check the batteries twice a year.
- Hold a mock fire drill with your child plan escape routes and arrange for a safe meeting place outside in case of fire.
- Never leave small children alone in or near water, including a bathtub.
- Make sure there are always life jackets to use in and around water.
- Simmer food on the front burners and boil on the back ones. Turn all pot handles inward.
- Keep all important numbers by every phone in the house including: ambulance, fire, your doctors, the nearest hospital's emergency room, and the nearest poison control center.
- Plug all electrical outlets with outlet covers when small children are around.
- Take a class in CPR, so you'll be better able to handle a situation if a child is choking or not breathing. Contract your local Red Cross for more information on classes.
- Bathrooms must have a lock that can be opened from the outside, in case a child locks him /herself in by accident.
- For tips on child proofing or more information on poisoning in children see the Poison Prevention website at <http://www.safebaby.net/childproofers/poisoning/>

If poisoning occurs or if you need information call the **B.C. Drug & Poison Information Centre** 1-800-567-8911.

## Personal Safety

Teach your children the following personal safety rules:

- To memorize his/her full name, address, and telephone number, including area code and state.
- How to use the telephone, how to make calls to the operator, and how to dial emergency numbers.
- Never to enter a stranger's car or home.
- To keep the doors locked and only admit people approved by you into your home.
- How to use a code word. A code word is a special word that only you and your children know. It is used if you need to another person pick up your children so that they can verify that the person is safe.
- He/she is safer playing and walking with friends.
- Never to wander away from you or your yard unless they tell you and receive permission.
- To tell you if something strange or uncomfortable happened to them.
- Never to give information about them (including home telephone number) to anyone except those people approved by you.

## **Children and Domestic Violence**

Even after an abusive parent has left, children may still be profoundly affected by the domestic violence they have witnessed or been the victim of. Children who experience violence in their homes may display a range of emotional and behavioral problems, physical disorders, and academic problems.

If a kinship caregiver believes that they or the children in their care are in immediate danger of violence, they should call 911 immediately. If a caregiver believes that domestic violence is likely to occur, they should contact in Victoria **the NEED Crisis and Information Line** (24 hours) at 386-6323, in the Gulf Islands and Port Renfrew Toll Free 0-2262. The website is <http://needcrisis.bc.ca>

The Website for the **National Centre on Child Abuse and Neglect** has a user manual under publications called Protecting Children in Substance Abusing Families that you can find at [www.calib.com/nccanch/database/](http://www.calib.com/nccanch/database/)

In some situations, the caregiver may want to consider asking a local court for a Peace Bond or Restraining Order which can make it illegal for the person named in the order to come near the caregiver and/or the child for a specified period of time. **The Victim Information Line** (B.C. Protection Order Registry) can be reached at 1-800-563-0808 . The operators will talk to you about your problem and refer you to a service or contact in your own community. This is free and confidential. They can also give you information about the B.C. Protection Order Registry.

*Speaking of Abuse* ( ISBN 0 -7726 - 3735 - 0) is a publication of the Ministry of Attorney General and can be ordered free from Legal Services Society by faxing them at 604-682-0965 and requesting the copies you require. It covers Peace Bonds, Restraining Orders, and other legal matters related to abuse. It may be that the parent/s of your grandchild/ren is/are abusive to you or the children. Take steps to protect them and yourself...assault and harassment are crimes.

**Victim Services** in Victoria can be reached at 995-7531. They can be called for help in dealing with the trauma that may come from recent circumstances when a grandchild first arrives at your home or other incidence of abuse or violence. They can also help with information related to the justice system, court orientation, liaison with police, court and other agencies. Confidentiality, support and understanding are their focus.

**The Mary Manning Centre, Child Abuse Prevention and Counseling Society of Greater Victoria** (and also serving other parts of Vancouver Island) is a good place to get help with these issues. They can be reached at [www.marymanning.com](http://www.marymanning.com) or by calling 250-385-6111. This year (2006) they offered a support group for grandparents raising grandchildren that had been sexually abused, recognizing the significant issues that these families needed to deal with and the growing numbers of families looking for this support. Let them know of your interest; it will encourage them to offer more of the same.

Grandmothers raising grandchildren may need to make use of the **Women's Transition Centers** or **Safe Houses** during times of high tensions with the parents. The number in Victoria for Hill House is 250-479-3963, and they will accept grandparents and the grandchildren they are raising. Some transition houses only accept partner abuse victims. **BC Yukon Society of Transition Houses** website, [www.bcysth.ca](http://www.bcysth.ca) offers information on safe houses throughout the province.

## Reporting Abuse or Neglect, Safety for Children

In schools and day care centers, young children are being taught that, if they are ever abused, help is available and as near as the telephone. Make your own children aware that they can say no to abuse.

### How to Reach the Helpline for Children

Pick up the phone.

Dial 310-1234 (no area code needed).

Tell your story.

This is a toll-free service. If you are calling from a pay-phone, there is no charge to call the operator. You can also call VictimLink a 1-800-563-0808 for victim of family and sexual violence, and any other crimes. TTY at 604-875-0885. To call collect please call the Telus Relay at 711; for multilingual and TTY confidential, 24 hours, 7 days a week, toll free, anywhere in BC. To report child abuse or neglect Dial 0 and ask the operator for Zenith 1234 or TTY at 1-800-667-4770 or on the mainland 660-0508. Kids Help Phone (counseling and referral) 1 800- 668- 6868 Youth Against Violence Line: 1-800-680-4264

## Reporting Abuse or Neglect Child, Family and Community Service Act

### The Child, Family and Community Service Act

[www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child\\_family\\_service\\_act/index.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child_family_service_act/index.htm) is the legislative authority for the Ministry's Child Protection Services. Under the Act, the Minister designates the Director of Child Protection, who in turn delegates the provision of child protection services across the province to child protection social workers.

The Act requires that anyone who has reason to believe that a child may be abused, neglected, or is for any other reason in need of protection, must by law, report it to the Director or a delegated social worker. To Report child abuse or neglect call 310-1234; you must, it is the law. These reports are investigated by social workers, who take the most appropriate action that is least disruptive for the child. These actions may include:

- providing or arranging the provision of support services to the family
- supervising the child's care in the home, or
- protecting the child through removal from the family and placement with relatives, a foster family or specialized residential resources.



Social workers also have the delegated authority of the Director to approve foster homes for children who come into the care of the ministry. Resources such as group homes, specialized residential facilities, assessment resources, and respite resources are developed to serve children and youth in care. To learn more about Foster Care call 1-888-922-8437, the **Foster Parent Support Services Society** of the Vancouver Island Region.

Child protection services across the province are provided through 429 ministry offices in 5 regions. The child protection staff are supported by the provincial office of the Child Protection Division. You can reach us by mail, phone, and email: **First Call BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition** Phone: 604-875-3629 BC Toll Free: 1-800-307-1212 E-Mail: [info@firstcallbc.org](mailto:info@firstcallbc.org)

## Other Helpful Resources for Families

**Doctors:** Contact a pediatrician or clinic. They have many valuable resources and referrals for you. The BC Medical Association, [www.bcma.org](http://www.bcma.org) may be a resource to find a doctor in your area.

**Hospitals:** Many hospitals and Children's Hospitals sponsor programs and activities relating to child development and parenting. Call your local hospital to find out if they offer such a program and request to be put on their mailing list. Let them know you are a grandparent raising your grandchild; together we can become visible, acknowledged, and supported.

**Libraries:** A great source for parenting books, audio/visual material and magazines, a librarian can help you locate a quick and easy to use reference on child rearing, books to read with grandparents as the primary caregiver, and age appropriate books for your grandchildren. Libraries are also a great resource for internet access if you do not have a computer at home.

**Community Colleges:** Many community colleges have classes and workshops on child development and parenting, and parent support services. Look in the phone book for the Community College nearest you.

## **General Information on Child Development and Parenting Skills**

Raising a child is a full-time job! The following web sites contain useful information that can help make the job a bit easier:

The Child, Youth and Family Health website [www.viha.ca/children/index.htm](http://www.viha.ca/children/index.htm) of the Vancouver Island Health Authority is full of information and resources on Vancouver Island to help you through every stage of your child's health.

The Canadian Abilities Foundation website [www.enablelink.org](http://www.enablelink.org) provides information and resources for people with disabilities.

The website for Child & Family Canada, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca) offers numerous resources related to children and families.

The Caring for Kids website, [www.caringforkids.cps.ca/index](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/index) developed by the Canadian Pediatric Society, offers children's health information from Canada's pediatric experts.

The Canadian Health Network website [www.canadian-health-network.ca](http://www.canadian-health-network.ca) provides an excellent library of helpful articles on children's health in partnership with Health Canada.

The About Kids Health website, [www.aboutkidshealth.ca/](http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/) developed by The Hospital for Sick Kids in Toronto, provides families with reliable information on topics influencing child health and family quality of life.

The Kids Health website [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org) is a goldmine of health information provided in three categories. The kid's section has a variety of games and lots of information for younger children. The teens section can help your teen learn about health issues of concern to them and include such topics as body image, acne and emotions. There's also a section for parents with lots of information on raising healthy kids.

The Save the Children website, [www.savethechildren.net](http://www.savethechildren.net) is a great site for information on the work being done around the world to promote children's rights. From the grandchildren being raised in Africa by their grandparents to those in Canada, like your grandchildren, all children have basic rights to have their needs met for safety, nurturing, stability and a good education. Go grandparents and other relatives providing this for your grandchildren.

The UNICEF website, [www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm](http://www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm) details the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The UNCRC was ratified in 1989 and recognizes elements essential to the growth and development of the child including the right to education, to participation, and the right to protection.



## Section Two

### Child Care and Educational Needs

*Finding childcare wasn't how Bev had planned to spend her lunch hours. She knew her daughter, Susan, was having difficulty with the children after their father died, but she didn't think the situation was that bad. When she received a call from Child Protection Services saying that the children had been abandoned, she knew she had to act fast. There was so much to do and she couldn't take time away from her job. Bev needed to find a place for the children to stay while she worked, and she needed that place by Monday morning.*

#### Child Care – Determining what is Right for You and Your Child

Finding child care is a concern for parents and caregivers. There are several different types of child care:

- In Home care a child care provider provides care in your home
- Family childcare care is being provided in a caregiver's home. You will want to be sure the provider is licensed or a "licensed-not-required" home
- Child care centers care is provided in a facility that is licensed by the province.

#### Finding the Right Type of Care

There are many pros and cons to the different types of child care. To help you decide which is the best for your family, you may find it helpful to make a list of your child care needs (do you need care on a regular basis, drop in, during regular working hours, at odd times) and what is offered by available child care providers (hours open, individualized attention, trained workers, planned activities, etc.). Talk to other parents, grandparents, co workers, etc. Ask them if they know the place you are considering. Ask lots of questions. You may want to visit prospective child care providers unannounced.

## **Child Care Facilities on the Provincial Government Listing**

The facilities listed on the following web address are funded under the Child Care Operating Funding Program and have also given permission for their information to appear on that website. The publication of this list does not constitute a recommendation of any of these facilities, nor does it constitute any warranty or guarantee regarding the services provided by any of these facilities. Choosing appropriate and reliable child care is every parent's responsibility; the Government of British Columbia specifically disclaims any responsibility or liability whatsoever for any damages, losses or claims that may arise as a result of a parent's choice of child care provider arising from or connected with the use of this website. Go to: <http://childcareinfo.gov.bc.ca/childcaresearch/search.aspx> where the facilities are described.

## **British Columbia Organizations Related to Child Care**

**BC Aboriginal Child Care Society:** [www.acc-society.bc.ca/](http://www.acc-society.bc.ca/). The BC Aboriginal Child Care Society is a provincial organization serving Aboriginal early childhood programs throughout British Columbia. Email: [lynda@acc-society.bc.ca](mailto:lynda@acc-society.bc.ca), Phone: 604-913-9128.

**BC Association of Child Care Employers:** Supports and gives voice to employers in BC's licensed child care sector, by acting as a conduit of information, an identifier of issues and an agent of change. Phone: 604-709-0481.

**BC Association of Family Resource Programs:** [www.frpofbc.ca/](http://www.frpofbc.ca/). The FRP of BC supports community based family resource programs in BC to foster the healthy development of children within the context of the family. Email: [frpofbc@telus.net](mailto:frpofbc@telus.net), Phone: 604-738-0068.

**Child Care Advocacy Forum:** [www.cccabc.bc.ca/forum](http://www.cccabc.bc.ca/forum). The Forum is an alliance of the following organizations: BC Association of Child Care Employers, Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC, Early Childhood Educators of BC, School Age Child Care Association of BC, Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre, and Western Canada Family Child Care Association of BC. The Forum believes in the vision of a comprehensive child care system including a wide range of quality, affordable and accessible programs and services that facilitate the growth and development of all children. Phone: 604-515-6257 or toll free 1-877-361-1116.

**Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC:** [www.cccabc.bc.ca/](http://www.cccabc.bc.ca/). The CCCABC is a voluntary organization working to promote the development of a comprehensive, accessible and affordable non-profit child care system in B.C. and across Canada. Email: [info@cccabc.bc.ca](mailto:info@cccabc.bc.ca), Phone: 604-709-5661.

**Council of Parent Participation Preschools in BC:** [www.cpppreschools.bc.ca](http://www.cpppreschools.bc.ca). The CPPP in BC unites and assists member preschools in providing a high standard of preschool education involving both parents and teachers. Email: [office@cpppreschools.bc.ca](mailto:office@cpppreschools.bc.ca), Phone: 604-435-4430 or toll free 1-800-488-0660.

**Early Childhood Educators of BC:** [www.ecebc.ca/](http://www.ecebc.ca/). ECEBC is the professional association for early childhood educators in BC, providing professional development, publications promoting high standards of practice and related resources. Email: [ecebc@direct.ca](mailto:ecebc@direct.ca), Phone: 604-709-6063 or toll free: 1-800-797-5602.

**First Call (BC Child & Youth Advocacy Coalition):** [www.firstcallbc.org/](http://www.firstcallbc.org/). First Call is a coalition of organizations and community groups and individuals who believe that children and youth need first call on society's resources. Email: [info@firstcallbc.org](mailto:info@firstcallbc.org), Phone: 604-875-3629 or toll free: 1-800-307-1212.

**Provincial Child Care Council:**

[www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/childcar/prov\\_council.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/childcar/prov_council.htm). The Provincial Child Care Council, representing a wide range of child care sectors across the province, advises the Minister Responsible for child care on policies and programs that affect the quality, stability and affordability of child care in BC. Phone: 250-356-6001 (250-387-5049).

**School Age Child Care Association of B.C. (SACCA):** [www.saccabc.org/](http://www.saccabc.org/). A province wide, nonprofit organization open to both professionals and students working or studying in the school age child care field. Our goal is to improve the availability of quality, affordable school age child care by providing programs and services to professionals in this field. Email: [info@saccabc.org](mailto:info@saccabc.org), Phone: 604-709-5661.

**Society for Children and Youth of BC:** [www.scyofbc.org/](http://www.scyofbc.org/). The Society for Children and Youth of BC (SCY) is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the well-being of all children and youth in British Columbia. Email: [info@scyofbc.org](mailto:info@scyofbc.org), Phone: 604-433-4180.

**Vancouver Island Cooperative Preschool Association:** [www.vicpa.org/](http://www.vicpa.org/). VICPA members include 14 parent participation preschools on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. The VICPA is an advocate for high quality early childhood education for

children and professional standards for adults who work with them. Email: [vicpa@vicpa.org](mailto:vicpa@vicpa.org), Phone: 250-598-2667.

**Western Canada Family Child Care Association of BC:** [www.wcfcca.ca/](http://www.wcfcca.ca/). A professional organization of family child care providers that believes in accessible, quality, inclusive child care services that support the needs of children, families and child care providers. Our goal is to promote, support and advocate for quality, inclusive family child care. Email: [familychildcare@wcfcca.ca](mailto:familychildcare@wcfcca.ca), Phone: 604-590-1497 or toll-free: 1-800-686-6685.

## **Early Childhood Education**

Early childhood education programs offer a range of activities to help pre-school children develop physically, socially, emotionally, and mentally. Activities are based on the children's age and change as children get older.

## **Child Care Subsidy Program**

The BC government is committed to providing sustainable child care in order that families can choose from a range of affordable, safe, quality child care options. Whether you are a child care provider, a parent, or an early childhood educator, you can find information here on programs and services to assist you.

The BC Child Care Subsidy Program [www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/subsidy\\_promo.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/subsidy_promo.htm) has increased rates and income thresholds for families with children under six in regulated care. Changes to the program increase the number of families receiving assistance. In Victoria call 387 - 5400 to find out about subsidies.

Service providers can also access information on child care funding by contacting the Child Care Help Line in Greater Victoria at 356-6501 or Outside Greater Victoria toll free at 1 888 338.

## **Child Care Resource and Referral Program**

In addition, the **Child Care Resource and Referral** program funded by the BC government can provide other information about a computerized registry connecting parents and child care providers, access to infant/toddler equipment, resource library and educational activity boxes, newsletters that address current child care issues, phone consultations with early childhood educators, and access to an ABC list "Assistance for



Back-up Care", a listing of qualified child care substitutes. They can be found in Victoria at [www.childcarevictoria.ca](http://www.childcarevictoria.ca) or by calling 250-382-7000 or toll free 1-800-750-1868 for referrals to programs in other areas of BC. They will also provide referrals to Licensed and Registered Licensed-Not-Required Child Care Providers, Information about Community Resources, and Parent/Child Drop-In programs, Parent Child Mother Goose Programs, Roots of Empathy, and others.

Some Neighborhood Houses and Community Centers often offer Drop-In Play-time. Check your local phone book yellow pages under recreation centers or community services.

## Public School Education Needs

### Enrolling in Public School

To enroll your child in school you need :

- A Birth Certificate (if starting kindergarten);
- Proof of Immunization;
- School Records (if transferring to a new school).

Call your local school district office (listed in the white pages of your phone book under School District) to get the name and address of the school your child will attend. The district office will tell you how to register your child. Schools have forms for requesting past school records and immunizations. School personnel can help you fill out the necessary forms and get documents. Be sure to tell the school staff of your role in the child's life and your commitment to the child.

Being in school is not easy these days for any youngster. Think of all the new kinds of information kids have to learn now that you did not when you were in school. And there are so many more ways to learn. Life, in general, is more stressful now, and this stress filters down to the classroom and schoolyard.

You are probably aware that most families, even in the most ideal settings, experience problems as their children go through school. You may face these as well. Knowing what to expect as your child enters or goes through school and knowing what resources are available, will help you work through any school related issues. Be a strong advocate for you and your child.

## Supporting Your Grandchild's School Experience at Home

- Talk positively about the school experience.
- Show interest in what your children are learning.
- Help your children apply learning to everyday life – let them teach you!
- Avoid the “grade trap” – learning is what’s important, not just grade.
- Develop realistic expectations.
- Provide a quiet place and time for homework
- Offer to help with homework but don’t do it for them.
- Read with your children
- Develop a consistent and effective discipline plan.

## Interactions with Teachers, Counselors and School Staff

*Sylvia kept postponing the visit with her granddaughter's fifth grade teacher. How could she tell the teacher that the reason she is not involved in Mary's homework is because she doesn't understand it? Sylvia was not only intimidated by the schoolwork, but she also feared embarrassing her granddaughter at school.*

Here are some tips for working with school staff:

Get to know your child's teachers. Inform teachers that you are raising your relative. Teachers can be more helpful when they are aware of family situations. Let the teacher know you want to be informed of your child's progress. Keep the lines of communication open between you, your grandchild, and the teacher.

Attend open houses and meetings. Try to attend all parent-teacher conferences. Then, schedule personal meetings with teachers and counselors to talk about your grandchild. If you cannot arrange face to face contact, plan for a telephone conference. Let them know you are the grandparent or relative raising this child. Remember there will be many more in the school than you expect; you may be able to get some special services, if you ask.

Get help with homework if needed. Teachers may be able to get your grandchild extra help with homework or tutoring. This may take place at the school or in the community. Let them know if you are having trouble finding time or simply do not understand the homework well enough to help your grandchild.

Do not be embarrassed or ashamed if you do not understand your grandchild's homework. Many adults have trouble with reading, writing, math, computer work, and

other subjects. Remember, it is in the best interest of your grandchild to ask for and receive help.

## **Parent's Guide to Individual Education Planning (IEP)**

### **Introduction: The Individual Learner's Potential**

All parents want their children "to develop their individual potential," to become the best they can be. As parents and as a society, we help children achieve this goal through education that meets their needs as individuals, as the **Ministry of Education, Skills and Training** mission statement specifies.

- If children are gifted, or have special talents or abilities, their educational programs must ensure they continue to be challenged in their learning.
- If children have disabilities, their programs need to respond to their particular learning needs.

The *BC School Act* (Ministry of Education, 1995) requires a school board to make an educational program available to all persons of school age who live and enroll in schools in the district. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) identifies any additions, changes and adaptations to the regular program that should be made for each individual child, to ensure that all students have an educational program that meets their specific needs.

### **Students with Special Needs**

A student with special needs has one or more of the following:

- A disability of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional or behavioural nature,
- A learning disability, or
- Exceptional gifts or talents.

Many students with special needs will be able to meet the standards set out in the provincial curriculum with adaptations to the way they are taught if their learning is assessed. For some students, the prescribed curriculum outcomes are modified to meet the students' special needs. Both adaptations and modifications must be outlined in the IEP.

The IEP is developed to meet the student's educational needs. It becomes, as its name suggests, a plan to enable the student to develop her individual potential. The B.C. Ministry has set forth a policy entitled "Special Education" which you can access on their website [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/special\\_ed.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/special_ed.htm).

## **Mediation in Special Education**

### **Parental Appeals**

Section 11(2) of the *School Act* gives parents and students the right to appeal within a reasonable time to their board of school trustees, any decision of an employee of the board that significantly affects the education, health or safety of a student. Section 11(1) states that "decision" also includes failure to make a decision. Section 11(3) of the *School Act* directs school districts to establish, by bylaw, an appeal procedure.

Decisions on appeals must be made with regard to the principles of natural justice and administrative fairness. Principles of natural justice include the notions that all parties to a decision must be heard, must receive notice of a hearing, must be informed of any evidence, and must have the opportunity to respond to such evidence. Hearings should be unbiased; those who made the initial decision should not also judge the appeal of that decision. Generally accepted principles of administrative fairness suggest that:

- Hearings should be convened within a reasonable amount of time;
- Hearings should be conducted in a fact-finding, non-adversarial manner;
- Where appropriate, parties should have the opportunity to examine and cross-examine witnesses;
- All parties to the proceedings should be able to understand what takes place; and
- The decisions made should be communicated to the person affected with reasons for the decisions.

