

# INCLUSIVE FOSTER CARE RESOURCES

Working within an 'inclusive foster care' model helps to ensure that children are raised feeling safe, loved, and connected. It is about forming relationships with positive role models in the child's life, such as biological parents, relatives, youth workers, teachers, or coaches.



It is an intentional relationship requiring **co-operation** to resolve differences and to work in true partnership. The focus is the best interests of the children and the goal is **preserving the children's preexisting positive relationships**. When appropriate, it is important for biological family members and foster parents teach each other and support each other to care for the children.

## **Mental Health Liaison:**

228 South Third Avenue, Williams Lake, BC  
Phone: 250-267-3119

## **Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents**

<http://www.fafp.ca/>

## **Ministry of Child and Family Development Foster Family Handbook**

<http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/foster/pdf/handbook.pdf>

## **About the Cariboo Friendship Society:**

The Cariboo Friendship Society is a non-profit, charitable Society that has been active in the community of Williams Lake since 1967 and was registered in 1969. Their services include:

## **Children Who Witness Abuse Program**

Phone: 250-398-7005

## **Aboriginal Child and Youth Mental Health Program**

Phone: 250-267-2377

## **Family Ties Supervised Visitation Program**

Phone: 250-267-3703

## **Aboriginal Supported Child Development**

Phone: 250-305-2430

# CARING FOR YOUR ABORIGINAL FOSTER CHILD



CARIBOO FRIENDSHIP  
SOCIETY INFORMATION  
FOR FOSTER PARENTS OF  
ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

# INTRODUCTION

# SELF-CARE

# THE CHILD

Some of the most vulnerable children in Canada are First Nations children. First Nations youth have been overrepresented in the foster care system since the **Sixties Scoop**, which occurred while the government began phasing out compulsory residential school

attendance, due to its traumatic impact. The effects of residential schools are still being felt on reserves today, with many survivors suffering from substance abuse and various social problems.



It is important to be aware that the current state-funded child welfare system bears many institutional similarities to the residential school system, such as the separating children from their biological parents. These similarities have the potential to spark negative responses and emotions.

In order to end this cycle, social workers and foster parents should consider the unique circumstances of each individual foster child in their transition from their biological parents' home to a foster home.

One of the most important things you can do to help your child settle and transition is to practice self-care. Self-care refers to routines and activities to reduce stress and nurture physical and mental health.



## Examples of self-care:

- Setting healthy boundaries
- Engagement with land and nature
- Connection with ceremony (sweat lodges, smudging, etc.)
- Access to Aboriginal elders
- Therapy or counseling
- Getting enough sleep
- Having enough down-time
- Writing in a journal
- Creating art, music, and dancing
- Exercise and sports
- Eating healthy food
- Access to proper health care
- Aboriginal support centres (Friendship Societies, etc.)

It is important to recognize that your First Nations foster child may have their own unique needs. First Nations children often have a type of birthmark called Mongolian Spots that can be confused with bruises. They may also have dietary restrictions pertaining to celiac's disease or lactose intolerance. Fortunately, there are many alternatives to gluten and dairy, such as:

- Gluten free oats
- Millet flour
- Beans
- Potato
- Soy
- Rice

A First Nations child may also be able to access cultural and financial support from their band. It is worthwhile to research available funding from the band or the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Remember that the child has a voice and opinion too. Connection to culture and family is important, but allow the child the freedom to do so at their own pace. It is common to see a stigma towards foster children, and one of the most important things you can do as the foster parent is to be an advocate for them.

