

# FOSTER FAMILIES WEEK

## Yorkton Tribal Council Child & Family Services Inc.

Cote First Nation  
Peepeekisis Cree Nation  
Cowessess First Nation  
Key First Nation  
Starblanket Cree Nation  
Sakimay First Nation  
Keeseekoose First Nation

Little Black Bear's Band  
Whitebear First Nation  
Ochapowace First Nation  
Kahkewistahaw First Nation  
Pheasant Rump Nakota First Nation  
Ocean Man First Nation

The Board of Directors and Staff wish to thank all of our caregivers who have opened their hearts and homes to our First Nation children. You have made a difference by allowing our children to stay within First Nations communities!

Megwetch! Dinamaya! Kinanaskomitin/Teniki!

**Our Children, Our Future, Our Promise.**

YTCCFS Inc.  
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Yorkton, SK S3N 3R1  
Phone: 306-782-8838  
Fax: 306-782-7780



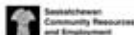
*Every child  
needs a  
place to  
call home*

Foster families come from all walks of life and different cultural, educational and economic backgrounds. Saskatchewan Community Resources and Employment and the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association provide training and ongoing support to foster families in Saskatchewan.

Make a difference in the life of a child. Become a foster parent.

For more information call: 1-800-667-7002

**Foster Families Week - October 16-22, 2005**



## More foster families needed in province

By CHEERYL PETTEN  
Sage Writer

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Every October, one week is set aside to recognize families across the province that have opened up their homes to provide care for a foster child. But Foster Families Week, being celebrated this year from Oct. 17 to 23, is also held to remind people of the important role foster families play, and to encourage more people to become foster parents.

Currently there are about 2,700 children in care in the province, about 1,800 of them living in one of Saskatchewan's 730 foster homes.

While more foster parents from all cultural backgrounds are needed, there is a particular need for more Aboriginal people to become foster parents, said Eva Carpenter, senior program consultant for foster care with the provincial department of Community Resources and Employment.

Currently, about 68 per cent of children in care in Saskatchewan are Aboriginal, while Aboriginal foster families account for only 28 per cent of the province's foster families.

Removing children from their homes and placing them in foster care is done as a last resort, Carpenter said.

"We always attempt to provide whatever services are needed in order for the family to care for the child at home. So that's where we concentrate a lot of effort and hopefully we can avoid the child needing to be removed from the home. But if we can't, and if the child does need to be removed, then we look at a number of options before we even look at placing the child into care."

The first option, she said, is trying to find a member of the child's extended family who can provide them with a temporary home.

"Then, in the case of Aboriginal children, we would look to their First Nation as well, and if there's no family on their First Nation, is there an Aboriginal foster home on their First Nation that could be considered."

Only once all these options are exhausted would the child enter into the foster care system. If an Aboriginal foster home is available, the preference would be placing the child there, Carpenter said.

The department recognizes the

advantages of placing Aboriginal children in homes where they can maintain their connection to their culture, Carpenter said.

"First of all, to be placed with family is the most preferable option because it's the least disruptive and, you know, they're familiar with the home and the people that are caring for them. And it's by far the best preference. However, if that's not possible, then even to place the child into an Aboriginal home, we know that also has many advantages in as far as having that continuity of culture and continuity of teachings and customs and so on, and the ongoing access to the child to be able to easily maintain that connection with their culture. Lots of advantages there."

In cases where an Aboriginal child must be placed in a non-Aboriginal foster home, the foster parents are still expected to ensure the children placed in their care continue to have contact with their culture.

"It's very much stressed in training with foster parents that connection with culture is very important for Aboriginal children," she said. That could include taking foster children to powwows and other cultural events, making sure they take advantage of cultural programming available in their schools, and maintaining contacts with their family.

"And when we have children in care, of course the goal is to reunify the families. And so the foster parents understand that they work with children as part of their family, their immediate family and their extended family. And so that often involves direct work with the families as well."

Recruiting more Aboriginal foster families is a priority for the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association (SFFA).

"We're always in need of foster families, period. But it's, more importantly, the Aboriginal foster families we want to encourage to apply to be foster parents because the majority of our children in foster care are First Nation. And it's very important to have children connected to their culture and their community," said Deb Davies, the association's executive director.

For more information about becoming a foster parent, contact Community Resources and Employment at 1-800-667-7002 or the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association at 1-866-999-5125.

*The Board, Director & Staff would like to take this opportunity to give a heartfelt "thanks" to all our support home caregivers for their time and dedication to our children.*

If you would like more information about becoming a Support Home, please call Valerie Simonot, BA (Sociology) at 306-663-5095 or 306-982-2511



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