Procedural fairness does not mean that all parties agree with the decision or think it is right, but that the procedures used to arrive at that decision are fair. Mediation by a third party is optional and can occur at any point in the appeals process. The appeals procedure should be responsive to the needs of individual cases while consistently treating all parties fairly.

In a system that is working well appeals would not be necessary. It is more than a cliché to say that parents and schools need to work together in partnership for students. In most cases disagreements can be resolved informally, but in some situations a more formal process is needed. Dispute resolution processes should be focused on the

educational needs of the individual child and be resolved in a manner that is timely and respectful.

## **Learning Disabilities Association Mission Statement**

**The Learning Disabilities Association of BC – South Vancouver Island Chapter (LDA-SVI)** is a not for profit organization that educates supports and advocates for children and youth with Learning Disabilities (LD) and or Attention Deficit Disorders AD/HD and their families. In Victoria call 250 - 370 - 9513, or in Vancouver 604 - 873 - 8139.

The LDA-SVI Chapter was formed by a group of committed parents and teachers who were concerned about their children, or children in their classrooms who were not reaching their potential. The LDA was incorporated in 1981.

To fulfill our mandate, we currently offer the many programs and services to our community including parent Education and Support Events, Publications, an Outreach program, support for academic skills, reading and writing and social skills programs for children and youth, as well as individual support programs for parents and children.

The LDA-SVI publishes Know Your Rights booklets for parents and youth and hosts the Know Your Rights website: [www.knowyourrights.ca](http://www.knowyourrights.ca).

Provincially, we are involved in many initiatives and activities through our provincial and national chapters LDA BC and LDA Canada. For more information call (250) 370-9513 (The Learning Disabilities Association of BC, <http://www.ldasvi.bc.ca/home.asp>)

Remember ...Schools are providing services to you and your child. The schools are there to help.



## Section Three

### Common Issues Facing Children

*Ana and her friends were good children. They did well in school and never got into trouble. Les and Cathy were proud of their grandchild, but still they didn't understand why she needed to dress the way she did baggy pants, stomach showing and, of all things, a tattoo. This wasn't the way things were when they were younger.*

Things are different today. Children are exposed to drugs, alcohol, sex, gangs, and violence at early ages. Your relative child's history might include some of these experiences. As a result, she/he may not see certain activities or language as inappropriate.

Many relatives are raising children who are developmentally deprived, but socially advanced. For example, a child may have trouble reading on a third grade level but have the survival instincts or "street smarts" of an older teenager. The events that led up to your grandchild being placed in your home may warrant a special approach.

We encourage you to talk to a school counsellor or family therapist. Check with your children's school for additional information and for referrals on getting help. Talking with a professional can be very helpful in dealing with children. The more grandparents and other relatives ask for help, the more professionals, organizations, governments, schools and community agencies will be aware of what is required for the best outcomes for the children and their families. Be seen and heard speaking up for your grandchild.

#### Alcohol and Drug Use (

Today young people are often exposed to alcohol, tobacco and drugs early often in elementary school. The younger someone starts to use alcohol and drugs, the more likely she/he is to develop problem behaviours associated with such use.

The number one reason children give for not taking drugs is that a caring adult does not want them to! You are in an ideal position to make a difference in your child's life.

- Help your child deal with peer pressure. Be willing to listen and talk about their need to belong and fit in.
- Help your child build positive social relationships. Friendships are very important. Know your child's friends. Be aware of unsupervised situations.
- Help your child learn coping skills to deal with disappointments. Talk with them about sad and angry feelings that arise when things do not work out as planned.
- Help your child build self esteem. Success achieved through social, academic, or extracurricular activities is helpful. Address learning problems with the child's teacher.
- Identify activities that help them relax and feel good. Music, art, or sports activities can help a child let off "steam" in a healthy way. Check with your city and community activity centres. Some programs are low cost or subsidized. Be sure to ask.
- Have honest and open discussions about drugs. Get informed! Let your grandchild know he or she can come to you for help and information. Lecturing is not effective, especially if someone is on drugs or hung-over. Talking, discussing and sharing information can be helpful at other times.

If your child does make a mistake, help them get back on track through support, not punishment. Get help from a well-regarded children's drug treatment program in your area. Early treatment can nip destructive patterns in the bud. You may need to get help for yourself, too, to cope through these trying times when someone else's addiction or drug-related behaviours are causing you a problem.

Your continued belief in their ability to make the right choices in the long run will help them internalize the values you are giving them

## **Support Services**

*Five Reasons Young People Give for Using Alcohol, Tobacco And Illicit Drugs:*

- 1) *To feel grownup.*
- 2) *To satisfy curiosity.*
- 3) *To fit in and belong.*
- 4) *To relax and feel good.*
- 5) *To take risks and rebel.*

Young people report that getting alcohol, tobacco and most illicit drugs is very easy. If you have questions or concerns about your own or someone else's alcohol and drug use,



contact the Alcohol and Drug Information and Referral Service at 660-9382 or 1 800 663-1441, (outside the Lower Mainland). You can also submit a question via e-mail [www.vcn.bc.ca/isv/QuestionForm.html](http://www.vcn.bc.ca/isv/QuestionForm.html) or, if you prefer, fax it to 604 660-9415.

**ALA-TEEN** for teens and **ALA-NON** for family and friends are self-help groups based on the Alcoholics Anonymous model. Phone 383-4020 for Alanon or Alateen information. For Alanon/Alateen meeting information across Canada call 1-888-4AL-ANON. The Alanon world service website is at [www.alanon.alateen.org](http://www.alanon.alateen.org).

In Victoria, **Narcotics Anonymous** can be called at 250-383-3553. They can direct you to local resources in your community.

### **BC Alcohol and Drug Information & Referral Service**

[www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/cpa/alcohol](http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/cpa/alcohol) is available for people across the province needing help with any kind of substance abuse issues. This service is staffed 24 hours a day to provide information and referral to education, prevention and treatment services and regulatory agencies Call 604-660-9382 in the Lower Mainland, or 1-800-663-1441 elsewhere in British Columbia.

## **Substance-Abusing Parents**

Although there are many paths that lead to children being cared for by relatives, no single issue is nearly as pervasive as birth parents' chemical dependency issues.

First, chemical dependency is a disease, a behavioural health issue, and is treatable. It is not a moral failing and does not make the chemically dependent person a "bad person." In your own thoughts, and in your conversations with your child, focus on the parents' behaviour and leave your own moral/ethical views out of it. Although this may be hard to swallow at times, it is helpful to maintain this stance in your role as alternate caretaker for your child.

Second, in almost all cases, your grandchild will continue to love his/her birth parent(s) and want to be with them, at least for frequent visits. Support your grandchild's love for his/her parent(s). To do anything else would be cruel and could damage that child's relationship with you. It could also have serious long-term effects for the child, such as reducing the child's ability to form intimate, loving relationships. Again, focus upon the parents' behaviours and the way those behaviours affect their ability to provide the best possible care for the child. And your grandchildren always deserve the best!

Third, chemical dependency is treatable, but it commonly takes multiple attempts at treatment to be successful. Support the parents' efforts to achieve sobriety, but remember to protect your child as well. Hold strictly to all conditions the court or treatment provider may impose upon the parent. This includes not allowing a visit if the parent arrives with alcohol on his/her breath or is apparently "under the influence" - even if it is a "special day" such as a child's birthday. Most treatment programs require clients to abide strictly by such orders. To let the parents "slide" only defeats the parents' efforts to achieve sobriety and in the end works against the best interests of the child. Sometimes called 'enabling', it enables the parents to think they can continue to "use" and still see their child, even if 'stoned' or inebriated.

And, fourth, be sure to deal appropriately with your own and the child's feelings about the parents' chemical dependency. The breadth of feelings, which may arise, is nearly endless -including anger, guilt, envy, suspicion, hurt, sorrow. Seek help in exploring these feelings and finding where they come from so that you can work to resolve the internal and external conflicts, which these feelings may create or enflame.

Consult the resources listed in this Resource Guide for help with these issues, including **COA (Children of Alcoholics)** groups, **Al-Anon**, relatives -as -parents support groups, and individual treatment providers. Many of these resources can work well with older children. For younger (pre-teen) children, whose abilities to identify and give voice to their feelings may be quite limited, peer groups or private therapists working with such methods as "play therapy" may be the best resources.

Here are some specific suggestions about how to relate to substance-abusing parents.

- Always treat them with as much respect as you can muster (you're not a saint, but do your best).
- Do not lay "guilt trips" on them - it won't work to stop their substance abuse and in fact could push them toward relapse, which they then will blame on you.
- Love them, despite their substance abuse.
- Be firm with them while communicating to them that you care about their recovery - allow no "sliding" on their treatment or court rules.
- Always present the birth parents to your grandchild as doing the best they can to be loving parents, but who have an illness to conquer.
- Do all you can to communicate openly with the birth parents no matter how often your efforts to do so, are turned aside.
- And always remember that the parents surely are hurting in many ways - guaranteed - no matter what façade they may present.

- Ask for a friend to be there if the visits are difficult for you...you need support, too and someone who can confirm "what happened".

## Coping with Parent Visits

*Kevin's mom said she was coming on Saturday, and that the two of them would go out for pizza and to a movie. He passed up a birthday party for her, and his mom did not even show up.*

*Last week, Kevin's mom came to visit but all she wanted to do was use his grandmother's washing machine and take a nap. Kevin suspected that his mom may have had too much to drink. He said his mom smelled bad. Kevin is tired of waiting for her and he knows she does not act like a mom anyway.*

It is important to establish clear rules for the parents. Firmly communicate that they:

- Make arrangements for a visit with only you, not with the children.
- Arrive on time or call to explain their delay.
- Arrive sober. If not, they will not be allowed in the house or to see the children.
- Are to spend time with their children - that is the purpose of the visit.

### Tips for Dealing with Parent Visits

- Do not tell the children about the planned visit until a sober parent shows up at the door.
- Have some of the children's favourite games, toys, or books ready for the visit.
- Do not leave the children alone with the parent unless you are sure it is safe to do so.
- If the visit goes well, encourage the parent to visit again and thank them for spending time with the children. Record in your journal (see Section VII) the date, time, place, and content of the visit.
- Consider using a visitation center or alternative location if you are seeing that the parent's visits produce conflict or stress.

## Preparing Children for Unsupervised Visits with Parents

Each year, kids are victims of abduction by non-custodial parents. There are a number of things you can do now to help reduce the risk of abduction or, if it should occur, to help get your child safely back home. Practical suggestions include:

- Teach her/him your telephone number complete with area code.
- Practice making long-distance, collect calls.
- Encourage your child to call you anytime they are uncomfortable, day or night.
- Teach her/him how to dial 911, and when to use it.
- Make sure he/she knows your first and last name.
- Have her/him memorize your address.
- Tell her/him you would never agree to their parent or a stranger taking them.
- Let her/him know that you will always keep looking for them if they disappear.
- Pick a code word known only to you and the child.
- Advise her/him never to go with their parents unless you've told them about the visit.
- Designate someone else the child can call if you aren't available.
- Tell her/him if it feels wrong, do not go.
- If the non-custodial parent is not rooted in the community, try to get supervised visits.
- Write down the parents' car license number, color, make, and year.
- Keep names and numbers of the parents' family, friends, and employers.

If you have legal custody, you may:

- Specify in custody orders, "No out-of-province travel without written permission and, police or the RCMP will be involved if violated."
- File for a denial of passport, if you are concerned the parents may leave the country with the children. You may contact FMED, who are responsible for the *Family Maintenance Enforcement Act*. You can download a fact sheet from their website: [www.fmep.gov.bc.ca/resources/information/federal-licence-passport-denial.php](http://www.fmep.gov.bc.ca/resources/information/federal-licence-passport-denial.php)
- If your grandchild is taken, call police and a family law attorney immediately! See the Legal Section of this Booklet.
- Have current photos of the grandchildren and both parents to give to the police.
- Write down physical descriptions of grandchildren and parents for the police.

## Gangs and Violence

### Preventing a Child's Involvement in a Gang

1. Make sure your child does not feel they "need" a gang.
2. Show your love of the child through hugs, reassurance, etc.
3. Talk and listen to your child.
4. Supervise her/his activities. Help get them involved in positive activities.
5. Get to know the child's friends and their families.
6. Place a high value on education. Help them do their best. Do everything possible to prevent them from dropping out of school.
7. Talk about values and why you think gangs are dangerous. Discuss the violence, drug dealing, hatred, and the likelihood of law enforcement action that is the result of these activities. Make sure you listen, not just lecture.
8. Make sure you are a parent first, not necessarily a buddy.

### Warning signs that your grandchild might be involved in a gang or gang activity

1. Changes in types of friends.
2. Changes in dress habits, such as wearing the same color combination
3. Gang symbols on books or clothing.
4. Being secretive about their activities and whereabouts.
5. Having extra cash from an unknown source.
6. Carrying a weapon (they might say it is for "protection").
7. Declining interest in school and family.
8. Problems with law enforcement.

If you notice these patterns, get help. Intervention may prevent the situation from getting more serious. Contact the school counsellor or the police department. Most police departments have juvenile gang specialists. When a child gets into trouble with the law do not make excuses for their behaviour.

## **BC Government Programs: Supporting Prevention of Youth Violence Initiatives**

The government has a number of youth based violence prevention programs. Website [http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/community\\_programs/index.htm](http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/community_programs/index.htm).

The **Youth Against Violence Line** 1 800 680-4264- is a multilingual phone service that provides a safe, confidential way to prevent and report incidents of youth violence or crime or seek help from local police or service providers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Youth, parents, service providers can call or e-mail the Line to report incidents of crime, request information or be referred to a service provider within their local community. Further info is available at <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/isv/youthagainstviolenceline.html>.

Pardeep Purewal, Coordinator, School and Youth Programs  
**Victim Services and Community Programs Division**  
**Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General**  
302-815 Hornby Street, Vancouver, BC, V6Z 2E6  
604-660-2916 (tel) 604-837-0436 (cell)

## **Sex and Youth**

You may have difficulty talking to your child about sexuality. Most parents do. However, kids learn about sex early in their lives. They may get information at school, from their friends, or through television or music. It is important that they get accurate, timely, and appropriate information from you. You may call your local youth clinic for print information you could give your child if you are uncomfortable to talk to them about some of the issues. Inform yourself about the 'new' issues related to sex and youth, as those issues include alcohol and drug use it includes often drug use (even someone else's use such as date rape drugs), It is necessary to know about the life and death importance of protected sex and talk about it with your teenagers. Let your child know about the joys and pleasures of intimacy and the reasons for 'waiting and being safe' and other values about children and family.

### **Tips to help you talk to your child about sexuality**

- Find out your child's questions and concerns.

- Know the facts about sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, birth control, and pregnancy, or refer your child to someone you trust who does.
- Talk about the things you see on TV or in the community that deal with sexuality. Ask your child how he/she feels about certain topics.

## Resources

For further information on talking to your children about sexuality issues, contact The Facts of Life Line managed by BC Planned Parenthood. It provides counselling and referrals on sexual and reproductive matters, including pregnancy options. Toll free 1-800-739-7367.

**The Crisis Centre** is a professional and caring organization committed to helping youths in crisis. The 24 hour distress line 1-866-661-3311. You may have to wait to talk to someone.

**Sexually Exploited Youth Speak Out, SEYSO**, Western Canada Office Toll Free 1-800-325-6873, [www.savethechildren](http://www.savethechildren), "If you want to find solutions, ask us what to do, we are the experts. Listen to our voice. Our united voices can create change!"

**Sexually Transmitted Disease Clinic** in Victoria at 250-388-2225.

## Communication Tips

Good communication creates a win/win situation for both children and their caretakers. Learning good communication skills helps children (and adults) develop confidence, feelings of self worth, and good relationships with others.

- Demonstrate good listening skills when you speak with your child. Give your undivided attention when your children want to talk to you - don't read, watch TV, fall asleep, or make yourself busy with other tasks.
- Practice listening and talking - talk with your children about school, friends, and how they feel about things.
- Respect your children. If you talk to your children as you do your peers, they will be more likely to tell you when things are right or wrong in their lives.

- Praise your children for doing things right. Praise builds a child's confidence and reinforces communication. Unkind words tear children down and teach them that they just aren't good enough.
- Children are never too old to be told they are loved. Saying and hearing "I love you" is important at any age.
- Remind them of your rules. Just saying "no" is not good enough. Younger children often need reminders

## Discipline and Setting Limits

- Start with only a few rules. The more rules you have, the harder it will be for your children to remember them.
- Consistency of rules is an absolute must. Never threaten or impose a restriction you can't keep.
- Be sure you know why you are saying no and explain your reasons. Be sure your child understands your reasons.
- Set routines for bedtime, meals, and chores. Let them know your expectations. Routines will help your children feel safe.
- Give children a voice in setting limits. They need a chance to tell you what they think and feel. Even a child of five or six can talk with you and help you set fair limits. When children help you make rules; they are more likely to obey them.
- Give children choices to make for themselves just be sure any one they choose is okay with you! This helps them to learn responsibility and independent thinking.
- Say what you mean. Be very clear about the limits you set for your child.
- Refuse to fight or give in. Don't argue the point simply restate the rule.

### Things to do Instead of Spanking

1. Get calm...stay calm
2. Take some time out for yourself
3. Be kind but firm
4. Talk about choices...give the children choice
5. Review logical consequences
6. Have a do over
7. Do not get involved in conflict...withdraw
8. Use firm but kind action
9. Inform children ahead of time...give them notice of plans



The latest research from Dr. Murray Straus at the Family Research Laboratory affirms that spanking teaches children to use acts of aggression and violence to solve their problems. It only teaches and perpetuates more violence, the very thing our society is so concerned about. The research further shows that children who have been spanked are more prone to low self-esteem, depression and accept lower paying jobs as adults. So, find another way to discipline; do not spank.

## Culture and Tradition

Traditions develop memories that can last a lifetime. Special foods on certain nights, bedtime and wake up routines, birthdays and holidays, all lend themselves to family routines and traditions. The hairstyles, dress, and language of today's children and teenagers might try the patience of adults for whom cultural traditions are important. Grandparents and other relatives need to be sensitive to their children's need to look, dress, and act like others their age. Sometimes you need to ask yourself "how important is it? Is it life threatening or dangerous?"

If your grandchild shares a different cultural background than you do, it will be important to learn about that culture, teach your children about that part of their heritage through books, cultural events, and other opportunities to explore who they are from that side of their blood line.

The **Inter-Cultural Association (ICA) of Greater Victoria** may be able to help you understand more about your grandchild's cultural heritage and/or provide other services or activities for you and your grandchild. You may contact them at 250 - 388 - 4728 or visit their website at [www.icavictoria.org](http://www.icavictoria.org). The ICA of greater Victoria also provides support groups for grandparents from many cultures and are working to start a group for inter-cultural grandparents raising grandchildren. It may be a great idea to let them know you are interested.

See under the First Nation's Section for programs related to First Nation's and Métis grandparents, grandchildren, and families. If you have a First Nation's child, and are not First Nation's yourself, remember it will support the child to have them involved in some activities from their culture and to provide for them an opportunity to meet First Nation's counsellors and support workers. It will support you, too.

**BC Human Right Coalition**, Vancouver 1-604-689-8474 may be able to help you with issues of discrimination or Vancouver Island Human Rights Coalition 1 -250- 382-3012

**Capital Race Relations** can be reached at 250-380-7311.

The **Canadian Human Rights Commission** can be reached collect at 1-604-666-2251.

## Section Four

### Special Issues Facing Children in Kinship Care

*Ann says her grandchildren seem to have many emotions that her now adult children never experienced when they were growing up. Ann is trying to sort out and identify their feelings so she can do the best job she can to help them.*

#### Understanding Children's Issues

Because of what has happened in their lives, children not being raised by their biological parents and being cared for by kin or friends of the family may experience a variety of emotions.

##### Abandonment

Young Scott was left at the neighbors, and his mom never returned. Scott's grandma came to get him, and brought him to her house. Scott was very scared that he would lose his grandma and grandpa, too. At first, he would not let them out of his sight. Scott even became very nervous when they went into the bathroom. He thought his grandma and grandpa might disappear down the drain. He does not know where his mom is, and he has heard nothing from her. Scott does not know if she will ever come back for him.

##### Grief and Loss

Billy had just made a new friend in his neighborhood when Billy had to move to his aunt's house. He was even on a soccer team, and now he cannot play. Billy's mom just packed him up one night and left him at her sister's house. She forgot to pack Billy's favorite bear and his pillow. To make it worse for Billy, at least in his eyes, his aunt, who used to let him get away with stuff before he lived with her, makes Billy go to bed on time and complete his homework before he is allowed to watch T.V.

### **Low Self-Esteem**

Little Andrea wonders what she did wrong. She thinks she must be really bad if her own mom does not want her. Andrea wonders if she is stupid or if something else is wrong with her. What particularly upsets Andrea is that her mom is keeping her new baby, but not Andrea.

### **Fear and Insecurity**

Marcus lays awake at night, worrying that his mom will not ever come back for him. At the same time, Marcus worries that she will return for him. What will happen then? Marcus is getting used to not being hungry, and he does not miss the beatings. He also worries about what will happen to him if his aunt gets sick or goes away. Where will he go?

### **Anger**

Sam punched his grandma today. He cannot explain what came over him. Sam said he felt like he would burst if he did not punch someone. His grandma was there, and it was easy to take out his anger on her. Marcus feels terrible about what he did. He loves his grandma, and knows she did not deserve it. Marcus is really mad at his mom; but he cannot show his anger to her because she is not there.

### **Confused Feelings**

Jenny says she hates her mom but, at the same time, she misses her very much. Jenny wants to go home, but she does not want to leave where she is now living. Jenny wonders if her mom could move in with her grandparents and her. Sometimes, Jenny questions if they are keeping her from her mom. But, Jenny knows her grandparents are very good to her and love her a great deal. Jenny also gets confused by other feelings, because her mom's boyfriend used to touch her in ways she did not like. When Jenny thinks about that, she gets real mixed up inside. She wishes she could get those thoughts out of her head.

## **Common Behaviours of Children in Kinship Care**

These are especially common behaviours displayed early in the transition of living without their parents:

- School difficulties (poor grades, difficult behavior).
- Does not pay attention for long, cannot concentrate.
- Will not let the caregiver out of sight, clings to the caregiver.
- Reverts to babyish behavior like thumb sucking and bed wetting.
- Will not sleep alone or with the light off.
- Eats too fast, too much, or hides food, or won't eat.
- Takes care of brothers and sisters like a parent should.
- Behaviors are often worse after a parent's visit.
- Exhibits age inappropriate sexual behavior.

## Tips for Helping Children

- Give them affection the child can count on.
- Provide regular meals.
- Have a set bedtime routine.
- Give the child structure so they know what to plan on.
- Reassure the child you will not leave him/her.
- Let the child know they are safe.
- Allow the child to talk about their feelings.
- Help the child understand they are not to blame for the situation.
- Give positive reinforcement and praise.
- Let the child know all feelings are okay, even mixed-up feelings.
- Let the child know you, too, have confused feelings sometimes.
- Reward the behaviors you want to see again.
- Catch the child being good and praise that behavior.
- Let them know you will always love them, even when they are mad or angry."Through the Eyes of a Child is a useful series of nine fact sheets for grandparents raising grandchildren (birth to age eight) on child development, family relationships, communication and the importance of contact with birth parents. For free copies, visit the **University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension** website [www.uwex.edu/relationships/index.html](http://www.uwex.edu/relationships/index.html)

### When talking to the children, consider the following guidelines

- Do not lie to children.
- Tell the truth, but tell only as much as the child really wants to know and can understand.

- Never bad-mouth the parent when the child is around.
- Explain the parents' problems as kindly as you can.
- When children ask those tough questions, it is okay to make such statements as, "I don't know"; "I don't know where your mommy is"; or "I don't know when Dad is coming back."
- If a parent is a drug user, talk about it by making such statements as, "Your dad uses drugs, and that makes him too sick to take care of a little girl."
- If a parent does not show up for a promised visit, nurture that child with comments, such as, "I know you feel bad because Mommy didn't come, but you're safe with me"; or "Sometimes Daddy's sickness makes it hard for him to remember."
- Find something—anything—good you can truthfully say about the parent.
- Always reassure the children that the situation is not their fault.

## Communicating with Children about Their Parents

*Joe is at a loss with what to tell his grandchildren about their parents. The children seem to idolize their parents, despite what the children have suffered at their parents' hands. Joe does not want to badmouth the children's mom and dad, but neither does he want to lie to them.*

Children who live with grandparents or relatives usually have strong feelings about their parents. Grandparents/relatives who build a good relationship with the children's parent(s) will have more success in getting the child to open up about their feelings.

Children love to play and often can play out their feelings. Activities that can help a child to open up about their feelings include: walks in the park, board games, baking together, playing with a doll house, building with blocks, play dough projects, and drawing.

### Reading Together

Reading together is another activity that can draw a child and an adult closer together and build trust and a sense of belonging so the child will share feelings. There are many excellent award-winning books. Ask a librarian to suggest a few books on your child's reading level that you can read to and with the child. Ask for books that address the feelings of loss, separation, anxiety and fear.

## **Books you can likely get from your Local Library**

The following are children's books in which grandparents are primary caregivers:

### **Books with Pictures for Younger Children**

*Babu's Song*, by Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen; A loving grandfather helps his grandson realize his dream of going to school. (primary fiction)

*The Farm Summer 1942*, by Donald Hall; During a summer in World War II, a city boy spends a wonderful summer on his grandparent's farm. (picture book)

*Grandmother Bryant's Pocket*, by Jacqueline Martin; Suffering nightmares after a fire, a young girl in 18th century Maine goes to live with her grandparents. (picture book)

*Grandmother's Song*, by Barbara Soros; A Grandmother sensing her granddaughter's fear, gives her courage, dignity and trust. (primary fiction)

*Mama, Across the Sea*, by Alex Godard; Cecile longs for her mama who works across the sea. Meanwhile, her grandparents provide a comforting home. (primary fiction)

### **Chapter Books for Older Children**

*The Cookcamp*, by Gary Paulsen; During World War II, a boy is sent to live with his grandma, a cook in a camp for workers building a road through the wilderness. (intermediate fiction)

*The Egypt Game*, by Zilpha Snyder; Sent to live with her grandmother, April learns to adjust, make friends, and care for her grandmother. (intermediate fiction)

*The Falconmaster*, by R. L. LaFevers; An action-filled fantasy in which a brave young boy overcomes his disability with the help of a mysterious wizard. (intermediate fiction)

*Heidi*, by Johanna Spyri; A beloved classic set in the Swiss Alps in which the companionship of a little girl rekindles her Grandfather's dormant kindness. (intermediate Fiction)

*The Islander*, by Cynthia Rylant; Daniel lives with his grandfather on an island off the B.C. coast. One beautiful night he meets a mermaid. (intermediate fiction)

*Lizard Meets Ivan the Terrible*, by C. Anne Scott; Third-grader Lizzie comes to live with her fun grandmother, and faces all the trials of being the new kid in her class. (primary fiction)

*A Long Way From Chicago*, by Richard Peck; During the Great Depression, a boy and his sister spend summers with their larger than life grandmother. (Sequel: *Alida's Song* - Teen fiction)

*Sammy Keyes and the Hotel Thief*, by W. Van Draanen; Sammy, though it's against the rules, lives with her grandmother in a senior's home. (intermediate fiction)

*The Silent Storm*, by Sherry Garland; A hurricane threatens the home Alyssa share with her grandfather on Galveston Island. (intermediate fiction)

*A Year Down Under*, by Richard Peck; In this sequel to *A Long Way from Chicago*, Mary Alice spends a whole year with Grandma Dowdel. (intermediate fiction)

The above list was supplied by the Greater Victoria Public Library. Ask your local libraries to order these books if they are not on the shelves. There are lots of grandparents and other relatives raising grandchildren that will be able to use them, too. If you ask, your library may have other books to recommend that are not on this list.

You may have to search a little harder to find books on this next list. The list was supplied by the Parenting a Second Time Around Program in Washington State:

*Today I Feel Silly & Other Moods That Make My Day* by Jamie Lee Curtis; A child's Emotions range from silliness to anger to excitement, coloring and changing each day. 1998 (four to seven)

*What Cried Granny An Almost Bedtime Story*, by Kate Lunn; Patrick's first sleep-over at his Granny's house is quite an adventure! 1998 (four - eight)

*What Grandma's Do Best, What Grandpa's Do Best*, by Laura Joffe Numeroff; Grandparents can do many things, but best of all they give you lots of love. 2000 (pre-school)



*When a Friend Dies*, by Marilyn Gootman; A book for teens about grieving and healing. Sensitively written and sensible. 1994

*When Dinosaurs Die, A Guide to Understanding Death*, by Marc Tolon Brown and Laurie Krasny Brown; Explains the feelings people may have when a loved one dies and suggest ways to honour the dead. 1996 (five to ten)

*When Sophie Gets Really Really Angry*, by Molly Bang; Different People handle anger in different ways. When Sophie gets angry she climbs her favourite tree. 1999 (five to eight)

*You Are My I Love You*, by Maryann K. Cuisimano; "I am your parent, you are my child, I am your quiet place, You are my wild"; Gentle verses about the love between (grand)parent and child.2001 (four to eight)

### **Books you may like to Read to Your Younger Grandchildren**

*Bernstein Bear and Giddy Grandma* by Stan and Jan Bernstein – N.Y.: Random House, c. 1994

*Grandmother for the Orphelines* by N.Savage Carlson. NY:Harper Row c. 1980

*Hooray for Grandparent's Day* by Nancy Carlson. NY; Viking c 2000

*Kevin's Grandma* by Barbara Williams, NY: Dutton c. 1975

*Robert Lives with his Grandparents* by M. Whitmore, Morton Gove III: Albert Whitman, c. 1995

*Spot and his Grandparents Go to the Carnival* by Eric Hill. NY: G. P. Putnam. C.1998

*Spot Visits his Grandparents*, by Eric Hill. NY: G.P. Putman c. 1996

*The Squeaky, Creaky Bed* by Pat Thomson NY: Random House c 2003

Mamma Bear Baby Bear, A Native American Myth of Recent Origin, by Linda Silvas " a story about Forbidden Fruit breaking the cycle" [www.littletreescreations.com](http://www.littletreescreations.com) and [www.mamabearbabybear.com](http://www.mamabearbabybear.com).

*Indian Shoes*, by Cynthia Leitich Smith [www.cynthialeitichsmith.com/](http://www.cynthialeitichsmith.com/).

## Weekly Outing to the Library

Libraries have changed from book warehouses to a place to be where you can sit in comfortable chairs and read, or just spend some quiet time. Not only can you find books that entertain, but there are books on self improvement, home improvement, developing hidden talents, and finding information on historical event, current events and strange and wonderful events. There are great books on mythology, group relations, government, customs, holidays, folklore and fairytales and so much more. And there is more, you can access information via computers that are available for your use and the staff will help you if you run into trouble. There are programs available for everyone starting with toddlers and story time to computer instruction for seniors. Make it a special outing and come prepared:

- If you need to get a library card, be sure to bring along some I.D. An invoice with your current address and one other piece of I.D.
- Bring along a canvass bag for the library books you will be borrowing.
- Before you go, talk with your and grandchildren about the books they would like to borrow and tell them about the books you would like to borrow.
- At the library encourage your grandchildren to browse in the section of their choice. There are fiction and non-fiction books, magazines, videos, tapes, etc.
- Collect an armful of books, sit down in a comfortable chair and read.
- Ask the librarian about the special programs they have for different age groups.
- Learn how to use the computers to access the books you want. If these books are not immediately available at your library, the library staff will show you how to place a "hold" on these and have them delivered to the library of your choice.

## **Books for Yourself**

While you are at the library you might get a book for yourself, too. Here are some suggestions for grandparents and other grand relatives raising grandchildren supplied by the resource material in "Parenting a Second Time Around".

Title: *Contemporary Grandparenting*

Author: Kornhaber, Arthur

Publication Date: 1996

Abstract: Written for professionals, this book discusses cultural and historical variations in grandparenting, research, family diversity, clinical grandparenting, legal issues, and generational involvement. Includes chapter on raising grandchildren.

Ordering Information: Sage Publications, Inc. 2455 Teller Rd., Thousand Oaks, CA 91320; e-mail: order@sagepub.com ISBN 0-8039-5806-4

Title: *Effective Support Groups: How to Plan, Design, Facilitate, and Enjoy Them*

Author: James E. Miller

Publication Date: 1998

Abstract: This book is written to provide basic information about support groups: how they're best created, the way in which they function, what's to be expected of members, and what's to be required of facilitators.

Length: 64 page book

Ordering Information: Willowgreen Publishing, PO Box 25180, Fort Wayne, IN 46825; phone: (219) 424-7916; ISBN 1-885933-26-6

Title: *Grandparent Power: How to Strengthen the Vital Connection Among Grandparents, Parents and Children*

Author: Kornhaber, Arthur

Publication Date: 1995

Abstract: Written for lay audiences. It discusses relationship issues between parents, children, and grandchildren.

Ordering Information: Sage Publications, Inc. 2455 Teller Rd., Thousand Oaks, CA 91320; e-mail: order@sagepub.com

Title: *Grandparents as Parents: A Survival Guide for Raising a Second Family*

Author: S. De Toledo and D. Brown

Publication Date: 1995

Abstract: For professionals and grandparents. Describes immediate actions to take when becoming parents for the second time, provides advice on lifestyle changes, legal and financial issues, and suggestions on how to create support groups.

Ordering Information: Guilford Publications, 72 Spring Street, New York, NY 10012; phone: 1-800-365-7006 –or- (212)-431-9800; fax: (212)-966-6708; e-mail: info@guilford.com ISBN: 0-8039-5805

Title: *To Grandma's House ... We Stay: When you have to stop spoiling your grandchildren and start raising them.*

Author: Sally Houtman, M.S.

Publication Date: 1999

Abstract: For professionals and grandparents. An overview of the challenges of raising grandchildren, dealing with irresponsible adult children, recommendations for parenting, and the grandchild's perspective. Includes extensive resource list readings, websites, newsletters, hotlines, and organizations dealing with special problems.

Ordering Information: Published by Studio 4 Productions, PO Box 280400, Northridge, CA 91328-0400 ISBN: 1-882349-05-9

The Library is a place to go to and a wonderful place to be!

### **Relax and Watch a Movie with Older Children**

Older children and youth like to watch movies. Movies that you preview for appropriate content can be good discussion starters. Look for wholesome movies that deal with parent-child relationships, loss, or separation. Make some popcorn and watch the movie together. After the movie spend some time discussing the movie, talk about how it made them feel, and how it made you feel. The following are movies all can enjoy:

*Secondhand Lions*

*Charlie And The Chocolate Factory*

The following movies are recommended by a grandmother who has been watching movies with the granddaughter she is raising and she highly recommends them:

*Chronicles of Narnia*

*Wallace and Gromit* - the best animated film of 2005

*The Bee Season* - a brave girl tries to help herself and her wounded family.

*Corpse Bride* - animated musical comedy with very likeable characters.

*Saint Ralph* - Ralph needs a miracle to save his hospitalized mother; touching and uplifting - some funny bits, too.

*The Weeping Camel* - a young camel is separated from its mother.

*Mad Hot Ballroom* - New York kids take dance lessons and compete - see who wins!

*The Chorus* - a music teacher in France helps some troubled boys by teaching them to sing together.

*Dear Frankie* - a Scottish boy and his mother try to find a new life away from the boy's abusive father.

*Whale Rider* - a brave young girl in New Zealand has a special destiny.

*The School of Rock* - kids learning to play rock music from Jack Black who is amazing!

*The Princess Bride* - an old-fashioned style story, for girls AND boys.

*Bend It Like Beckham* - a sixteen year old girl wants to play soccer which is against her family's tradition.

*Finding Nemo, Shrek and Monster's Inc.* are some excellent animated films.

You may also try the National Film Board at [www.nfbc.ca](http://www.nfbc.ca) where there are films on divorce, family violence and prevention, child rearing and development, and many others. They are often available at your local library or through the web site.

## Relationships with Incarcerated Parents

Many grandparents and other relatives are raising children because their parents are incarcerated. Incarceration presents many challenges for kinship families. In addition to the daily tasks of raising children, caregivers also find themselves responsible for making sure the children maintain a healthy relationship with their incarcerated parent. Because the isolation of incarceration can make this relationship very difficult, kinship caregivers may need support from organizations that have a special understanding of this situation.

**The Directory of Canada** is a national organization that offers resources and referrals for caregivers and others with incarcerated family members. This includes a directory of programs for each province at [www3.sympatico.ca/cfcn/bcolumbia.html](http://www3.sympatico.ca/cfcn/bcolumbia.html). In Victoria contact John Howard Society 250-386-3428.

## Children and Grief

No parent can protect children from losing someone they love or shield them from mourning that loss. For some children, the loss is caused by the death of a loved one. In other cases, especially for many of the children being raised by kin, that special someone is lost to an illness, prison, or to the streets. No matter what caused the loss, children grieve. Although their feelings may be similar to those of adults, how children express their grief depends on their age, their relationship to the person who is gone, and the part that person played in their lives. How others around them grieve is important as well. Understanding how children grieve can help you to help them.

The Rainbows Program may be helpful for you and/or your children. It has a variety of support programs, with trained volunteer facilitators, for teens, children, and adults in different kinds of grieving and families in painful transition. [www.rainbows.bc.ca](http://www.rainbows.bc.ca) or in Victoria call 250 -479 -3086. This is a faith based, but not religious, program.

## **What Kinship Caregivers Should Know About Children and Grief**

Grief is more than the feeling of loss. It brings with it disruption and change in the child's life. As a result, children have to cope with a sense of unreality – which may stay with them for a long time – and a sense of feeling unsafe. Nothing is the same as it was before.

Not only have they lost that special person, but they may also have to go to a different school, move to a different place to live, or take on new responsibilities. Suddenly they are faced with unfamiliar feelings, like fear, anger, and sadness, with which they have little experience. You can meet your grandchildren's needs by remembering the three C's – Care, Continuity, and Connection.

**Care** - Your children need to know that someone will support them, feed them, and give them a home.

**Continuity** - Your children need to know that they can trust the person taking care of them, that others around them will not leave, and that there is some stability through these changes in their lives.

**Connection** - Your children need to have their loss acknowledged. They need to be part of the giving and receiving of comfort within the family. They need to talk about the relationship with the person they have lost, both the good and the bad.

### **Children Experience Loss Differently**

Children experience loss differently depending on their age and stage of development.

**Pre-schoolers** (ages 1-5) feel the loss but do not have the words to say what they feel. They usually express only one feeling at a time; they can be happy or they can be sad, but not at the same time. They may have lost someone who held them together, directed them in the world, gave them things, and made them feel safe.

**Primary school children** (ages 5-10) recognize the extent of their loss and are fearful of the changes they see associated with it. For them to feel safe and whole they need to learn that there is some continuity between the past and the present. They lost someone who may have done things for them and with them. Children in this age group can begin to talk about their own needs and feelings, but often they do not think before they act.

**Pre-adolescents** (ages 10-13) understand more about what they lost, have words for their feelings, and can recognize what the person who is gone did for them and the difference he or she made in their lives. They may try to be more grown up than they really are.

**Adolescents** (ages 13-18) can reflect on their own behavior and the meaning that the loss has on their lives and the lives of others in the family. They may try to take over the roles and responsibilities of the person they have lost. They can see the person they lost as someone with his or her own needs and who has, in some way, lost something too. They can talk about how their own personal history will be different because of the loss.

### **How Caregivers Can Help**

Most adults feel uncomfortable talking about death or loss, especially with children. We know we can't "fix" their pain, and because we are afraid of saying the wrong thing, we often say nothing. But children often find that the silence of adults deepens their confusion. The availability of a loving parent or other caring adult can be very helpful to children who have suffered a loss. The following tips may help you assist your child cope with a loss:

- Be honest – Their lives have been shaken and your honesty will help rebuild their sense of trust
- Be open about your own sorrow – Your grief lets your children know that it's okay for them to cry and be sad. Let them comfort you as you comfort them. Help them find outlets for their feelings, perhaps through sports, arts, or talking.
- Encourage questions – Understand that children often need to ask the same questions over again as they reach different ages and stages. They may need to hear over and over again what is happening, how you will manage, and the nature of the changes taking place.
- Consider an activity that helps children remember and honour the person they have lost - They might want to make a scrapbook, a photo album, or a memory box, or tell or write a story. The activities children find helpful change over time as children grow. Let them decide what they want to do and what works for them.
- When the loss is through death, use the words "death," "dead," and "dying" – Using concrete words allows adults as well as children to be open and honest and avoids disguising the truth.

- Allow, but don't force, children to attend funeral services or viewings — If they do wish to attend, prepare them for what they will see and hear. If they are primary school age or younger, have someone they trust stay with them during the service to explain what is happening, to comfort them, and to answer questions. Older children and adolescents may be able to take a more active role in these rituals.

Grief is a process, not a single event. The best thing caregivers can do for grieving grandchildren is to give them the tools to cope. Being there for them provides the support they need as they work out new ways to deal with the major and permanent changes in their lives caused by loss.

**BC Bereavement Helpline** : Toll Free 1-8777-779-2223 The BC Bereavement Helpline is a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to the healthy and wholesome recovery of individuals experiencing grief.

[www.bcbereavementhelpline.com/index.php?page=links](http://www.bcbereavementhelpline.com/index.php?page=links)

## Resources

### Ministry of Children and Family Development Resources

The Ministry of Children and Family Development provides a wide range of services to help young people and their families when they are having difficulties, when youth are sexually exploited, have an addiction to drugs or alcohol, are living on the street, have mental health problems, or a combination of issues.

The services they provide may help you make changes in your life, better your relationships with friends and family, help you find housing, help you finish or continue education, enable you to gain skills and education to get a job, help you learn to manage your emotions and behaviour. If you are living on the street, they may help you get home, work with you to kick your drug or alcohol addiction, provide your parents with education and counseling, or help you learn to manage money.

After Hours Line:

For emergencies outside office hours (8:30-4:30 pm, Monday to Friday) call MCFD 24-hours at:

- Vancouver, the North Shore & Richmond: 604-660-4927



- Lower Mainland from Burnaby & Delta in the west to Maple Ridge and Langley in the east: 604-660-8180
- Rest of the province: 1-800-663-9122

### **Other Useful Resources**

- **Poison Control Centre:** 1-800-567-8911
- **RCMP Missing Children's Registry:** 1-877-318-3576
- **BC Federation of Foster Parents:** 1-800-663-9999
- **Youth Against Violence:** 1-800-680-4264
- **Alcohol and Drug Information and Referral Service:** 1-800-663-1441
- **Ombudsman:** In Victoria call 387-5855. From elsewhere in BC call toll-free 1-800-567-3247.
- **Public Guardian and Trustee:** In Vancouver call 604-660-4444. From elsewhere in BC call toll-free 1-800-663-7867.
- **The People's Law School** has publications about "Writing a Will", "Power of Attorney", and other legal matters related to death and dying. They can be contacted at 604-331-5400, or you can read their publications in large print on their website at [www.publiclegaled.bc.ca](http://www.publiclegaled.bc.ca)
- **Helpline for the Deaf** 1-800-667-4770
- **Helpline for Children** 310-1234
- **Housing Registry** 250-387-4731
- **Capital Region Housing** 250-388-6422



## Section Five

### Financial Assistance

*Ann Marie made a modest living, but only enough for herself. Anything left over at the end of the month was used to help cover her mother's care in the nursing home. How could she possibly financially care for her granddaughter who was now living in her home? Her savings were depleted yet she knew others were counting on her.*

All levels of government in Canada have programs that provide financial assistance and benefits to individuals and families. These are called benefit programs. They provide basic assistance to help meet the needs of Canadians, permanent residents and others who qualify.

#### Canada Child Tax Benefit Program

The Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) is a tax-free monthly payment made to eligible families to help them with the cost of raising children under the age of 18. The Canada Child Tax Benefit helps grandparents raising grandchildren with the cost of raising them.

The CCTB includes the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS), a monthly benefit for low-income families with children. The NCBS is the Government of Canada's contribution to the National Child Benefit, a joint initiative of federal, provincial and territorial governments.

#### Eligibility for CCTB benefits

To receive the Canada Child Tax Benefit, you must meet all the following conditions:

- You must live with the child, and the child must be under the age of 18;
- You must be the person who is primarily responsible for the care and upbringing of the child;
- You must be a resident of Canada; and

- You or your spouse or common-law partner must be a Canadian citizen, a permanent resident, a protected person or a temporary resident.

## **How to Apply**

You must complete an application form and send it to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). You can download a copy of the application form from the CRA Web site, <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/menu-e.html>, or get one from a CRA office.

When you are ready to submit your application, you will need to show your passport and your Permanent Resident Card, Record of Landing (IMM 1000), or Confirmation of Permanent Residence (IMM 5292).

For information on how to apply for the Canada Child Tax Benefit see <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/benefits/cctb/menu-e.html>. or call 1 800 387-1193.

Relatives applying for child-support benefits should expect to be asked for the following information. If you need assistance getting any of these documents, let someone know: the school counsellor, a counsellor at a local family serving agency, or your caseworker if you have one.

- Proof of the child's age, such as a birth certificate, baptismal record, or school document.
- Proof of the relative's relationship to the child – in many cases, the caseworker can get this information from public records, but it is advisable to bring in any documentation you have. For example, if you have a birth certificate for the child showing their parents' names, then you just need to establish your relation to one of the parents.

## **Child Support Services**

This web site provides general information about a number of issues of interest to BC couples who have separated or who are about to separate. It may also be useful for guardians and other family members, such as grandparents, who may be involved in making important decisions about the family and its future  
<http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/family-justice/index.htm>.

## **Comprehensive Child Support Service**

There are Child Support Services and Child Support officers in some BC communities. Child Support Officers will help you understand the child support guidelines and calculate what you are entitled to receive or must pay under those guidelines. If the other parent agrees, Child Support Officers will work with both of you to negotiate a child support amount. Officers will also refer you to other professionals associated with the pilot project as appropriate - such as an outreach worker from the Family Maintenance Enforcement Program [www.ag.gov.bc.ca/family-justice/help/fmep/index.htm](http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/family-justice/help/fmep/index.htm) or a Family Justice Counsellor [www.ag.gov.bc.ca/family-justice/help/counselors/index.htm](http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/family-justice/help/counselors/index.htm) - or to other programs and services, such as Parenting After Separation, [www.ag.gov.bc.ca/family-justice/help/pas/index.htm](http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/family-justice/help/pas/index.htm) for financial management, legal advice and debt counseling.

For more information, please contact:

[www.ag.gov.bc.ca/family-justice/help/fmep/index.htm](http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/family-justice/help/fmep/index.htm).

## **Child Care**

Child care is defined as the care and supervision of a child in a child care setting other than (a) by the child's parent, or (b) while the child is attending an educational program provided under the *School Act* or the *Independent School Act*.

Parent is defined in the *Child Care Subsidy Act* as a person with whom a child resides and who stands in place of the child's mother or father (*Child Care Subsidy Act* section 1).

The **Ministry of Children and Family Development** website has a search tool that helps people find licensed child care in their communities which can be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/parents.htm>.

Also, **Child Care Resource and Referral Centres** provide information and refer people to license-not-required child care facilities. For more information, go to [http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/ChildCar/rrp\\_city\\_index.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/ChildCar/rrp_city_index.htm).

## **Child Care Subsidy**

The Child Care Subsidy is a monthly payment that helps families with low incomes pay for some of the costs of child care. You may be eligible for a Child Care Subsidy if you:

- are working and earn a low wage
- are looking for work
- are attending school or a job training program
- have child care recommended by the Ministry of Children and Family Development
- have a medical condition that interferes with your ability to care for your child, or
- have a child attending a Licensed Preschool

## To apply for the Child Care Subsidy

- Contact a **Ministry of Human Resources** office, [www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/contacts/index.htm](http://www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/contacts/index.htm) listed in the blue pages of the Telus telephone directory; or
- Phone **Enquiry BC** at:  
Victoria: 250 387-6121  
Vancouver/Lower Mainland: 604 660-2421  
Elsewhere in British Columbia: 1 800 663-7867

Further information on the **Child Care Subsidy Program** is available on the government website: [http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/ChildCar/subsidy\\_promo.htm#apply](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/ChildCar/subsidy_promo.htm#apply)

## Children with Special Needs

### Supported Child Care

Supported Child Care (SCC) agencies contract with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) to provide a range of consulting and support services in order that children with special needs from birth to 12 years of age can be included in regular child care settings.

When there is a lack of other community options for social inclusion, youth from 13 to 18 years of age may also receive SCC services on a case by case basis.

Parents should approach their local SCC agency directly, or contact their local MCFD office for information about additional resources. Further information is available on the government website: [http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/supported\\_childcare/index.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/supported_childcare/index.htm).

## Special Needs Supplement

Special Needs Supplement is an income-tested support payment to assist parents with the cost of the child care space (up to \$150). The Special Needs Supplement is administered through the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance along with Child Care subsidies to ensure streamlined services. Range Payment - provides additional supports and resources to help children with special needs succeed in child care settings.

## British Columbia Family Maintenance Enforcement Program

We monitor and enforce maintenance orders and agreements (for either child support or spousal support). Many maintenance payments are paid on time and in full, but some people like having a third party (FMEP) involved to track the payments. If payments aren't made, we contact the payer to try to get payment voluntarily. If this doesn't work, we may take enforcement action such as:

- Notice of Attachment (garnishment for wages, bank accounts, etc)
- Federal Interception (Notice of Attachment for federal payments as EI benefits and income tax returns)
- Land Registration (lien against real estate)
- Maintenance Lien (against personal property)
- Reporting to the Credit Bureau
- Drivers License Withholding
- Federal License and Passport Denial

The following chart is from the British Columbia Family Maintenance Enforcement Program <https://www.fmep.gov.bc.ca/resources/>.

**LOWER MAINLAND CLIENT OFFICE**

Box 80449  
Burnaby, BC V5H 3X9  
Phone: (604) 678-5670  
Fax: (604) 678-5679  
Toll-free: 1-800-663-9666

**NORTHERN AND INTERIOR CLIENT OFFICE**

Box 830  
Kamloops, BC V2C 5N1  
Phone: (250) 434-6020  
Fax: (250) 434-6033  
Toll-free: 1-800-663-3933

**VICTORIA CLIENT OFFICE**

Box 5100  
Victoria, BC V8R 6N3  
Phone: (250) 220-4040  
Fax: (250) 220-4050  
Toll-free: 1-800-663-3455

**WHY CAN'T I SEND AN EMAIL TO THE FMEP?**

The confidentiality of your information is very important to us.

<https://www.fmep.gov.bc.ca/resources/>

**INFOLINE NUMBERS**

Greater Vancouver: (604) 775-0796  
Greater Victoria: (250) 356-5995  
Elsewhere in BC: 1-800-668-3637

**PAYMENT SERVICES**

Box 5599  
Victoria, BC V8R 6T7

**ENROLLMENT OFFICE**

Box 5100  
Victoria, BC V8R 6N3  
Phone: (250) 220-4040  
Fax: (250) 220-4053  
Toll-free: 1-800-663-3455

**DIRECTOR OF MAINTENANCE**

**ENFORCEMENT**

**MINISTRY OF ATTORNEY GENERAL**

203 – 865 Hornby Street  
Vancouver, BC V6Z 2G3  
Phone: (604) 660-2528  
Fax: (604) 660-372

## Other Financial Assistance

### Custody and Adoption Rights

If you are considering adopting your grandchild/relative's child, you may qualify for **Post Adoption Assistance (PAA) Program**. The PAA program has three key components:

- 1) Designation - defines the needs and circumstance of the children to be placed and assesses potential service needs;



- 2) Eligibility, - examines the circumstance of the adoptive family, and
  - 3) Assistance - provides financial assistance and access to support services.
- Ministry for Children and Families: Adoption Branch  
[www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/adoption](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/adoption) will provide more details.

Adoption and Transfer of Custody look very similar in many respects and both require that a child is in the permanent or continuing care of the Ministry, however, they are two separate legal processes that have significant differences. Policy and procedures regarding out of care placements are found in the reference guide "Custody to a Person other than a Parent Under the Director's Supervision" at [http://icw.mcf.gov.bc.ca/manuals/cfd\\_policy/refguide-custody.pdf](http://icw.mcf.gov.bc.ca/manuals/cfd_policy/refguide-custody.pdf) for those of you who like to read a LOT!

## **Grandparents' Rights**

### **The Difference Between Custody and Adoption Rights and Social Benefits**

The following information has been provided to us by **Legal Services Society of Victoria**. Generally speaking, a Custody Order gives the grandparents custody and guardianship, but does not extinguish or end the parental connection of either natural parent

Adoption, on the other hand, replaces the parental rights that are existing with new parental rights, those of the adoptive parents, so a grandparent who adopts a grandchild becomes the parent for legal purposes. The natural parents are no longer legally the parents.

Now, quite commonly, plans can be done to meet the needs of the grandparent and the child using either legal avenue. For example, if the concern was that a grandparent's estate be left to a grandchild, that can be accomplished by a Will, whether or not there is custody or adoption.

Likewise, if there is a wish for the natural parents to have continued contact through access arrangements, that can be done even after adoption. The natural parents sometimes have access rights included in the Adoption Order, for example, where there is an older child and everyone agrees an Access Order is best for the child. Those adoptions are called open adoptions.

Vested property rights of a child continue after adoption - see S.37(6) *Adoption Act*.

An important consideration is how various social benefits are changed by adoption or custody. It is impossible to fully set out different benefits, but the follow table gives an idea. If a benefit is important to your plans, check the impact of the legal status with the agency. Even then, it is common to get different answers at different times. It is a good idea to confirm entitlement in writing, where possible, with the administrator of the social benefit.

SOCIAL BENEFIT	GRANDPARENT ADOPTION	GRANDPARENT CUSTODY ORDER	GRANDPARENT PLACEMENT BY THE MINISTRY (Foster Care)
Child in the Home of Relative - Benefits	No	Usually	No
CPP Child Benefits (based on disability of the natural parent)	No	Yes	No. Benefits go to the Public Trustee to be held for the child.
Benefits under the <i>Income Tax Act</i> which included Married Equivalent Deduction	Yes	Yes	No
Disability Child Tax Benefit and Child Tax Benefit and B.C. Child Tax Credit	Yes	Yes	No
<i>Employment Insurance Act</i> Benefits Section 16 (dependents) Adoption	Yes	No	No
Child Care Subsidy (Daycare), for low income earners or if approved by the	Yes	Yes	Yes

Ministry			
Regular Social Assistance Benefits	Yes, the child is a dependant under that legislation.	Yes, if not receiving the Child in the Home of Relative Benefits.	No, but placement does not end grandparent entitlement for benefits.
Status under the <i>Indian Act</i>	Survives adoption	Continues	Continues
Band Membership/Treaty Rights	Depends upon the Band by-laws	Should continue	Should continue
Power to appoint a new Guardian under a Will, pursuant to S.50 of the <i>Infants Act</i>	Yes	No	No
Foster Parent Payments and Benefits	No, generally, but some exceptions.	No	Yes
Maintenance (child support) from the parents of the children	No	Yes (but is deducted from Child in the home of a Relative Benefits).	No (Maintenance rights are with the Ministry).

This table is meant for general information purposes and is no substitute for legal advice about social benefits in a particular situation. Rules change and there are exceptions, so please check where applicable.

Status under the *Indian Act* is different from Band Membership - they are two different ideas. Band Membership depends upon the Band by-laws and rules of the particular Band that a person might be a member of, and status under the Indian Act depends upon rules set out generally across Canada. Additionally, to make matters complex, there are Treaty rights that vary from location to location, and depend upon Band membership or membership in a particular community. Treaty rights of a child can depend upon which Band the child is a member of and is not simply a matter of Status under the Indian Act. The best source of information about what is going to happen to these rights is to contact the Band that the child is a member of to see if their

membership rules are in place. Any time there is adoption of a First Nations child, there has to be discussions with First Nations communities.

## **Legal Tools When There is No Child Protection Involvement**

### **Delegation of Parental Authority**

It is quite common, and on a day-to-day basis, parents delegate their authority to somebody else who is looking after their children. For example: a babysitter would be a delegated authority of a parent. Sometimes this delegation of authority is done in writing. For example: for an extended school field trip when the parent signs a release and a consent and authorizes the teacher to make decisions about the child's emergency needs while away on the trip.

Consent arrangements can be done for some period of time with grandparents, or other non-parents, looking after children.

Generally speaking, the parental/child relationship is not changed legally by these delegations, and the person who is looking after the child has no legal authority that has not been given from the parents and can be taken back by the parents at any time.

### **Written Agreements**

Parents can more formally arrange to transfer custody rights to a grandparent through a written agreement. There are many different ways agreements can be written. Some of them provide for joint custody and joint guardianship, with the child's primary residence being with a grandparent. Others may provide for a different kind of sharing of authorities. For example: custody to the grandparent, joint guardianship with the parents.

Agreements can also spell out access arrangements and ground rules.

The written agreement can be filed in Court and have the strength of a Court Order in some circumstances as it relates to custody and access powers. (Under Section 121 or 122 of the Family Relations Act).

### **Appointment of Guardianship Under a Will**

Sometimes parents appoint a grandparent to be a guardian of a child through their Will. Section 50 of the Infants Act expressly provides that the parent who has custody can make such an appointment. The appointment takes effect upon the death of the parent.

## **Consent Custody Orders**

Just as parents and grandparents can formalize changes in custody and guardianship by way of a written agreement, they can also do it by way of a Consent Court Order.

There are several different ways a Consent Court Order can be done and there are two levels of Court in British Columbia that, at this time, can make Consent Custody Orders: Provincial Court and Supreme Court.

Sometimes Custody Orders can be done by way of a Desk Order - that is where papers are prepared and signed by all the parties, and documents go to a Judge's desk for the Judge to review. Many Orders are obtained this way at both levels of Court.

Sometimes Consent Orders are spoken to in Court where one or all of the parties show up in front of a Judge and agree in front of that Judge to the terms of the Order. This is quite common in Provincial Court and can also be done with the assistance of Family Duty Counsel.

## **Unopposed Custody Order**

Sometimes Custody Orders are made without the consent of all the parties, for example, where the parents don't fight in Court against the Order. Sometimes the parents cannot be located. Other times, where parents have been located, they may choose not to show up in Court. Custody Orders are made in their absence. The procedure for getting this kind of an Order is very similar to the steps or procedure that would take place if a person were having a Court Custody Order after the hearing. This kind of Order, by default, is a little more difficult than one that is obtained by agreement, but is also quite common.

## **Custody Order After Litigation**

It is clear Courts can make Custody Orders and Guardianship Orders after a Court hearing or trial. Often people have Orders done on a temporary or interim basis until the full trial of the matter. After a full trial, a Final Order is made (of course, Final Orders in family law are always subject to applications to change them, if there is a significant change in circumstance).

## Adoption

Grandparents can legally adopt their grandchild. That would usually require the consent of the natural parents but there are exceptions which allow for the consent to be dispensed with. Most adoptions are not contested.

Many adoptions are done without the natural parents maintaining contact with the adopted child. There has been a trend to allow more open adoptions. Open adoptions that allow for on-going contact with one or more of the parents after adoption, are sometimes in the best interest of the child.

## Combinations

It is possible to have rights distributed in a way that some are governed by agreements, some by understanding, some by Consent Orders and some by judicial decisions and Orders. It is possible to mix and match parts of residence and contact rights of children. For example: access might be covered in a written agreement, but custody might have been dealt with in a Court Order by a Judge.

Just as there can be different kinds of legal paper work, there can be sharing of legal authority and responsibilities, for instance in a joint guardianship arrangement. There are many different ways to arrange legal relationships with children so that it best suits a particular taste or circumstance and the needs of the involved child.

## Canada Pension Plan (CPP)

Ensure you are getting the benefits you deserve! Get information about CPP Survivor Benefits, CPP Disability Benefits and Old Age Security. Website:

<http://www.sdc.gc.ca/en/isp/cpp/cpptoc.shtml>

CPP Survivor Benefits are based on the death of a natural parent.

CPP Disability Benefits are based on disability of a natural parent.

Briefly, you may be eligible for this type of benefit if:

- You are raising a child of a parent who is eligible for CPP Disability Benefits, or
- You are raising a child of a parent who has passed away and earned enough credits to be eligible for the Canada Pension Plan.

You need to check with the CPP office to determine if you are eligible for either of these benefits. There are time limits to apply for these benefits, it is best to look into these benefits as soon as possible. Contact Information: Phone: (250) 220-3200 Fax: (250) 363-0553 Email: [bcytprograminquiry@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca](mailto:bcytprograminquiry@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca)

Hours of Service: Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm

Service Area: Colwood, Esquimalt, Galiano Island, Highlands, Jordan River, Langford, Mayne Island, Metchosin, Oak Bay, Pender Island, Port Renfrew, Saanich, Salt Spring Island, Saturna Island, Sidney, Sooke, Victoria, and View Royal.

## Ministry of Income and Employment Assistance

There are benefits available under the *Income and Employment Assistance Act*. Generally, if a child fits under the legislation and you are someone raising a minor family member, you may be entitled to Child in the Home of a Relative benefit. Find out more by contacting the **Ministry of Income and Employment Assistance**. Website:

[http://www.gov.bc.ca/bvprd/bc/channel.do?action=ministry&channelID=-8388&navId=NAV\\_ID\\_province](http://www.gov.bc.ca/bvprd/bc/channel.do?action=ministry&channelID=-8388&navId=NAV_ID_province)

Offices to contact:

**Vancouver Island Regional Office, Victoria**

Telephone: 250 387-9606, Facsimile: 250 387-9566

E-mail: [OFF100@gov.bc.ca](mailto:OFF100@gov.bc.ca)

**Child Care Subsidy Centre - Vancouver Island South**

Victoria, Telephone: 250 387-5400

Toll free: 1 866 387-5722 Facsimile: 250 387-5722

E-mail: [OFF102@gov.bc.ca](mailto:OFF102@gov.bc.ca)

**Single Parent Employment and Assistance and Family Maintenance Centre**

Victoria Telephone: 250 387-5338 Toll Free: 1 866 952-4718

E-mail: [OFF103@gov.bc.ca](mailto:OFF103@gov.bc.ca)

## Employment Insurance (EI) Canada

Under the *Employment Insurance Act*, if you are collecting Employment Insurance Benefits you may be eligible for more benefits because of the number of dependents in your care. Please contact your local Employment Insurance office. If you are adopting, sometimes EI is available if you want to take time off work.

Website: [http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/gateways/nav/top\\_nav/program/ei.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/gateways/nav/top_nav/program/ei.shtml)

**Contact Information:**

In Victoria Phone: (250) 220-3200 Fax: (250) 363-0553

Email: [bcytprograminquiry@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca](mailto:bcytprograminquiry@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca)

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**Revenue Canada**

The Province or Territory may tax benefits such as Child Tax Benefit, BC Basic Family Bonus, BC Earned Income Benefit, and Disability Tax Benefit. Find out more by contacting Revenue Canada. Website: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/menu-e.html>

Office Contact: Victoria, Fax: (250) 363-8188, Income Tax Enquiries: 1-800-959-8281  
Canada Child Tax Benefit: 1-800-387-1193 GST JST Credit: 1-800-959-1953

**Orders Sometimes Called Restraining Orders**

LAW	DURATION	AT WHOSE REQUEST
<b>Criminal Code:</b>		
Bail Conditions	Until conclusion of Court case (i.e. acquittal or sentencing or stay)	Police/Crown, but victim input
Probation Order Conditions	As long as Probation Order – 3 years maximum after jail (2 years less 1 day)	Police/Crown, but victim input
Conditional Sentence	As long as conditional sentence	Police/Crown, but victim input
Peace Bond	6 to 12 months	Victim to Police and Crown

**Youth Criminal Justice Act:**

Note: as of April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003, some Peace Bond provisions are available under Sec. 14(2) and Sec. 20(2). Generally, there are parallel provisions in the *Youth Criminal*



*Justice Act*, but it is much more complex and, at sentencing, it seems like just about anybody can put forward proposals for conditions.

<b>Family Relations Act:</b>		
Section 37	Term of Order (until changed)	Client
Section 38	Term of Order (subject to continuing custody)	Client
Section 126 (non-entry)	Term of Order (until changed)	Client

<b>Inherent Jurisdiction of the Court:</b>		
Injunctions (only in Supreme Court)	Term of Order	Client

<b>Family Maintenance Enforcement Legislation:</b>		
Section 46	Term of Maintenance Order	Creditor or Director of Maintenance Enforcement

<b>Child Protection Legislation:</b>		
Section 98 (child in care)	While child in care	Director
Section 28	6 months and 6 months extension	Director

The above information has been provided for this Resource Booklet by Legal Services Society of BC, Victoria Office.

### **Special Needs Adoption Support**

Society of Special Needs Adoptive Parents (SNAP)  
1150—409 Granville Street, Vancouver, BC V6C 1T2  
Ph 604-687-3114; Fax 604-687-3364  
E-mail [snap@snap.bc.ca](mailto:snap@snap.bc.ca); Website [www.snap.bc.ca](http://www.snap.bc.ca)

## Special Needs Children

To be considered a child with "special needs" each of the three following statements must be true.

1. One or more of the following factors or conditions must exist:

- The child is of an minority ethnic background; or
- The child is six years of age or older at the time of application for adoption support; or
- The child is a member of a sibling group of three or more or of a sibling group in which one or more siblings meet the definition of special needs; or
- The child is diagnosed with a physical, mental, developmental, cognitive or emotional disability; or
- The child is at risk for a diagnosis of a physical, mental, developmental, cognitive, or emotional disability due to prenatal exposure to toxins, a history of serious abuse or neglect, or genetic history.

2. The state has determined that the child cannot or should not be returned to parent's home; and

3. A reasonable but unsuccessful effort was made to place the child for adoption without adoption support. (Other unique conditions may exist in which a child would qualify. Almost every child in the state's Foster Care program qualifies for Adoption Support).

## Your Role As A Relative

Most children get the support they need to grow up secure, healthy and independent. But not always. Some children are abused or neglected. The harm they suffer can last a lifetime.

British Columbia's law that protects children from abuse and neglect is the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* [www.mfc.gov.bc.ca/child\\_familyservice\\_act/index.htm](http://www.mfc.gov.bc.ca/child_familyservice_act/index.htm). It is administered by the **Ministry for Children and Families**. Relatives also have a role in ensuring the safety and well-being of children. This site tells you how you can help, if there is a child protection concern in your family. It does not address issues around relatives' rights in cases of divorce or separation. For information about these issues, contact a lawyer or your local legal aid office.)

If you think a child - any child - is being abused or neglected you must tell the Ministry of Children and Family Development. That is the law. Phone your nearest ministry office (the number is listed in the blue pages of the phone book) and ask to speak to a child protection social worker.

Or call the **Helpline for Children**: Dial 310-1234 (no area code needed). Call a friend or a counselor for support, too.

## **Relevant BC Government Programs and Policies**

### **Child in the Home of a Relative (CIHR)**

The **Child in the Home of a Relative (CIHR) program** provides financial support to children who are placed in a relative's home by their parents when the parents are unable to assume full responsibility for supporting the child. It is provided through the **Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance**.

A child may be eligible for CIHR assistance only if all of the following apply:

- the child resides with his or her relative
- the child's parent placed the child with the relative
- the child's parent does not reside with the relative.

To apply for CIHR assistance, the relative who is caring for the child goes to his or her nearest **MEIA Employment and Assistance Centre** (Ministry offices are listed in the blue pages of the phone book or on the ministry Internet site at the following address: <http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/contacts/city.htm>). The relative will be asked to complete the **Application for Income Assistance for a Child in the Home of a Relative** on behalf of the child. As part of the application process, the relative must provide proof that the parent has consented to the child's placement with the relative. The relative can prove the parent has consented to the placement by obtaining the parent's signature on the application form or by providing the worker with a written statement authorizing the placement of the child in the relative's home, signed by the parent.

Once the relative has completed the application form and provided proof of parental consent, ministry staff will issue funds to the relative on the child's behalf. To receive ongoing assistance, the relative will be required to submit a Monthly Report form to the ministry informing the ministry of any changes in the child's circumstances.

CIHR rates are as follows:

Age Group	Maximum Monthly Rate
Birth to 5 years	\$257.46
6 to 9 years	\$271.59
10 to 11 years	\$314.31
12 to 13 years	\$357.82
14 to 17 years	\$402.70
18 years	\$454.32

Parents are expected to contribute to the cost of caring for the child whenever possible. The amount of the parent's contribution will be deducted from the CIHR assistance paid. In addition, the relative may apply for the Canada Child Tax Benefit through the Canada Revenue Agency which automatically generates entitlement to the BC Family Bonus and BC Earned Income Benefit. While these payments must be declared on the Monthly Report, they are exempt as income and do not affect CIHR payments.

The relative may also apply for the Canada Child Tax Benefit, which will automatically generate an application for the BC Basic Family Bonus and BC Earned Income Benefit <http://www.rev.gov.bc.ca/itb/fam/fam.htm>. Neither of these supplements will affect the Child in the Home of a Relative rate.

The relative will receive payment in the form of a monthly cheque. The relative is required to complete monthly reports on behalf of the child, noting any changes in the child's circumstances.

If there are child protection concerns, the situation will be referred immediately to the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

### **Support Services for Families** (Ministry of Children and Family Development)

The Ministry of Children and Family Development provides support services to strengthen the capacity of families to care for their children and youth.

When responding to requests for support services the Ministry provides information about available services and community networks, assistance in connecting with community-based support services, including volunteer-based services and mutual support groups, and, if necessary, referral to specialized services. Examples of specialized services include counselling, in-home support, respite care, and parenting programs.

Support services are accessed through local Ministry of Children and Family Development offices. To find your local MCFD office call Enquiry BC toll-free: 1-800 663-7867.

### **Kinship Care or Kith and Kin** (Ministry of Children and Family Development)

If a parent is unable to care for a child, the Ministry can enter into an agreement with a child's relative or other person known to the child, to provide financial and other direct support services that the person may need to look after the child. The Ministry may require the child's parent to contribute to these costs if the child's parent has the means to contribute.

The intent of the Kinship Care Program is to provide familiarity and stability to the child when the parent is temporarily unable to look after the child. The parent agrees to transfer care of the child to the child's relative and to work towards being able to care for the child again. The maximum timeframe for a Kinship Care agreement is between 12 and 24 months, depending on the age of the youngest child involved in the agreement. A criminal record check and assessment of whether the home would meet the child's basic needs must be completed.

If financial assistance is the only support required to look after the child, relatives would be referred to the Child in the Home of a Relative Program in the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

Kinship care agreements are accessed through local Ministry of Children and Family Development offices. To locate a local Ministry office call Enquiry BC toll-free: 1-800 663-7867 and ask to be transferred to the Ministry of Children and Family Development in Victoria at (250) 387-7027.

### **Children in the Care of MCFD** (Ministry of Children and Family Development)

If a child is in need of protection and brought into the care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Ministry must give priority to placing the child with relatives, unless it is not in the best interests of the child to be placed with relatives. (If appropriate the Ministry may also consider placing the child with relatives under a Kinship Care agreement rather than have the child come into foster care.)

The child may be placed in the home of a relative on a foster care basis in which case the Ministry provides financial assistance and support services for the care and

development of the child. When a child is in foster care with a relative, the Ministry retains legal custody of the child while the relative provides the day to day care of the child. There is no income testing for foster parents. A restricted foster home study is completed by the Ministry to ensure that the placement is safe and in the child's best interest. The restricted foster home study is conducted by the local Ministry office.

To locate a local Ministry office call Enquiry BC toll-free: 1-800 663-7867. Ask to be transferred to the Ministry of Children and Family Development in Victoria at (250) 387-7027.

### **Transfer of Guardianship** (Ministry of Children and Family Development)

If a child is permanently in the care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Ministry can transfer guardianship of that child to someone other than the child's parent. This would generally be someone related to, or known to, the child. The purpose of transferring guardianship is to provide the child with a sense of permanence where adoption may not be an option. For example, the child has an ongoing attachment to his/her birth family and does not want to be adopted, or adoption is inconsistent with the cultural practices of the child or guardians. In order to be eligible, the prospective guardian would need to consent to a background check and be able to meet the child's ongoing needs.

While the person(s) would become the child's legal guardian(s) under the Family Relations Act, the Ministry could continue to provide financial support and other services for the child. The provision of ongoing financial and support services for the child would be based on the needs of the child and a determination of whether a lack of financial support would be a barrier to transferring guardianship. The Public Guardian and Trustee of BC would be the guardian of the child's estate and must also consent to the transfer of guardianship.

Upon transfer of guardianship the guardian would be eligible to apply for the Canada Child Tax Benefit, which would automatically generate an application for the BC Basic Family Bonus and BC Earned Income Benefit

<http://www.rev.gov.bc.ca/itb/fam/fam.htm>.

The transfer of guardianship would be facilitated through the local Ministry of Children and Family Development Office. To locate a local Ministry office call Enquiry BC toll-free: 1-800 663-7867 and ask to be transferred to the Ministry of Children and Family Development in Victoria at (250) 387-7027.

## **Adoption** (Ministry of Children and Family Development)

Children in the permanent care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development may be eligible to be adopted. The Ministry has a post adoption program that provides for direct payment to the adopting families to purchase necessary services or equipment. It also provides access to support services provided or funded by the Ministry. In certain circumstances, maintenance payments may also be provided. Eligibility for post adoption services is based on the needs of the child and the adopting family. The post adoption assistance program is income tested and a formal review is completed to determine the child's needs when negotiating a post adoption services agreement.

The families of adopted children are also eligible to apply for the Canada Child Tax Benefit, which will automatically generate an application for the BC Basic Family Bonus and BC Earned Income Benefit <http://www.rev.gov.bc.ca/itb/fam/fam.htm>.

The local adoption contact can be found at <http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/adoption/adopt.htm>, or by calling 1-877-ADOPT-07 (1-877-236-7807)

## **Services for Children and Youth with Special Needs** (Community Living BC and Ministry of Children and Family Development)

Under a Memorandum of Understanding between Community Living B.C. and the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), Community Living B.C. provides independent planning support and family support services for children over age six with developmental disabilities (including children with Autism Spectrum Disorder) who require life-long support.

Community Living B.C. also provides independent planning support for families of children with identified developmental disabilities under age six. Most children with special needs under age six, however, will continue to receive services from MCFD.

The following services are available for children and youth with special needs. We have been told by many grandparents that these are difficult to access, but keep trying.

## Developmental Services

- Infant Development Program – provides home-based services to families with infants up to age three who are at risk of developmental delay or who have a developmental delay
- Aboriginal Infant Development Program
- Supported Child Development – helps fund the extra supports children with special needs require to participate in pre-school and child care settings
- Early Intervention Services – provides community pediatric speech/language pathology, occupational therapy, and physiotherapy services
- Early Intervention for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder – intervention and treatment programs for children under age six diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Includes programs delivered by agencies and through direct funding
- Extended Autism Intervention – direct funding for families of school aged children with autism spectrum disorder, to purchase autism intervention services for out-of-school hours
- Behavioural Support for Children with Autism – determines behavioural goals, develops plans and the systematic use of Applied Behavioural Analysis procedures. May also include services targeted to a child's specific needs and follow-up with families and caregivers
- Summer Program for the Deaf/Blind – provides intervener services to ensure deaf/blind students maintain skills gained through the school year
- School-Aged Therapy Services – provides some school-based occupational therapy and physical therapy services to school-aged children with special needs
- Community Brain Injury Program – plans, co-ordinates and funds short-term, acute rehabilitation services for children and youth with acquired brain injuries when no other funding is available and facilitates their re-entry to communities throughout B.C. as they leave acute care facilities

## Support Services

- The At Home Program – provides medical and/or respite benefits for families of children with severe disabilities and/or complex health needs and who are cared for at home
- Respite Services – offer families an interval of rest and relief from daily care of children with special needs. Services may include recruitment, training and/or monitoring of respite caregivers, matching families and caregivers, and the provision of respite services



- The Associate Family Program – secures community based, quality family living for children with multiple disabilities. The program matches associate care-giving families (who are trained, supported and paid to provide full or part-time care) with children with multiple disabilities and complex needs, whose natural families are unable to assume their ongoing care
- Nursing Support Services – a provincial program that supports children and youth (0-19 years) with special health care needs and their parents by providing comprehensive nursing services in their home, school and childcare settings. These services include assessment, planning, intervention, coordination and evaluation of care
- Children and Youth Care Worker Services – provides children and families with a specialized child care worker who assists the child to learn social, life skills and/or the family to learn parenting/child management skills
- Homemaker/Home Support Worker Program – provides household management or child care services for families of children with special needs or families requiring support to become/remain independent; basic care for children and families
- Parent Support for Families – provides a range of community-based services including parent support groups, parent skills training and counselling
- Professional Support Services for Children with Special Needs – specialized assessment and planning to assist families, service providers, and ministry staff to provide effective services for children with special needs
- Provincial Programs for the Deaf/Blind – provides a variety of direct and contracted services to children, youth and their families. Key programs include: Family & Community Development Services for Deaf, Deaf/Blind, and Hard of Hearing clients, and services for blind or visually impaired children and their families.

## **Information & Resources**

<b>THE RED BOOK – INFORMATION SERVICES</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free public information and referral service for the lower mainland but also includes some information about services in the rest of BC</li> <li>• Callers from outside the lower mainland can call collect</li> </ul>	<p>202-3102 Main Street Vancouver, BC V5T 3G7 Email: <a href="mailto:inform@communityinfo.bc.ca">inform@communityinfo.bc.ca</a> Website: <a href="http://www.communityinfo.bc.ca">www.communityinfo.bc.ca</a> Tel: (604)875-6381 Fax: (604)660-9415</p>

<b>THE OMBUDSMAN</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ombudsman receives inquiries and complaints about the practices of and services provided by public bodies, and may investigate to determine if the public body is being fair to the people it serves</li> </ul>	<p><b>Howard Kushner</b></p> <p>In person: 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 756 Fort St, Victoria, BC</p> <p>By mail: PO Box 9039 Stn Prov Gov Victoria, BC, V8W 9A5</p> <p>Tel: (250) 387-5855 (Victoria)</p> <p>Toll Free: 1-800-567-3247</p> <p>Fax: (250) 387-0198</p>
<b>MCFD After Hours Emergency Line</b>	<p><b>Vancouver: (604) 660-3194</b></p> <p><b>Rest of BC: 1-866-660-3194</b></p>
<p>Complaint Resolution Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you disagree with a decision made by a social worker or other service provider at the Ministry of Children and Family Development, or feel that you have been treated unfairly, contact the complaint resolution manager in your region</li> </ul>	<p>Enquiry BC can connect you with the complaint resolution manager in your region</p> <p>Victoria: (250) 387-6121</p> <p>Vancouver: (604) 660-2421</p> <p>Toll-free: 1-800-663-7867 or go to</p>
<b>ABORIGINAL ORGANIZATIONS AND SERVICES</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education</li> <li>Friendship Centres</li> <li>Health and Family Services</li> <li>Housing</li> <li>Legal Services</li> <li>Treatment Centres</li> <li>Women’s organizations</li> </ul>	<p>Refer to:</p> <p>A Guide to Aboriginal Organizations and Services in British Columbia</p> <p><a href="http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr/prgs/aboriginal_dir/down/aboriginal_guide.pdf">http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr/prgs/aboriginal_dir/down/aboriginal_guide.pdf</a></p> <p>Or contact: Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliations: (250) 356-8281</p> <p>Fax: (250) 356-2213</p>
<b>BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY LIVING</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocates for children, youth and</li> </ul>	300 – 30 East 6 <sup>th</sup> Avenue

adults with developmental disabilities and their families to ensure justice, rights and opportunities in all areas of their lives	Vancouver, BC V5T 4P4 Tel: (604) 875-1119 Fax: (604) 875-6744 E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@bcacl.org">info@bcacl.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.bcacl.org">www.bcacl.org</a>
<b>FAMILY SUPPORT INSTITUTE</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Province-wide organization with the purpose of supporting and strengthening families faced with the extraordinary circumstances that come with having a family member who has a disability</li></ul>	300- 30 East 6 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Vancouver, BC V5T 4P4 Tel: (604) 875-1119 Fax: (604) 875-6744 E-mail: <a href="mailto:fsi@bcacl.org">fsi@bcacl.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.familysupportbc.com">www.familysupportbc.com</a>

For those wanting to read about dispute resolution when you disagree with the Ministry, and to look at details about payments, policies, and mediation the following websites could be useful:

Unofficial Consolidation of the Child, Family and Community Service Act (current to January 16, 2006) [www.cfcsa.unofficial.consolidation.2006-01-16.pdf](http://www.cfcsa.unofficial.consolidation.2006-01-16.pdf)

Alternate Dispute Mechanisms: Family Conferencing and Mediation  
[www.g02.family.mediation.pdf](http://www.g02.family.mediation.pdf)

Dispute Resolution <http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/dro/child-protection/index.htm>

Agreements with a Child's Kin and Others: Policy and Procedures Concerning Sec 8 Agreements are found in this reference guide:  
[http://icw.mcf.gov.bc.ca/manuals/cdf\\_policy/refguide-kinagreement.pdf](http://icw.mcf.gov.bc.ca/manuals/cdf_policy/refguide-kinagreement.pdf)

Policy and Procedures regarding Other Out-of-care placements are found in the reference guide "Custody to a Person other than a Parent Under the Director's Supervision" [http://icw.mcf.gov.bc.ca/manuals/cfd\\_policy/refguide-custody.pdf](http://icw.mcf.gov.bc.ca/manuals/cfd_policy/refguide-custody.pdf)

[http://www.connectforkids.org/content1554/content\\_show.htm?attrib\\_id=323&doc\\_id=70727](http://www.connectforkids.org/content1554/content_show.htm?attrib_id=323&doc_id=70727)

[http://www.crv.gov.ab.ca/CRV.nsf/\(Printable\)/Foster+Care-Kinship+Care](http://www.crv.gov.ab.ca/CRV.nsf/(Printable)/Foster+Care-Kinship+Care)

## Government of British Columbia Ministry Responsibilities Related to Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Grandchildren

The following is part of a list that is maintained by the **Public Affairs Bureau** (PAB). Call Janine in PAB at 250-387-4578 for more information or to locate this document on the web go to [www.gov.bc.ca](http://www.gov.bc.ca). Click on "Contact Us" on top right side and scroll down to Key Contact List on the lower right side. This will list current minister and their phone and email contact info as well as deputies and others. They represent you! Call them with requests for services or information as grandparents and other relatives raising grandchildren.

Ministry of Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Treaty Negotiations 387-1866 or 387-6411 [www.gov.bc.ca/ag](http://www.gov.bc.ca/ag)

### General Responsibilities

- Criminal justice and family law
- Administrative law policy
- Pay equity policy
- Human rights
- Court administration, courthouse management and sheriff services
- Legal aid and public legal education
- Expropriation compensation
- Family maintenance
- Legal services to the government
- Treaty negotiations and interim measures

Ministry of Children and Family Development General Responsibilities - [www.gov.bc.ca/mcf](http://www.gov.bc.ca/mcf) or 387-9699 or 387-9722

- Adoption and reunion services
- Child protection and family development
- Community living services for adults
- Children's mental health and youth addiction services
- Youth correction

Ministry of Education General Responsibilities - [www.gov.bc.ca/bced](http://www.gov.bc.ca/bced) or 387-1977 or 387 - 3200

- K-12 school funding
- Independent schools
- K-12 education programs, curriculum development, special education
- Community-based learning
- English as a second language

Ministry of Community, Aboriginal, and Women's Services General Responsibilities  
[www.gov.bc.ca/mcaaws](http://www.gov.bc.ca/mcaaws) or 387-2283 or 356 - 8508

- Community Charter
- Local Government
- Building Policy
- Multicultural policy
- Immigration policy
- Aboriginal services
- Office of the Fire Commissioner
- Safety standards and inspections
- Transition houses
- Child care
- Housing policy
- Vancouver Urban Development Agreement
- University Endowment Lands
- Cultural programs
- Artistic and cultural development
- Heritage conservation
- Sports and recreation
- Library services
- BC Olympics

Ministry of Human Resources (Now called Ministry of Income and Employment Assistance) General Responsibilities [www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/bcea.htm](http://www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/bcea.htm) or 356-7750 or 356 – 7292 or 356-7750 or 356 -7292. Customer service: 1-866-866-0800

- Income assistance
- Disability Assistance
- Employment programs
- Supplementary Assistance

- Emergency Social Services

Ministry of Health Services General Responsibilities [www.gov.bc.ca/healthservices](http://www.gov.bc.ca/healthservices) or 953 -3547 or 356 - 9587

- Regional Health Authorities monitoring and compliance
- Hospitals and long term care
- Emergency care
- Community care, home care and home support services
- Adult mental health and addictions
- Health promotion and illness prevention
- Public health, family support, special needs
- Children's health
- Medical services Plan processing
- Pharmacare processing
- BC Ambulance Services
- Health protection
- Office of the Special Advisor for Women's and Seniors Health
- Vital Statistics
- Aboriginal Health
- Strategic planning
- Capital planning
- Accountability system
- Provincial Health Officer
- Regional Health Authority structure
- Health licensing governance
- Health information system

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, General Responsibilities  
[www.gov.bc.ca/pssg](http://www.gov.bc.ca/pssg) or 356-7717 or 356-8270

- Police and correctional services
- Commercial Vehicle Safety
- Cemetery and Funeral operations
- Debt collection operations
- Crime prevention programs
- Regulation of security industry
- Criminal record checks and protection order registry
- Liquor distribution
- Provincial emergency preparedness

- Victim assistance
- Consumer legislation and investigations
- Landlord-tenant dispute resolution
- Cemetery operations
- Film classification
- Liquor control and licensing
- Gaming policy and enforcement

## Insurance and Medical Coverage

*Betty was already worried about her own medical bills before taking on her grandchildren. After all, Medicare only covers so much. She knew she couldn't afford private insurance for her grandson living with her. A grandparent in a similar situation told her that medical coupons were often available to children. Betty was embarrassed at the thought of applying for assistance, but there wasn't anything else she could do the children needed medical care.*

## Eligibility and Enrollment

All residents of B.C. must enroll with MSP. Under the Medicare Protection Act, enrollment with MSP is mandatory for all eligible residents and their dependents

### Who is Eligible?

An individual must be a resident of B.C. in order to qualify for medical coverage under MSP. A resident is a person who meets all of the following conditions:

- must be a citizen of Canada or be lawfully admitted to Canada for permanent residence;
- must make his or her home in B.C.;
- must be physically present in B.C. at least 6 months in a calendar year; and
- dependents of MSP beneficiaries are eligible for coverage if they are residents of B.C.

Dependent - includes a spouse and children who are B.C. residents.

Spouse - means a resident who is either married to or is living and cohabiting in a marriage-like relationship with the applicant and may be of the same gender as the applicant. (Note: in the case of divorce, the former spouse is no longer eligible for coverage as a dependent and must apply for separate coverage.)

Child - means a resident who is the legal ward or child of the applicant, is supported by the applicant, is neither married nor living and cohabiting in a marriage-like relationship, and is either age 18 or younger or age 19 to 24 and attending school or university full-time.

## Income Tax Benefits

- You can claim the Eligible Dependant or Equivalent to Spouse Credit on your income tax return, worth about \$6,500, as long as no one else is claiming a deduction for the same child under the age of 19.
- If you are in paid employment, you may be able to claim child care expenses such as daycare, if no one else is.
- You may also be eligible for some financial aid at other government levels. For example, Ontario Works provides monthly support payments for children, plus benefits for prescriptions, dental and vision care, even back-to-school or winter clothing costs.

For details on your eligibility for tax deductions, contact the Canada Revenue Agency, [www.cra-arc.gc.ca](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca).

## Canada Pension Disability

If grandparent is in receipt of CPPD, they may be entitled to an allowance for “grandchild/ren” until the age of 18 + 1 month. Not Taxable. Then the child can receive the money in his/her name until age of 25 if still in school. Really worth checking out as you may be eligible!

If you require more information on CPP Disability dependant child application call 1-800-277-9914 [www.sdc.gc.ca](http://www.sdc.gc.ca)

## Housing Assistance

British Columbia, BC Housing helps more than 55,700 households, with low to moderate-incomes, live in subsidized housing. Another 13,000 households, currently on the waitlist, have applied for subsidized housing through The Housing Registry . [www.bchousing.org/providers/registry](http://www.bchousing.org/providers/registry). Under 10% of the total housing in B.C. is subsidized. This section of the website explains what subsidized housing is and how to apply for it. See their website for more information.



- What is subsidized housing?
- Eligibility criteria for subsidized housing
- How to apply for subsidized housing
- How to apply to Independent Living BC
- Programs available by referral
- Housing Listings (formerly called The Link)
- Information for seniors
- Information on Emergency Shelters
- Frequently asked questions
- Who to contact

If you have a question that is not answered here, please contact the Housing Services branch at 604-433-2218 or 1-800-257-7756.

## **The B.C. Lions Society**

The B.C. Lions Society are the Easter Seal People who support children with disabilities through B.C. The families of children with disabilities often face extremely high costs, not covered by other medical plans. Patient Care Grants cover some of the costs for therapeutic equipment and prosthetics as well as transportation and accommodation to Easter Seal House. Each year, the Lions Patient Care Grants Program provides financial assistance to approximately 100 families of children with special needs in BC, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. Wherever possible the assistance is provided discreetly so that families can focus on their most important task caring for the children. For more information log onto [www.info@sbc.ca](mailto:www.info@sbc.ca)

## **Dealing with Social Service Agencies - A Few Tips**

- Be patient. You may encounter long waits on the phone or in person. Many agencies do not have the staff to take your calls immediately. You may call programs that have automated answering systems or answering machines.
- Save time when applying for any type of benefits by calling first and getting a list of all the information and papers you'll need. Ask how long you may have to wait, so you can schedule your time.
- Call during low volume phone times. Agencies differ by the volume and type of calls they receive. It is often easier to get through to agency help lines during the early morning hours on Tuesday through Thursday. The busiest phone times appear to be during lunch hours (11:00 am-1:00 pm) and on Mondays and Fridays.

- Keep a log. Always write down the name, title, and phone number of the person, to whom you speak, and the name, address, and business hours of the agency. Record the time and date of your call or visit and important details of your conversation for future reference (see below).
- If you make an appointment with an agency, plan to arrive 15 minutes before your meeting to fill out any forms they might need. Once the appointment is over, ask what the next step in the process will be and how soon you can expect a decision.
- It's hard to get into some services. Keep trying or ask for another place to try for a similar service.
- Work cooperatively with your caseworker. If difficulties arise that you cannot settle with your caseworker, ask to speak with the worker's supervisor.
- If need be, file a grievance. Most agencies have a grievance (complaint) procedure for handling difficult situations.
- Navigating the system can be exhausting and time consuming. Take a break to recharge yourself or ask for help.

Each social service agency you deal with will likely have different requirements and processes, so you should expect to provide various kinds of information when you first apply. To make the process as smooth as possible, prepare a list of questions before you contact an organization. A sample list is shown below. Record the questions and the information you receive in a notebook so you can refer to it in the future.

A typical conversation might begin something like this:

“Hello, I would like some information about programs that can help me provide my grandchild who I am solely responsible for with some assistance with X.” (Replace the “X” with the types of assistance you need, such as help with meals, medical care, or transportation, etc.) “Can you please answer some questions for me?”

### **Sample Questions When Contacting a Social Service Agency**

- What types of services do you provide?
- How can I receive an application?
- If I cannot complete the application by myself, can someone at your agency help me?
- What documents will you need to verify my identity? (Driver’s License, Social Security Card, etc.)
- What documents will you need to verify my level of income? (Pay check stubs, pension forms, Social Security check stubs, etc.)

- If I don't have the proof I need to verify my identity or income, can I provide them to you later?
- If I don't have the documents, can someone at your agency help me get them?
- What documents will you need to verify my child's identity? (Birth certificate, Social Insurance Number, etc.)
- Once I have completed the application, will I need to schedule an appointment to meet with someone so they can review it?



## Section Six

### First Nation Community Resources

#### Aboriginal Head Start Association of British Columbia

Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) is an early intervention program for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children. The primary goal of the initiative is to demonstrate that locally controlled and designed early intervention strategies can provide Aboriginal children with a positive sense of themselves, a desire for life long learning, and opportunities to develop fully as successful people. Aboriginal Head Start directly involves parents and the community in the design and implementation of preschool projects. Projects include the promotion of cultures and languages, education, health, nutrition counseling and improved social supports

#### Office of the Provincial Advisor for Aboriginal Infant Development Programs

Suite 200 - 506 Fort Street,  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 1E6

Diana Elliott  
Provincial Advisor  
[advisor@aidp.bc.ca](mailto:advisor@aidp.bc.ca)  
Tel: 250-388-5593  
Fax: 250-388-5502

Shelly Littlechild  
Provincial Assistant  
[shelly@aidp.bc.ca](mailto:shelly@aidp.bc.ca)

Aboriginal Infant Development Consultants works together with families to support the growth and development of aboriginal children during their most important years of development, from birth to 3 years.

The first three years of life is the most important time during a baby's growth and brain development. A baby's brain is developed approximately 85% by the age of three and is dependant on the experiences they receive (Dr. Bruce Perry, Child Trauma Academy). Early experiences and bonding relationships received provides the foundation for a healthy development.

Aboriginal Infant Development Consultants want to ensure that infants will receive the support needed through their most crucial years of development.

The Office of the Provincial Advisor for AIDP was established in the fall of 2002 to provide leadership and support to Aboriginal Infant Development Programs, both on or off-reserve across BC. Some of the objectives of the Office are to:

- Provide leadership and support primarily to AID's as well as infant development consultants working with Aboriginal families;
- Increase the number and capacity of Aboriginal infant development programs in the province
- Develop and deliver tools and training to support culturally appropriate practice; and
- Develop provincial standards and guidelines for the practice of Aboriginal infant development.

The Office exists to support Aboriginal Infant Development programs and staff across BC. The Office also collaborates with the IDP Provincial Steering Committee, the ministry, and other community stakeholders to promote awareness about the developmental needs of infants and young children and their families.

## Aboriginal Child and Family Development

The Ministry of Children and Family Development is working with BC Aboriginal leaders and their communities to plan for the establishment of five Aboriginal regional authorities to deliver services for Aboriginal children & families. The first authority is expected to be established by 2007. Once created, the authorities will incrementally assume responsibility for the Aboriginal child and family services currently delivered by MCFD. The timing of the transfer of authority will be based on readiness

## **Ministry of Children and Family Development**

Aboriginal Child Protection and Aboriginal Relations Branch at  
[www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/about\\_us/aboriginal/index.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/about_us/aboriginal/index.htm)

The BC Aboriginal Child Care Society is a non-profit charitable society. We are a provincial organization serving Aboriginal early childhood programs throughout British Columbia. 604.913.9128 Fax: 604.913.9129 Website: [www.acc-society.bc.ca](http://www.acc-society.bc.ca)

## **Aboriginal Health Resources**

### **BC First Nations Health Handbook**

[http://www.bchealthguide.org/first\\_nations\\_healthguide.pdf](http://www.bchealthguide.org/first_nations_healthguide.pdf) (PDF 2.6Mg)

This companion document has been developed to make the BC Health Guide more user-friendly and culturally appropriate for First Nations.

### **Canadian Health Network** <http://www.canadian-health-network.ca/>

Are you looking for information about your health? In this section, you can find something useful for Aboriginal Peoples. If you are First Nations, Métis or Inuit, we can help. Start here to find out about: Diabetes facts and tips Good food ideas How to prevent drug use How to stay safe at home and work Tips to keep children safe. It also provides easy Internet access for Canadians looking for reliable, relevant, credible health information. A national, bilingual Internet-based health information service.

### **Canadian Institute of Child Health** <http://www.cich.ca/>

National Charitable Organization: Canadian child welfare lobbyist group that provides research and policy recommendations to government and health-care professionals. Includes health information and events listings.

### **Caring for Kids** <http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/>

Children's Health Information: Wide range of health information articles from pregnancy to teen health, made by the Canadian Pediatric Society. Also includes a doctor lookup as well as current health-related events and articles

## **Fetal Alcohol Syndrome - Community Action Guide**

[http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child\\_protection/fas/fas\\_index.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child_protection/fas/fas_index.htm)

This on-line guide provides clear, up-to-date information on FAS and other disabilities related to alcohol and other drug use during pregnancy; interventions that work for children, youth, and adults working with FAS; information that supports increased understanding of women's use of alcohol and other drugs; information on working with women to prevent FAS; and information on planning effective community-based initiatives to prevent FAS.

## **Fetal Alcohol Syndrome - FAS Bookshelf** <http://www.fasbookshelf.com>

An internet and mail order business committed to providing a wide range of resources, making searching for resources and information easier and less time consuming.

## **BC Council of Families** <http://www.bccf.bc.ca>

The BC Council of Families works to strengthen, encourage and support families through information, education, research and advocacy. They have an extensive catalogue of brochures, workbooks, and online information in the areas of family life, parenting, communication skills, relationships, conflict resolution, etc. Excellent materials for families and individuals to read or use together to strengthen their families. Their Resource Centre is host to more than 3,000 family-life education resources, including books, journals and audio/video tapes.

## **Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program**

[http://www.bccf.bc.ca/programs/np\\_about.html](http://www.bccf.bc.ca/programs/np_about.html)

Nobody's Perfect is a parenting education and support program for parents of children from birth to age 5. It helps parents develop the knowledge, skills and self-confidence that are so essential to child-raising, and encourages the development of support networks. The BC Council for Families provides training, support and resources to facilitators of Nobody's Perfect (funding to run programs may be available from Regional Health Boards/Societies and the Ministry for Children and Families).



## Aboriginal Directorate

### Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation

Telephone: Enquiry BC: Vancouver (604) 660-2421, Victoria (250) 387-6121, BC (other than Vancouver or Victoria): 1-800-663-7867

### Toll-Free Treaty Information Line

Telephone: 1-800-880-1022

E-mail: [Aboriginal.Directorate@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Aboriginal.Directorate@gov.bc.ca)

### B.C. Aboriginal Network on Disability Society

Toll free at 1-888-815-5511 or [www.bcands.bc.ca](http://www.bcands.bc.ca) has an inventory of resource materials, published March 2003, on fetal alcohol syndrome/fetal alcohol effects . In Victoria call 250-381-7303

### First Nations Research Site

*First Peoples Child and Family Review: A Journal on Innovation and Best Practices in Aboriginal Child Welfare Administration, Research, Policy and Practice.* This is an online journal, published jointly by the First Nations Research Site, Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare, and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada. This e-journal focuses primarily on First Nations and Aboriginal child welfare practices, policies, and research. <http://fncfcs.ca/pubs/vol1num1/toc.html>. For the Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare, [www.cecw-cepb.ca](http://www.cecw-cepb.ca)

*Sacred Lives, Canadian Aboriginal Children And Youth Speak Out About Sexual Exploitation,* published by Save the Children, [www.savethechildren.ca](http://www.savethechildren.ca), toll free 1-800-325-6873, full of resources and information for BC and Canada for First Nations and Aboriginal children and youth.

*Caring for First Nations Children Society;* Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director, in West Vancouver call 604-925-0461

## **Heywaynoqu, Healing Circle for Addictions**

In Vancouver call 604-847-1831

## **Central Interior Native Health Centre,**

Prince George, 250-564-3568

## **Vancouver Aboriginal Council,**

Michael Cook, 604-682-1943

## **Kinship Care: A Community Alternative To Foster Care**

By Jeannine Carriere-Laboucane published in the *Native Social Work Journal*, 1(1), 43 -53 provides a beautiful and full discussion on this family way. Jeannine Carriere-Laboucane can be contacted at the UVic School of Social Work, 721-6452, <http://socialwork.uvic.ca/faculty/indies/carriere.htm>.

## **HIPPY Canada**

HIPPY Canada is all about children starting school on an equal footing and ready to succeed. It is free. HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters) is offered in Victoria through Hulitan Social Services and at the Victoria Native Friendship Centre. Contact Monique Ney 250-384-9466 ext. 113 or email [mney@makola.bc.ca](mailto:mney@makola.bc.ca) Inner City Aboriginal Society, Family Helping Families located in Victoria. Phone 250-388-3824 or email [icas@shaw.ca](mailto:icas@shaw.ca). or <http://members.shaw.ca/icas> ICAS, established in January 2005 is to create a voice for the inner city Aboriginal citizens and to provide a network of support and advice among other activities.

## **First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council**

In Victoria at 250-652-5952, their website, [www.fphlcc.ca](http://www.fphlcc.ca), is resourceful, encouraging, supportive and an advocate to all language revitalization endeavors.

## **First Citizens Fund**

Also visit [www.mcaaws.gov.bc.ca/fcfund](http://www.mcaaws.gov.bc.ca/fcfund), **First Citizens Fund**, for information on Student Bursary Programs, Elders Transportation, and Friendship Centre Programs BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres in Victoria; [www.bcaafc.com](http://www.bcaafc.com) or call toll free 1-800-990-2432 or in Victoria call 250-388-5522

## **Legal Services Society**

Legal Services Society has many publications for First Nations people including Planning A Will For Residents on Reserve Lands. Contact them at <http://www.lss.bc.ca> or call The Law Line at 604-408-2172 or toll free at 1-866-577-2525 for information and referral provided on the phone.

## **Division of Vital Statistics**

Division of Vital Statistics (BC) for birth certificates, death certificates, and will searches call toll free 1-800-663-8328.

## **Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development**

Contact Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (INAC) for information about a custom adoption finding phone 819-953-9176 (Manager, Adoption Unit, Ottawa)

## **Human Resources Development Canada**

Contact Human Resources Development Canada for information about Old Age Security and the Canada Pension Plan call toll free 1-800-277-9914

## **Métis Community Services**

In Victoria call 250-480-006 for child services, cultural support, family counseling, family reunification and community outreach. Elsewhere on Vancouver Island call toll free 1-866-867-9050 .

The *Métis Messenger* is a quarterly publication of Métis Community Services well worth getting (\$8/yr) to learn of events, hear from other Métis, learn of MCS advocates are

doing for children and keep up with local activities. To subscribe call 250-480-0006 or check out [www.metis.ca](http://www.metis.ca).

### **NIL/TU,O Child and Family Services**

NIL/TU,O Child and Family Services provides prevention and support services, residential services, voluntary and special needs services for residents of TSAWOUT, TSARTLIP, PAUQUACHIN, SONGNEES, PACHEEDAHT, BEECHER BAY since 1997. Their mission is "to ensure the safety, protection, and well being of our children in today's society; working together to maintain the traditional values of the extended family. Phone 250-544-1400 or toll free 1-888-744-1422.

"Racism: Dealing with the Trauma", A Resource Guide to Community Services can be copied electronically at [www.unitedwaylowermainland.ca](http://www.unitedwaylowermainland.ca), or [www.amssa.org](http://www.amssa.org), or [www.urbancultures.ca](http://www.urbancultures.ca) is a good one.

### **Canadian Anti-racism Education and Research Society**

(CAERS) contact at 604-687-7350 or check out [www.antiracist.com](http://www.antiracist.com).

### **The Indigenous Students Community**

Says "Everything is connected to everything else"; to gather information contact [www.uvic.ca/indigenous](http://www.uvic.ca/indigenous).

### **First Nation Information Project: BC First Nations Directory**

This can be downloaded at [www.aboriginalcanada.com/firstnation/dirfnbc.htm](http://www.aboriginalcanada.com/firstnation/dirfnbc.htm) Listed by Tribal Council.

### **Aboriginal Parenting after Separation**

*Moving Forward For Your Child's Future, A Handbook for Aboriginal Parents, Families, and Communities* is a workbook publication of the Law Courts Education Society of BC and can be accessed by calling 604-660-9870 or [www.lawcoursed.ca](http://www.lawcoursed.ca). It is an excellent resource booklet for anyone raising grandchildren or children after separation with lots of activities and information such as "Tips for Children: How to survive your parent's

fight" , "Games some Parents Play", "Pitfalls to Watch for in informal negotiations" and lots of others!

Surrounded By Cedar Child and Family Services in Victoria call 250-383-2990 or [www.surroundedbycedar.com](http://www.surroundedbycedar.com) seeks First Nations Care homes for First Nations/Métis children in care and living in Urban Victoria. Surrounded by Cedar "works to ensure that First Nations/Métis children grow up connected to their families, communities, and culture so that they may form strong identities and a true sense of belonging. . Team member strive to provide services that are rooted in cultural values and beliefs." Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents, [www.fafp.ca](http://www.fafp.ca) or phone 1-866-291-7091 or in Vancouver call 604-291-7091; Providing a Collective Voice for Foster Parents of Aboriginal Children and promoting Aboriginal Fostering in British Columbia.



## Section Seven

### Legal and Custody Issues

*"What are my legal rights as a grandparent raising my grandchild?" "Can I adopt my niece?" "Can I keep my brother from seeing his son?" "Do I really need a lawyer?"*

These and many other questions may be running through your head. For many people, the legal issues are the most difficult of all the challenges relatives face. Legal and court systems are expensive, can often be difficult to understand, and take an emotional toll on everyone involved.

#### Legal Resources

##### Legal Guide for Kinship Caregivers

We could not do justice to the multitude of legal issues involving relatives as caregivers in a few pages. The guide: *The Child's Right to Love: Information for Grandparents, Relatives, and Others Close to the Child* was developed by the People's Law School and the Canadian Grandparents Rights Association and updated in July 2005. This resource can provide invaluable information. If you are a relative involved in a legal situation regarding raising a child, you can obtain a copy of this legal guide by contacting either organization. Call the People's Law School at 604-331-5400 or the Canadian Grandparents Rights Association at 604-585-8242 to request your copy. This booklet is also available for viewing and downloading from the People's Law School website: <http://www.publiclegaled.bc.ca>. This booklet and other helpful resources may also be available at your local Legal Aid Centre.

##### Legal Aid Centres

There are legal aid centres throughout the province of British Columbia. Legal aid is free legal help for people with low incomes and can include legal information, legal advice, and legal representation by a lawyer. Legal aid is provided by the Legal Services Society

(LSS). More information about Legal Aid Centres is available online at:

<http://www.lss.bc.ca>

Phone numbers for legal aid centres by city or region are listed below. If your hearing is impaired, you can call a province-wide toll-free number to be connected to a teletypewriter (TTY) machine at the Vancouver Regional Centre. Call 1-877-991-2299 and leave a message. A legal aid worker will call you back. If you cannot get to a legal aid office, phone the LSS Call Centre at (604) 408-2172 (Lower Mainland) or toll free at 1-866-577-2525 (outside the Lower Mainland). You must use a Touch-Tone phone. You will hear some recorded messages before a legal aid worker comes on line to take your application.

Abbotsford	(604) 852-2141
Campbell River	(250) 287-9521
Chilliwack	(604) 793-7243
Courtenay	(250) 897-1400
Cranbrook	(250) 426-4066
Dawson Creek	(250) 782-7366
Duncan	(250) 746-3930
Fort St. James	(250) 996-7700
Fort St. John	(250) 785-8089
Hazelton	(250) 842-5218 or toll free 1-877-842-5218
Kamloops Regional Centre	(250) 314-1900
Kelowna Regional Centre	(250) 763-8613
Nanaimo	(250) 753-4396
Nelson	1-877-426-4066
North Vancouver	(604) 980-7000
Penticton	(250) 493-7164
Port Alberni	(250) 724-5137
Prince George Regional Centre	(250) 564-9717
Prince Rupert	(250) 624-7701
Quesnel	(250) 992-8387
Richmond	(604) 273-9311
Salmon Arm	(250) 545-3666
Surrey Regional Centre	(604) 585-6595
Terrace Regional Centre	(250) 635-2133 or toll free 1-877-787-2511
Vancouver Regional Centre	(604) 601-6206
Vernon	(250) 545-3666
Victoria Regional Centre	(250) 388-4516
Williams Lake	(250) 398-7359



## Grandparents Raising Grandchildren – Working with a Lawyer

### Finding a Lawyer

Decisions you make about legal issues are very important, and a lawyer can help you understand your options and risks and how your choices will affect your family.

Look for a family law attorney who has experience in guardianship and adoption. Ask for recommendations from friends. If you are in a support group, they may have names of attorneys who regularly work with kinship care legal issues. It's important that you find someone you can talk to and who seems right for your situation. You will be working as a team.

Legal Aid Centres provide free legal information and may provide legal representation for those who are eligible based on financial need. This legal representation (referred to as duty counsel) can be provided at provincial courts, some Supreme Courts, and the Vancouver Citizenship and Immigration Canada enforcement office to help unrepresented people with their criminal and family court appearances or immigration matters.

Some of the services duty counsel provide include:

- brief advice about your legal rights and options;
- information about court procedures;
- potentially speaking in court for you on some matters;

By calling your local legal aid office (see section labelled Legal Aid for phone numbers) you can find out what services are available, or visit <http://www.lss.bc.ca> and click on “Legal advice services” for more information.

### What you can expect from a lawyer

A lawyer's job is to explain the law and your legal options to you, and act on your behalf.

- Lawyers do not make decisions for you — they review your situation and offer suggestions on what you can do. A lawyer should listen to what you say, and do what you decide you want to do. Remember that the lawyer is working for you.
- Sometimes it is hard to understand what a lawyer is saying. Do not hesitate to ask the lawyer to slow down and explain anything that has been said. Take notes while the lawyer is talking. If an advocate is available, take one with you to your meeting with the lawyer.
- Your lawyer can help with legal advice only. If you need emotional support, you may want to talk to a friend, an advocate, or a counselor.

### **Some things that you might want to ask your lawyer**

#### **What are my choices?**

After you have explained your problem, ask the lawyer to talk about your options. If you don't understand something, ask. Take the time to think things over.

- What do I need to support my case? Ask the lawyer about what evidence you need to support your case. For example, you may need to get receipts from a daycare centre or statements from witnesses.
- Can I get help with part of the work? You can ask a lawyer for help with a certain part of the case and how much that would cost. For example, you might want the lawyer to draft your affidavit, or review the other side's application or reply.
- What can I get help with? Ask your lawyer to explain the things you need to be helped with, and what steps are involved. It's also a good idea to ask your lawyer to make suggestions about what you can do to save time or money.
- How long will it take? Ask if there might be delays and how these can be avoided or reduced.
- How much will it cost? Ask the lawyer how much your bill will be and if there will be any additional costs. Tell your lawyer you want to be kept informed about costs as the case progresses.
- When do I have to pay? You are entitled to receive a detailed bill before you pay. Some lawyers will agree to wait until your case ends before getting payment from you. Remember: how and when you pay can be negotiated.

If you have a problem with your bill or your lawyer, you should first try to work things out with the lawyer. You are entitled to have your bill reviewed if you are not happy with it. Contact the Law Society of British Columbia for advice about any problems you are having with your lawyer.

## Organizing your information

Note: A lawyer will need information about you and your situation in order to give you legal advice.

If you have arranged to meet with a lawyer, you need to:

- take all court documents you have relating to your case, such as your separation agreement, any court order that exists, or any new application;
- take a list of questions, extra paper, and a pen so that you can write down the answers to the questions that you have; and
- have some idea of what you want to have happen.

As a general rule, take all the documents you think may help. A lawyer will need to know about your situation in order to advise you about your options. In addition to the above list, here are some other things you could have ready for your first interview:

- identification with your full name and address (tell the lawyer if you do not want this information given to anyone else)
- full names and birth dates of all your children
- medical problems you or your grandchildren have
- the full name and current address of your child(ren), if you know it
- all court orders you already have
- information about your income and everything you know about your child's income
- a list of incidents in the relationship that explain any need for a protection or custody order (for example, specific dates, times, and places of physical or mental abuse).

## Thinking about how to tell the lawyer about your problem

It is best that you have a good idea or even write down your story before you see your lawyer. Since the meeting can feel like a very short time, you need to tell your story in a way that is clear and concise. You should try to talk only about the facts relevant to why you are seeing the lawyer today. For example, if you have been to court several times and other orders have been made but what you really want to speak to the lawyer about today is something outside of those orders you should tell the lawyer or show the

lawyer what orders are in place, but be clear that the matter you are there to discuss that day is....

Make sure that you tell the lawyer all the important facts. The lawyer is not there to judge you and can only give you advice based on the information you give him. If you choose to leave out important information the advice you receive may not be correct for your situation.

### **Other Legal Resources**

The Lawyer Referral Service is a program that connects you with the right lawyer. Lawyers who participate in the program offer an initial consultation of up to 30 minutes at a small fee of \$25 plus taxes. The Lawyer Referral Service is available by phone from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on weekdays. Call 604-687-3221 in the Lower Mainland or 1-800-663-1919 elsewhere in BC (this toll-free number works only in BC).

The Salvation Army British Columbia Pro Bono Lawyer Consultant Program provides volunteer lawyers for individuals who require legal assistance and are ineligible for legal aid. Specifically, individuals must:

1. be ineligible for legal aid
2. must meet the criteria of total household income
3. cannot have equity in a home, or other, of more than \$30 000
4. must have a legal problem

More information about the Pro Bono Program can be found online at:  
<http://www.probono.ca> or by calling (604) 694-6647.

Some university law programs provide legal assistance. The Law Centre is a service of the University of Victoria's Faculty of Law and provides advice, assistance and representation to clients who cannot afford a lawyer. Thousands of persons living in the Capital Regional District are served annually. More information about The Law Centre can be found here: <http://www.thelawcentre.ca/> or by calling: (250) 385-1221. The University of British Columbia offers The Law Students' Legal Advice Program which provides free legal advice and legal representation at clinics located throughout the Greater Vancouver Regional District. More information about LSLAP can be found online here: <http://www.lslap.bc.ca/> or by calling 604-822-5791.

## Free-of-Charge Legal Resources

The following legal resources are available free of charge.

**Dial-A-Law** is a library of scripts prepared by lawyers. It offers general information on a variety of topics on law in BC, but not legal advice. If you need further information, you should consult a lawyer. Dial-A-Law is a free service available by telephone and Internet. In order to use Dial-A-Law by phone, call 604-687-4680 in the Lower Mainland or elsewhere in BC, call 1-800-565-5297. To access Dial-A-Law by the internet, go to <http://www.dialalaw.org>.

**LawLINE** provides free legal information, referrals, or advice over the phone. Call (604) 408-2172 and press 7 in the Lower Mainland. Outside the Lower Mainland, call this toll free number 1-866-577-2525 and press 7. The LawLINE service is available 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday.

**LawLINK** provides online legal information and self-help resources here: <http://www.lawlink.bc.ca>. Free public access computers are available—call LawLINE at the numbers listed above for addresses.

**The Legal Services Society** also provides information about family law online here: <http://familylaw.lss.bc.ca/>

If you do not have a lawyer, family justice counsellors can give you information about the law and about the Family Court process. Family justice counsellors are government employees who work at Family Justice Centres, which are located across the province (sometimes in the local courthouse). These centres offer a range of services, including:

- information and referral,
- help filling out Family Court forms,
- mediation and conciliation services, and
- help planning a separation agreement.

Family justice counselors aren't lawyers and they don't act for you. They cannot help you with getting a divorce or other Supreme Court matters. They work with both spouses or parents to try to resolve the matter at hand.

Family justice counsellor services are free. To contact a family justice counsellor, see the list of Family Justice Centres on the Family Justice website (PDF) or call Enquiry BC at

(604) 660-2421 (from Vancouver),  
(250) 387-6121 (from Victoria), or  
1-800-663-7867 (from outside Vancouver and Victoria).

Ask for a transfer to a family justice counsellor near you. You will not need to pay for the call.

You can also visit the Ministry of Attorney General's Family Justice website (<http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/family-justice/index.htm>) for more information on family justice counselors and family law in general. Note that you may have to take an income test if you require services from a family justice counsellor that go beyond information and referral.

## Paternal Establishment

Emotional and financial support from both parents gives a child the foundation for a good life. The child you are caring for is entitled to financial support from his/her father when legal paternity has been established. Every child has a father, but not every father is a legal father. When the parents aren't married, the "father" may have limited rights and responsibilities. To become a legal father with all of the rights and responsibilities, the man must establish paternity. Below are some good reasons for establishing paternity:

- The child has a right to know and to be loved by both parents as well as all of his grandparents and grandrelatives.
- The child can get child support money when legal paternity is established.
- The child may need medical information and medical history from the father's family to have a better chance at a healthy life.
- Establishing paternity makes it possible for the child to claim pensions, Veteran's benefits, life insurance and inheritance rights.
- Although the child's father may not be able to pay child support currently, someday he may be able to provide support.

Paternity information can be added to a child's birth certificate using a court order (under Section 3(6)(d) of the Vital Statistics Act). Once the court order has been obtained, an application to add paternity information to a child's birth certificate is available from the Vital Statistics Agency or can be downloaded from the agency's

website: <http://www.vs.gov.bc.ca>. The following information must be provided on the application form:

- the full name, mailing address and home/work phone numbers of the applicant (either the father or mother of the child)
- the full name, sex, date and place of birth of the child
- the mother's maiden surname and given names as well as the mother's place of birth
- the father's full name, date and place of birth, age at the time of birth, personal health number (Care Card number) and whether the father is a BC resident. If the father has aboriginal status, the father's registration number must be included.
- If the child's surname is to be changed based on the court order, this name must be indicated on the form.

The application form, an original or certified copy of the court order and a processing fee must be submitted to the Vital Statistics Agency in order to have the child's birth certificate updated.

Establishing paternity or "parentage" in British Columbia can be a complicated process since there are a number of different factors the court may consider when determining who is the child's father. Forms with detailed instructions are available on the Family Justice website (<http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/family-justice/>) in order to provide assistance with this legal process. For example, if you are seeking child support from someone who is no longer residing in British Columbia you can apply for an interjurisdictional support order using two forms: Form C - Evidence of Parentage and Form D - Statements to Support a Declaration of Biological Parentage. If possible, seek the advice of a lawyer to help you with the process of establishing paternity.

## Negotiation and Mediation

Thinking about a court order makes many people imagine nasty courtroom battles and lots of yelling and blaming. While this is a common fear, in most cases the parents and the relative find a way to agree. It's always better to work out a plan that is in the best interest of the child, through:

- Negotiation - your lawyer can talk to the parents' lawyers, or you can all sit down together with the lawyers and work out a plan; or through

- Mediation - you and the parents sit down together with a person trained to help people, such as a family mediator or therapist, and work out an agreement to resolve the conflict.

### **Mediation: What is it?**

Mediation is a way to negotiate solutions to disputes. A trained mediator creates a safe place and helps with communication among the people involved. The mediator makes sure each person has a chance to be heard, shows respect for each one's feelings and values, and explores workable solutions to the disagreements. Both parties need to be willing to prepare and actively participate in the mediation. If the parties reach an agreement, the mediator will put that agreement in writing. The parties may then have their own attorneys review the agreement and put it in a legal form.

Mediation is voluntary. Both parties must agree to mediation and both must be satisfied for agreement to be reached. Mediation is also confidential. Information shared during the mediation cannot be used later in court or in an administrative hearing (exceptions are threats of violence and unreported abuse).

You can mediate at any time - before going to court, during a court case, or even after a court case is over. For example, you can mediate to clarify a final parenting plan. If no agreement is reached, you can still use the courts. If part of the disagreement is solved, you will have that much less to take to court.

Mediation is less costly than going to court - in terms of money, time, and emotions. To find a mediator you have the following options:

- Look in the Yellow Pages of your telephone book under "Mediators."
- Ask a Family Justice Counsellor if they can mediate.
- Ask a family lawyer for a referral.
- Contact the BC Mediation Roster Society at (250) 356-8147 or toll-free at 1-888-713-0433. More information about the society can be found here:  
<http://www.mediator-roster.bc.ca/>.

You can also contact Family Mediation Canada for a list of mediators in your area. FMC is an interdisciplinary association of lawyers, social workers, human services and health care professionals, working together, creating a better way to provide for co-operative conflict resolution relating to separation and divorce, adoption, child welfare, wills and estates, parent/teen counseling, organizations, etc. FMC was established in 1985 as a charitable, not-for-profit association under the Canada Corporations Act. FMC can be



reached by phone: 1-877-FMC-2005 / (519) 585-3118 or fax: (416) 849-0643 or email: [fmc@fmc.ca](mailto:fmc@fmc.ca). You can also search for local mediators online on the FMC website: <http://www.fmc.ca/>

There may be dispute resolution centres in your area that will provide resources to help resolve conflict. The British Columbia Arbitration & Mediation Institute also provides assistance with resolving conflict. The Institute is located in Vancouver and can be contacted by phone at (604) 736-6614, fax: (604) 736-9233, toll free: 1-877-332-2264 or email: [info@amibc.org](mailto:info@amibc.org). More information about the Institute is available here: <http://www.amibc.org>. The South Island Dispute Resolution Centre is a non-profit Canadian charity dedicated to raising community awareness of collaborative conflict analysis and management by providing intervention services and community education. The services provided include mediation and facilitation services to individuals, families, and businesses, as well as the community based programs. The Resolution Centre is located in Victoria, BC and can be reached at (250) 383-4412 or 1-888-383-4412 (in BC only) or by email at [office@disputeresolution.bc.ca](mailto:office@disputeresolution.bc.ca).

Pamphlets and videos about mediation and negotiation are often available at local legal aid offices. Ask for information for grandparents raising grandchildren. If they know there are 1000's and 1000's of us in BC they may decide to print some information related to our specific legal concerns!

## Obtaining Needed Papers and Documents

*Sam didn't have any records for his grandson. Kyle came to him with one suitcase, two pairs of jeans, three tee shirts, some underwear, and a pair of tennis shoes. How was he going to enroll him in school without a birth certificate, social insurance number, or immunization records?*

You are going to need certain documents and papers in order to apply for certain services.

### **Birth Certificates**

Birth certificates can be obtained by contacting the Vital Statistics Agency at 604-660-2937 in the Vancouver Area, (250) 952-2681 in the Victoria area, and toll free 1-800-663-8328 if you live elsewhere in BC. You can get more information about birth certificates and download an application form from the Vital Statistics Agency website at

<http://www.vs.gov.bc.ca>. The following information is required in order to complete the application:

- name of the child;
- child's date of birth;
- child's place of birth;
- father's full name and place of birth;
- mother's full name and place of birth;
- full name, mailing address, phone number and signature of person making the request.
- processing fee.

Only certain individuals are permitted to apply for birth certificates. The regulations regarding birth certificate application are detailed on the application form. If you do not meet the requirements, contact the Vital Statistics office for further assistance.

### **Social Insurance Numbers**

Parents and legal guardians can apply for Social Insurance Numbers for children under the age of 12 by completing an application form and providing the required identification documents. If you are a legal guardian, you must also provide proof of legal guardianship in order to apply for the card.

The SIN application form can be obtained from a local Social Development Canada office or by downloading it from the SDC website: <http://www.sdc.gc.ca>. Applicants are encouraged to apply in person at a local SDC office since the process is faster and easier.

For information on obtaining a SIN card by phone, call the Regional Call Centre for Employment Insurance and Social Insurance Numbers at 1 800 206-7218.

### **Medical Records**

If you haven't been a primary caregiver for your child since birth, your doctor may not have all the medical records. If the child's doctor doesn't have them, they can send a request to any previous physicians and request the child's records be sent to them so you have a more complete medical history on file. Likewise, immunization records can be forwarded to your doctor since this information is typically tracked by local health authorities.

If you are concerned that the medical files available incomplete, you can help your doctor “reconstruct” your child's medical history by making a list of all the illnesses and conditions you can verify that your child has had. Also list any information regarding the medical history of the birth parents, including any medical conditions, substance abuse, or mental health problems the mother may have experienced during pregnancy.

## Keeping Documentation

For a variety of reasons, it is advisable to keep records on issues related to the children in your care.

### What to Document

- Have the children's doctor and dentist make notes in the medical file, such as, “Child brought in by grandparent.”
- Keep a file with bills and receipts for medical expenses you pay.
- Ask the child's teacher to note in the education file such information as, “School conference attended by grandparent.”
- Keep a file with receipts for school clothes and educational expenses you incur.
- Document all lessons (piano, karate, ballet, etc.) for which you pay.
- Keep receipts for groceries, rent, and anything that contributes to the child's care.
- Keep a journal of the parents' involvement, or lack thereof, with the child.
- Record important events.
- You may wish to keep a journal on a tape recorder.

### Journaling Tips

- Use a bound journal rather than a loose-leaf notebook.
- Write the date of each entry.
- Note when parents visit and what happens during each visit.
- Log when parents telephone their children and comment on the children's reaction.
- Log phone calls by the parent to you. Does the parent ask about the child?
- Record the parent's behaviour when they visit or call.
- Note the parents' broken promises.
- Include photographs of family events and list who participates
- Write about the child's behaviour before, during, and after a parental visit.

- Document what the parent doesn't do; for example, when they don't remember a birthday or holiday.
- Attach receipts of everything you buy for the child.
- Write what you observe when a child comes back from a parental visit; i.e., any bruises, resumption of bed-wetting or thumb sucking, etc.
- Record what the child says about a visit with the parent.

# Section Eight

## Coping Strategies

One of the best ways you can help yourself and your child through tough times is to take care of yourself, both physically and mentally. Eat right, get plenty of rest and regular exercise, and see your doctor regularly. Talk to your doctor about any physical, mental, or emotional problems you are experiencing.

### Resources

The B.C. Ministry of Health's document entitled: Healthy Aging Through Healthy Living provides a blueprint that promotes, supports and enables healthy aging for B.C. seniors. Encouraging healthy lifestyles can prevent, minimize and even reverse frailty and poor health in older age resulting in a better quality life for seniors

If you, your spouse, or another family member is experiencing a health condition that requires long term care services, you can contact one or more of the following resources:

- **Aging and Seniors: Services for Seniors** is a guide to more than 120 programs and services provided by the Government of Canada. It covers everything from income support to housing, health and safety issues.  
[www.seniorsservingseniors.bc.ca](http://www.seniorsservingseniors.bc.ca), phone 250 -382 -4331
- The new **Services for People with Disabilities** guide includes information on more than 60 Government of Canada programs and services to people with disabilities. For a free copy call 1 800-O-CANADA (1-800-622-6232) or log on at [www.servicecanada.gc.ca](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca). EXPRESSION is a newsletter published four times a year by the national Advisory Council for Aging. The bulletin is available on the NACA website.
- **The Family Help Line in Canada** at 1-888-603-9100, toll-free phone service for parents and caregivers. The Family Help Line provides information and resources to help you.

- **Family Caregivers Network Society** connects families with information on caregiver resources and local services. The Caregivers Association of B.C. can be reached at (Toll Free) 1-800-833-1733.

## Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Grandchildren (GRG) Support Groups

*Rosemarie was nervous about going to her first support group meeting. Shy at first about speaking up in the group, she just sat and listened. Within the first five minutes she began to hear that others were in similar situations. Finally, she had found a place where people understood what she was going through.*

GRG caregivers commonly report that they feel alone in their struggles. They may lose touch with old friends who don't have the same caregiving responsibilities. They may no longer have the time and energy to stay active in their community. This sense of isolation can become overwhelming for some kinship caregivers, making it even more difficult to care properly for themselves and for the children they are raising.

A support group allows participants to share their personal experiences with others who are in similar situations and are experiencing the same types of issues. A support group can provide a productive way to accept and "work through" problems as a group and make the participants feel less alone in their struggles. In a sense, a support group can serve as a kind of "extended family" for kinship caregivers, sometimes leading to friendships that may outlast the group itself.

The number of support groups for relatives raising children is increasing. Parent Support Services of BC is working in many BC communities with other agencies to offer childcare so that both the relative and their child have a chance to socialize. For many, support groups offer relatives the only respite from their parenting duties.

### How Support Groups Can Help

- offers emotional support to caregivers who feel alone and isolated
- creates a network of caregivers who are in the same situation
- offers guidance, assistance, and feedback to relatives in their efforts to care for their child

- gives ideas on creative, positive solutions to difficult and challenging problems
- serves as a connection to resources and information
- offers a safe, understanding place to discuss the emotional ups and downs of raising a relative
- provides tools for advocacy on the issues one faces raising a relative's child

## **Parent Support Services of BC**

Offers GRG Support Circles, self-help groups for grandparents raising children 12 years and under, in some locations throughout BC. In Vancouver call 604-669-1616 or 1-800-665-6880 or email: [parent@radiant.net](mailto:parent@radiant.net), on Vancouver Island call toll free 1-800-377-0212, in Victoria call 382-8042, mid-island call 250-468-9658, in the Prince George area call toll-free 1-866-561-0607, and the Northwest Office including Terrace 635-3366. On the web: [www.parentsupportbc.ca](http://www.parentsupportbc.ca)

If you are interested in starting a grandparents and other relatives raising grandchildren (GRG) support group in your area contact the above numbers.

## **Parents Together**

Parents Together offer support groups in BC for parents raising youth over 12 and teenagers up to nineteen. They have not started to develop GRG support groups but have indicated a willingness to do so if there is an interest. Call them if you would like to start a GRG support group in your area. Dena Nicholby, Regional Coordinator, Parents Together Program, Boys and Girls Clubs of B.C. ph. 604-885-5110, fax. 604-885-5112

## **Respite Services**

Respite Services assists families with the arrangement of a respite caregiver who will help care for their family member with a developmentally disability. Respite is a vital part of the continuum of family services intended to support family stability and reduce stress. Whether it's a short break to get some much-needed rest or a planned vacation to get away for a few weeks, respite allows parents and primary caregivers a chance to relax and enjoy some time to themselves. The Respite Program caters to the many differences in family dynamics, cultures, and needs by offering optimum flexibility and the opportunity for families to fully participate tel:604-273-9778 fax: 604-273-9770 [info@develop.bc.ca](mailto:info@develop.bc.ca)

## **Cridge Respite Resource Service**

Cridge Respite Resource Service provides parents who have a child with a disability with free information about potential respite caregivers for their children. There is also a free service for respite caregivers to be listed on this database. Mimi Davis, Coordinator, Respitality Victoria email: [mdavis@cridge.org](mailto:mdavis@cridge.org) phone:995-6412.

## **Respitality Victoria**

Respitality Victoria, "The Heart of Hospitality" offers the parents of a child with a disability, a complimentary overnight stay at one of 13 luxurious hotels in Victoria.... a program that truly cares about families in Victoria. .

## **Community Respite Service for Families**

Unfortunately, at this time, there are very few, if any, respite services for grandparents and other grandrelatives raising grandchildren that are free and accessible for those grandparents and grandrelatives raising children without disabilities. We know this is a high priority for grandparents and are working to raise awareness about this need with the Ministry of Children and Family Development and other charitable organizations. In the interests of your health and that of your grandchild your voice needs to be heard about the need for respite care services, so do request this service when speaking to community service providers.

Community Respite Service for Families (CRSF), states that it is an in-home Respite Care Service offered by Vancouver Island Health Authority through the Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health and Victoria Integration Society. This service is offered in the Capital Regional District. The CRFS provides service for families raising children with physical, intellectual and/or developmental disabilities under the age of nineteen. Families pay a standard hourly fee to the Respite worker and the respite worker submits an invoice to the Victoria Integration Society for the subsidized portion of their fees. CRSF Coordinators can be reached at 721-6710.



## **Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary**

Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary has programs for families during school breaks and other times throughout the year. They are free or low cost and they welcome grandparents and other relatives and the grandchildren they are raising to join them for their family programs. There are guided bird walks, picnics on Christmas Hill, Junior Nature Explorers, and much more! [www.swanlake.bc.ca](http://www.swanlake.bc.ca) or phone 250-479-0211

## **Family Caregivers Network Society**

A family caregiver is anyone who provides care and support for an adult family member or friend who is chronically ill, frail, elderly or has a disability. Many family caregivers feel providing a better quality of life for their family member or friend is their most important responsibility in life. FCGN helps to provide respite in these circumstances. Address: 527 Michigan Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 1S2 Tel 250-350-0408 or log on to [www.fcns@telus.ca](http://www.fcns@telus.ca) if you are raising a grandchild and caring for an adult aging relative.

## **Coping With Challenging Emotions**

It's natural to feel sad and angry. You're watching a child you love struggle with loss and pain, and it hurts you to see it. Your life has changed drastically too, and you may miss having time for your own friends and interests. "I was always the hardworking one, with goals for my life," said one woman angrily, "while my sister was out partying. Now she's still living the high life, and I'm changing her kids' diapers."

You may also worry a lot. A grandfather, raising the children of his crack addicted daughter, spoke with sadness in his voice: "Sometimes at night, I hear a siren or a woman screaming. I wonder if it is my daughter in trouble out there. I try to do my best for the little ones, but I'm scared for them, too."

At times, you hurt so much it seems you just can't bear it. Yet even the most painful feelings fade with time. You can talk them out with others. You can pray or take quiet moments to relax. You may find comfort from a support group, counseling, or other services discussed in this book.

Much as they hurt, painful feelings won't break you. Try to be patient, and remember that the worst of the pain will pass with time. You may also start feeling better when you see progress. As the children do better in your care, you'll feel pride and relief.

## Stress Busters

Whatever you do, remember to take care of yourself! When new children enter a household, it's common for apprehension to mount. Stress-related health problems may start or get worse. You can help keep it from happening to you and stay strong for your family by taking care of yourself now.

- Make your health your first priority. See your doctor regularly and follow his/her advice.
- Create a regular "quiet hour" in your household, whether it's naptime for infants or stereo (with earphones) for teens.
- Take time to nurture yourself.
- Take the child places that are restful for you. A library, park, or public pool can be nice, as long as they're not too crowded.
- Practice patience. Let others in your family do as much for themselves as possible.
- Look for local activities where the children will be safe and you can enjoy time apart. Libraries, community centers, 4-H Clubs, YMCA, YWCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brothers and Sisters, Mentoring Programs, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, all may have programs, many of them free or low cost.
- Do something you enjoy. You deserve it!
- Since you probably have not had to "parent" for a while, you may find it useful to look into parenting classes to learn different methods for helping children develop self-esteem, confidence, accountability, and responsibility.
- Start a co-op with other parents or caregivers and trade watching each other's children for a couple of hours weekly.
- Keep a sense of humor.
- Join a support group. Look for one with free childcare.
- Lower your standards (for a clean house, for perfect manners).
- Talk with friends, family members, or a counselor.
- Consider your religious community and personal faith for strength and assistance. Contact your church, synagogue, or band for help its members may provide.
- Learn to say NO.
- Reward yourself.
- Sing as you do your work. Don't worry about the words or being on key ....just sing and enjoy yourself.
- Daydream about some of the great times you have had and will have.
- Take a break and enjoy that cup of tea, cocoa or coffee.
- Give yourself a pat on the back for all you have done.

## **Take a Minute for Yourself. Try a Relaxation Technique**

### **Guided Imagery**

Guided Imagery is a simple form of relaxation that can help you manage stress. Sit down and get comfortable – close your eyes and focus on breathing in and out. Once you are relaxed imagine yourself laying in deep grass and looking at the blue sky or imagine yourself floating in the warm waters of Hawaii. As you imagine this .....focus on your other senses.....how does it feel? What do you smell? What do you hear? Enjoy yourself .....your stresses are diminishing!

### **Meditation**

Meditation is another wonderful stress buster. Sit in a relaxed position and clear your mind. In your mind start chanting the word “one...one...one...one..” over and over until you are in a totally relaxed state. Your mind will clear and your creativity will increase and the stresses diminish.

### **Most Important...Know your Limits**

We all have times when we wish we could fix everything that's causing pain to those we love. You may wish you could provide the perfect loving home, which would make all the children's problems magically disappear. The truth is that you can't, and neither can anyone else. You can, however, help a lot by remembering:

- You can't keep a child in your family from feeling sad or acting angry. You can offer care and understanding, and help find counseling if needed.
- You can't erase a history of pain and abuse for a child. You can provide a safe, nurturing home for them to heal
- You can't make a child a better student overnight. You can help with homework, read together, limit television, and work with the child's school to discover other learning opportunities.
- You can't make the child's parents get better. You can suggest drug treatment or other services you think might help, and encourage them if they go.
- You can't do everything right, any more than any parent can. You can get services and support to help you do your best with all the challenges.
- You can't assume you will always be able to cope, and sometimes you may need professional help to remain healthy and supported. You can contact mental health professionals in your community if you feel you need extra support.

There's relief in realizing that you cannot, and you need not, do everything. You can take pride in doing your best in getting help when you need it.

# Appendices

## Community Services in British Columbia

The numbers listed below are for general information within the Victoria area and toll free numbers in BC.

ADOPTION	1-877-236-7807
ALCOHOL/DRUG INFO	1-800-663-1441
ALA-TEEN/ALA-NON /FAMILY	1-888-4AL-ANON
B.C. GOVERNMENT ENQUIRIES	250-387-6121 Toll Free 1-800-663-7867
B.C. HEALTH GUIDE	1-800-307-1212
B.C. ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE SOCIETY	604-913-9128
B.C. ABORIGINAL INFANT DEVELOPMENT	250-388-5593
B.C. ASSOC. OF FAMILY RESOURCE PROGRAMS	604-738-0068
B.C. BEREAVEMENT	1-877-779-2223
B.C. CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM	1-888-338-6622
B.C. CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCACY COALITION	604-875-3620
B.C. ELIMINATE ABUSE TO SENIORS	1-866-437-1940
B.C. FEDERATION OF FOSTER PARENTS	1-800-663-9999
B.C. FOSTER CARE EDUCATION PROGRAM	1-888-922-8437
B.C. HEALTH GUIDE NURSE LINE	1-866-215-4700
B.C. HOUSING	1-800-257-7756
B.C. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION	1-888-440-8844
B.C. SMILES /INFO ON MEDICATION/EDUCATION	1-800-668-6233
BUS PASS PROGRAM	1-800-855-0511
CANADA CHILD TAX BENEFIT PROGRAM	1-800-387-1193
CANADA PENSION PLAN	250-220-3200
CAREGIVERS ASSOCIATION OF B.C.	1-800-833-1733
CHILD PROJECT	604-822-5232
COMMUNITY OPTIONS FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES	1-604-875-0188
CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES	1-800-307-1212

CHILD SUBSIDY CENTRE	250-387-5400 Toll Free 1-866-387-5722
CHILD SUPORT SERVICES	1-888-227-7734
COOL AID DEN TAL CLINIC	250-383-5957
COUNSELLING CENTRE	250-598-0544
CRISIS CENTRE	1-866-661-3311
DENTAL CARE – CAMOSUN COLLEGE	250-370-3191
DIAL A LAW	1-800-565-5297
DIAL A DIETITION	1-800-667-3438
EMERGENCY	911
ENQUIRY B .C.	1-800-663-7867
FAMILY CAREGIVERS NETWORK SOCIETY	250-384-0408
FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION	415-252-8900
FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME	250-721-6798
GOV ERNMENT OF CANADA INFORMATION	1-800-622-6232
GUARDIANSHIP TRANSFER	1-800-663-7867
HELPLINE FOR CHILDREN	310-1234 Toll Free 1-800-667-4770
HIV/AIDS INFORMATION	1-888-499-4673
HEALTH BENEFITS AND SUBSIDIES	1-800-465-4911
HEALTH CARE REEGULATIONS	1-877-511-4111
HEALTH INFORMATION LINE	1-800-465-4911
KINSHIP CARE	1-800-663-7867
LAW LINE	1-866-577-2525
LAWYER REFERRAL SERVIC E	604-687-3221
LEARNING DISABILITIES/VANCOUVER ISLAND	250-370-9513
LEGAL AID CENTRES	1-866-577-2525
MEDICAL SERVICE PLAN	250-386-717 Toll Free 1-888-788-4357
MINISTER OF HEALTH INFO LINE	250-952-1742, Toll Free 1-800-465-4911

NEEDS CRISIS AND INFO LINE/VICTORIA	386-6323 or 655-4402
NUTRITION COUNSELING YM/YWCA, VICTORIA	250-386-7511
OMBUDSMAN	1-800-567-3247
PARENT TO PARENT SUPPORT PROGRAM	1-800-821-5927
PEDIATRICS AND FAMILY HIV/AIDS INFO	1-888-499-4673
PENSION PLAN (CANADA)	250-220-3200
PLANNED PARENTHOOD	1-800-739-7367
POISON CONTROL CENTRE	1-800-567-8911
PHARMACARE	1-800-387-4977
PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE PROGRAMS	1-800-663-7867
PUBLIC GUARDIAN	604-775-0202
RCMP MISSING CHILDREN REGISTRY	1-877-318-3576
RESOLUTION CENTRE	250-952-2681
SENIOR HOUSING INFO (SHIP)	604-520-6621
SENIORS HOTLINE	250-655-4402
SENIORS HOTLINE GULF ISLAND	1-800-655-4402
SENIORS HOTLINE SALTS SPRING	1-800-534-4604
SHIFTING GEARS SENIORS ON THE MOVE	1-250-889-4946
SENIORS SERVING SENIORS	250-382-4331
SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER	1-800-206-7218
WELCOME WAGON FOR GRANDPARENTS- VICTORIA	250-477-2220
VANCOUVER NUMBER FOR WELCOME WAGON	604-685-9010
VICTIM LINK	1-800-563-0808
VIHR HEALTH CARE ACCESS AND INFORMATION	1-888-533-2273
YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES	250-721-2669

## Acronyms

AHS	Aboriginal Head Start
ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

ADR	Alternate Dispute Resolution
AG	Attorney General
BCFB	British Columbia Family Bonus
BCBB	British Columbia Baby Bonus
CCTB	Canada Child Tax Benefit Program
CCO	Continuing Custody Order
CFS	Child and Family Services
CFCSA	Child, Family and Community Service Act
CHILD	Consortium for Health, Intervention, Learning and Development
CIHR	Child In the Home of a Relative
COA	Children of Alcoholics
CMCSS	Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards
CPPD	Canada Pension Payment Disability
CPP	Canadian Pension Plan
CPR	Cardiopulmonary resuscitation
CRA	Canada Revenue Agency
CRN	Community Response Network
CFCSA	Child, Family And Community Service Act
CMHA	Canadian Mortgage and Housing
DRO	Dispute Resolution Office
FAS	Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
FAW	financial assistance worker
FAE	Fetal Alcohol Effect
FCHA	Family Care Home Agreement (Contract)
FGC	Family Group Conferencing
FMC	Family Mediation Canada
FMED	Family Maintenance Enforcement Act
FRA	Family Relations Act
GFA	Guardian Financial Assistance (restricted to on-reserve families)
GIS	Guaranteed Income Supplement
IEP	Individual Education Plan
INAC	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
LD	Learning Disabilities



LSS	Legal Services Society
MCAWS	Ministry of Community Aboriginal and Women's Services
MCFD	Ministry of Child and Family Development
MHR	Ministry of Human Resources
MEIA	Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance
MSP	Medical Services Plan
NACI	National Advisory Committee on Immunization
NCBS	National Child Benefit Supplement
OAS	Old Age Security (federal plan)
PWD	Person with Disability
SIN	Social Insurance Number
TCO	Temporary Custody Order

## Glossary of Terms

### Section One: Legal Terms

**Restricted Foster Family:** designated as a foster home for only one specific child

**Family Home Care Agreement:** the contract which makes a relative a Restricted Foster Parent. Visitation of parents is usually governed by this agreement, and restricted foster parents are obligated to supervise parental visiting rights

**Open Family Service File:** MCFD has an open file on a child and family, a social worker is involved with the family in some way

**Specified Access:** Your court order or agreement states exactly when and for how long the children will be with their (other) parent

**Supervised Access:** The children can spend time with the parent who does not have custody only with another adult present

**Access:** Refers to the time the children spend with the parent/s with whom the children do not normally live

**Affidavit:** A written statement, sworn under oath or affirmed in front of a person allowed by law to witness affidavits (called a Commissioner), usually a lawyer, notary or court registry staff member. An affidavit is legally binding and can be used as evidence in court.

**Consent Order:** A court order made by a judge, usually without a court hearing, when both you and the other relative of the child (parent/s) agree to the terms of the order.

**Court Order:** Document containing directions given by a judge in court: the order tells the people named in it what they are to do about such issues as custody and access or child support. There are legal consequences for disobeying a court order.

**Custody:** Custody is used to describe who will live with the children and be responsible for providing daily care, after the parent/s are unable to do so.

**Sole custody:** The children live with one adult only who is responsible for providing their daily care them

**Joint or shared custody:** Can mean a number of different arrangements, including an arrangement where the child/ren live part of the time with the grandparents and part of the time with the parent, or with both of them at the same time.

**Custody and Access Assessment:** A report to the court by the Ministry to help the court determine what living situation will best meet the needs of your children/grandchildren

**Defendant:** The person who starts a family law proceeding in Supreme Court to settle custody, guardianship, access, support or division of property issues becomes the "Plaintiff". The person with whom the issues need to be settled (usually the Plaintiff's child or son/daughter-in-law in the case of grandparents getting custody) is the "Defendant". He or She must respond to the Plaintiff's proceeding. (In provincial court Plaintiff's are called "Applicants and Defendants are called "Respondents")

**Family Justice Counsellors:** Government employees who work out of Family Justice Centres across the province. Family Justice Counsellors are accredited family mediators, specially trained to help families, including grandparents raising grandchildren, with custody, guardianship, access, support and the division of property.

**Family Maintenance Enforcement Act:** BC law that covers procedures for enforcing spousal and child support orders, and outlines the powers and responsibilities of the Family Maintenance Enforcement Program to monitor, collect and enforce child support payments. Grandparents have the right to payments from the grandchild's parents if they have custody and are raising the child.

**Family Relations Act:** BC law that covers child custody, guardianship, access, spousal and child support, and the division of property.

**Guardianship:** When a family is living together, the parents share guardianship, which is the responsibility for making major decisions about such things as what kind of education, health care, or religious training the children will receive, and if they can leave the country or province, and how to manage anything the children may own, such as property or money. After separation or divorce, guardianship can be left in the hands of one parents, or become the responsibility of a grandparent through a legal process.

**Interim Order:** A short term court order granted prior to a trial or a final order. The order- which may be used to settle such things as custody, access or support - will remain in effect until the court makes a final decision or until you (the grandparents or other relative raising the child) and the parent/s of the child reach an agreement.

**Maintenance:** Financial support for the grandchildren being raised by grandparents or other relatives that must be paid under a court order or agreement. Also called support of family support.

**Master:** A Master hears cases in Supreme Court. A Master has the same powers as a judge to make interim-temporary-orders for custody, access, guardianship and support, but cannot make final orders.

**Payor:** The person paying maintenance

**Plaintiff:** The person who starts a family law proceeding in Supreme Court to settle custody, guardianship, access, support or division of property issues becomes the "Plaintiff". The person with whom the issues need to be settled (usually the Plaintiff's child/parent of the grandchild or in-law/parent of the grandchild) is the "Defendant" - he or she must respond to the Plaintiff's proceeding. You may need to testify against the defendant.

**Pre-Trial Conference:** A meeting before a Supreme Court judge or Master to make sure you and the parents of the grandchild you are raising are ready to present your case at

trial (In Provincial Court, this meeting is called a "Trial Preparation Conference" and will be before a Provincial Court Judge.)

**Protection Order:** An order (either a peace bond or a restraining order) made by a judge to protect one person from another. The order lists certain conditions the person named in it must follow - usually that he or she can have no direct or indirect contact with the other person. If the person disobeys the conditions, he or she may face significant consequences, including a fine and/or jail.

**Provincial Court:** The Provincial Court is divided into several divisions, each dealing with a different aspect of the law - such as small claims or traffic. The family division of the Provincial Court (often called Family Court) grants court orders for custody, guardianship, access, spousal and child support.

**Recipient:** The person receiving maintenance (support for the grandchild/ren)

**Statement of Claim:** The Statement of Claim goes with the Writ of Summons to start a family law proceeding in Supreme Court. In it, you (the Plaintiff) provide background information about who you are, your relationship to the Defendant and what you are asking the court to decide - for example, child custody, or support.

**Summary Trial:** In Supreme Court, a summary trial - also called a Rule 8A application - is a quicker alternative to a full trial, using written affidavits only instead of witnesses.

**Summons:** Court Order that requires a person to appear in court at a specific time.

**Support/family support:** Financial support for grandchildren that must be paid under a court order or agreement. Also called maintenance.

**Support order or agreement:** Specifies the amount one must pay to the other in child support cases. It may be a separate order or agreement, or may form part of a larger agreement.

**Supreme Court:** The Supreme Court handles both criminal and civil matters. On the civil (family law) side, the Supreme Court grants divorces and court orders for custody, guardianship, access, spousal and child support, and the division of property

**Writ of Summons:** The Writ of Summons is the first step in starting a family law proceeding in Supreme Court. It is the official notice the Plaintiff will give to the

Defendant, stating that you have started a family law proceeding in the Supreme Court. The writ also tells the Defendant what he or she needs to do next to reply to your action.

## **Section Two: from the Child and Family Development Service Standards**

**Aboriginal Child:** defined in the Child, Family and Community Service Act as a child:

- who is registered under the Indian Act (Canada)
- who has a biological parent who is registered under the Indian Act (Canada)
- who is a Nisga'a child
- who is 12 years of age or over, of Aboriginal ancestry, and considers himself or herself to be Aboriginal or
- who is under 12 years of age and has a biological parent who
- is of Aboriginal ancestry, and
- considers himself or herself to be Aboriginal.

**Aboriginal community:** for the purposes of the standards, "Aboriginal community" is defined more broadly than the definition under the CFCSA. A child's Aboriginal community is one to which the child has a connection through culture, heritage or descent. It includes the community or communities with which the child identifies.

**Assessment:** the process of collecting information on children and families in order to make informed decisions. Different supports, programs and services may be chosen depending on the outcome of the assessment.

**Care provider:** a person who cares for a child under one of the out-of-care living arrangements available under the CFCSA, including sections 8, 35(2)(d) and 41(1)(b).

**Caregiver:** a person with whom a child is placed by a director and who, by agreement with the director, has assumed responsibility for the child's day-to-day care.

**Child:** a person under 19 years of age; includes youth.

**Child with Capacity:** a child who is capable of understanding issues that affect him or her and who is able to give or refuse informed consent. An assessment of a child's capacity is based on the child's:

- age
- developmental level and maturity, and
- ability to understand the nature, complexity and effect of the decision or course of action.

**Discrimination against a child:** when a child experiences prejudice or is harmed on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, physical or developmental disability, culture, ethnicity, religion or race.

**Extended family:** includes relatives related by blood or marriage and includes second and third generations. Extended family also includes persons who have a significant and/or meaningful relationship to a child or adult but are not related by blood or marriage, such as "godparents" or persons to whom the child refers to as "aunt" or "uncle". Family or extended family in Aboriginal cultures includes relations and community people involved in "raising" a child and the people with whom the child was raised. It is a connection to the elders and the ancestors.

**Family Conference Plan of Care:** (as defined by the CFCSA) plans developed through a family conference that will protect the child from harm, serve the best interests of the child, take into account the wishes, needs and role of the child's family and the child's culture and community. Plans of care contain information required under CFCSA section 20 and 21.

**Family Development Response:** an approach to child protection reports when, according to an assessment, the risk of harm can be managed through the provision of intensive, time-limited support services. It includes a strengths-based assessment of the family's capacity to safely care for a child, and provision of support services, instead of a child protection investigation.

**Formal and Informal Kinship Care:** terms used in the Council on Accreditation (COA) Standards to refer to arrangements where a child is cared for by relatives.

**Formal Kinship Care:** living arrangements where children in care (by court order or agreement) are placed by a person delegated under the CFCSA with relatives approved as "caregivers" under the CFCSA, often grandparents.

**Informal Kinship Care:** all out-of-home living arrangements not included in formal kinship care. Informal kinship care arrangements may or may not include support from a person delegated under the CFCSA. These arrangements include:

- the "child in the home of a relative" program
- agreements with the child's kin and others ("Kith and Kin" program)
- court orders placing a child in the interim or temporary custody of a person other than the parent under the director's supervision.

**Parent:** defined in the CFCSA as: the mother of a child, the father of a child, a person to whom custody of a child has been granted by a court of competent jurisdiction or by an agreement, or a person with whom a child resides and who stands in place of the child's mother or father. The standards always refer to a child's parents in the singular ("a parent"). "A parent" is assumed to include all parents of a child.

**Plan of Care:** an action-based planning tool for children in care, used to identify specific developmental objectives based on continuous assessments of the child's evolving needs and the outcomes of previous decisions and actions. Care plans are completed by the child's worker with the involvement of the child, the family, the extended family and Aboriginal community if the child is Aboriginal, the caregiver, service providers and significant people in the child's life.

**Public Guardian and Trustee:** a public official appointed to carry out functions under the Public Guardian and Trustee Act and various other statutes, including the Infants Act. The Public Guardian and Trustee performs three broad categories of function:

- protecting the legal rights of people with mental disabilities
- administering the estates of people who have died, usually where the deceased left no will and has no family member in the province willing or able to administer the estate, and for missing persons, and
- protecting the rights and interests of children and youth

**Special Needs:** a child with special needs has documented significant impairment associated with an ongoing physical, cognitive, communicative and/or emotional/behavioural condition that requires specialized care and support. One criteria for making a special needs agreement (SNA) is that the child has special needs. (GRG note that there are often additional supports including educational and financial for children assessed with special needs)

**Youth:** a person who is sixteen years of age or over but under nineteen years of age.

**Youth Service Response:** a differential response to youth in need of assistance through CFCSA s. 12.1 and s.12.2 that involves screening, assessment, short-term planning and utilization of youth support services, such as youth-family mediation, mentorship, safe housing and outreach services.

An unofficial consolidation of the Child, Family and Community Service Act can be read at [www.cfcsa-unofficial-consolidation\\_2006-01-16.pdf](http://www.cfcsa-unofficial-consolidation_2006-01-16.pdf)

**Relevant Legislation:**

1. Child, Family and Community Services Act (CFCSA)
2. Family Relations Act (FRA)
3. Adoption Act
4. Employment and Assistance Act & Regulations
  - a. Child in the Home of a Relative
  - b. Income Assistance Rates
  - c. Healthy Kids Program (basic dental and vision care)

## National and International Connections for GRG

**Canadian Grandparents Rights Association**, A non-profit Society with a subsidiary group called Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Society can be reached at 604-585-8242, Nancy Wooldridge, President and founding Director, and Carol Kersberger at [cbkers@shaw.ca](mailto:cbkers@shaw.ca)

**Cangrands**, email [grandma@cangrands.com](mailto:grandma@cangrands.com) or tel 1-613-474-0035 website: [www.cangrands.com.grgtips.htm](http://www.cangrands.com.grgtips.htm). Good website to get connected to GRG all over Canada and elsewhere!

### Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust

Diane Vivian

P O Box 34 892

Birkenhead

North Shore City, New Zealand

Phone: 09 4806530 9am to 3pm

Fax: 09 4806572

Email [parenting2@xtra.co.nz](mailto:parenting2@xtra.co.nz)

[www.raisinggrandchildren.org.nz](http://www.raisinggrandchildren.org.nz) They are interested in hearing from Canadian grandparents raising grandchildren. Lots to share!

**Fifty Plus -CARP** (Canadian Association of Retired Persons); A Voice dealing with all levels of government to provide the 50+ population with opportunities to join forces against social/political/economic challenges and be informed about relevant issues. Phone 1-416-363-8748. [www.carp.ca](http://www.carp.ca); April 2006 issue was and Advocacy Report "CARP fights for grandparent's rights to access and compensation for raising grandchildren".

### From some grandparents:

[www.grandparenting.org/Grandparents/20Raising%20Grandchildren.htm](http://www.grandparenting.org/Grandparents/20Raising%20Grandchildren.htm)



[www.aginglink.org/p.asp?x=ssww1033AD](http://www.aginglink.org/p.asp?x=ssww1033AD)

[www.ahealthyadvantage.com/topic/gpkids](http://www.ahealthyadvantage.com/topic/gpkids) A Healthy Advantage Grandparents Raising Grandkids

[www.connectforkids.org](http://www.connectforkids.org) Relative Security: Kids in Kinship Care

## Resources

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# Notes



