

# NORTHERN FOSTERING NEWS



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## WINTER IS HERE!

Welcome to the Winter edition of the Northern Fostering News! It seems winter is finally upon us, and the cold weather is back in full force!


In this edition we discuss the updates to the 4Y Program, new staffing changes, our plans for the winter season, and much much more!

Please read on in this edition of Northern Fostering News to find out more!



WINTER 2019/2020





Change is in the air this winter... We are very excited to announce some staff changes happening at the Foster Family Coalition.

First is Meagan, our Executive Assistant. Meagan is taking some time off to be with her daughter before moving on to other opportunities. We are excited to announce our new Executive Assistant, Chantelle. We look forward to all the exciting new changes a staff member brings.

We have also hired two new staff members for the 4Y Program. We'd like to welcome Diane and Travis as the newest employees of the 4Y Program. They will be working with the youth in the program on life skills and helping out Korry, the Program Coordinator.

Welcome to the team Chantelle, Diane, and Travis



## PRIDE ONLINE TRAINING

Did you know that the Foster Family Coalition provides online training for current & potential foster parents? This training is free, has no time limit, and can be completed in the comfort of your own home. Contact us either by phone, or by email at [ffc@ffcnwt.com](mailto:ffc@ffcnwt.com) to sign up!

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# Executive Director Report

Season's Greetings!

Another Christmas "break" is upon us already. We all know that is a far cry from a break for foster caregivers.

Please remember to take some time for yourself this holiday season. Remember, it's okay to step back from certain traditions and obligations if you feel that you're being stretched too thin. Take the time to enjoy the little things and don't apologize for doing what you need to do to support your family. I know I will be trying my best to do exactly that because I know that the start of the New Year is going to be crazy busy at the Coalition.

I am extremely sad to see Meagan leave the Coalition after 1.5 years as my Executive Assistant. Meagan has decided to take a break and spend time with family and I wish her all the best in whatever she decides to do. I am very happy to have Chantelle Duval join us in Meagan's position. Chantelle has just started this week and will be learning the ropes over the holidays. She will be the first person that you will talk to when you come into the office or call us on the phone. She can hook you up with whatever you need so don't hesitate to reach out. Chantelle will also be doing the outreach calls to each and everyone of you to let you know what services and supports we have. Please let her know if there is anything you need.

There is a new Territorial Executive Director of Child and Family Services, Colette Prevost, who started with the department in the fall. I was fortunate enough to attend the Child Welfare League of Canada's Learning Community on Reconciliation in October with her, where we were able to connect and talk about what we feel needs to happen when it comes to our roles in the TRC. We have also connected on a few other occasions when it comes to foster care and she recently met with a group of Yellowknife foster caregivers who wanted to voice their concerns. Nathalie Nadeau also attended this meeting from the Territorial Health Authority, as well as Liliana Canadic from the Yellowknife Region.

I am very happy to finally have a Foster Care Specialist to work with at the Department. This position has been vacant for quite sometime and although there was always someone there when I needed them, they were also carrying other portfolios as well. Marren Pluchinski started at the Foster Care Specialist earlier this month and I will be working closely with her on training and support for foster parents across the territory.

When we received the Foster Caregiver Contact List from the Authority we noticed that not all foster parents are signed up for the Legal Defence Insurance. This is a resource to help foster caregivers with legal expenses if they are charged with an offense against a youth in their care. If you have not yet received your certificate please contact us so we can ensure you are signed up.

The P.R.I.D.E. online is also heading into another year. You can now take Pre-service P.R.I.D.E online as well as the first 4 CORE modules at your own convenience. We have more and more people signing up for the training. This is an excellent way to make sure that we are all prepared to work with children and families. If you are living in a smaller community and need help with the online training, talk to your social worker and they can help you out!

Some exciting news for our 4Y Program that is lead by Korry Garvey! We received Jordan's Principle Funding so we were able to expand the office so the 4Y Program has its own space. We have also hired two part-time Navigators, Diane Gordon and Travis Sidoroff. This program supports youth in Yellowknife who have FASD. We are seeking additional funding so that we can offer services outside of Yellowknife and hope to hear if this has been approved in the next few months. Stop by the office and see what the program is about.

The Scotia Capital Stay In School Awards and Tutoring are now available. First deadline is January 30th, 2020. Funding is limited so apply early!

We are currently looking for a Camp Director to work part-time over the winter and then full-time starting April 1, 2020. If you know if anyone that would be a good fit and would like to join our team, please tell them to apply.

Let's hope this cold spell is over so we can all get out of the house over the holidays!

Tammy Roberts

FFC-NWT Executive Director



# 4Y Program Updates

The 4Y Program, a pilot program which began in June 2019, has been very successful! Currently, eight youth are in the program, and benefit from spending time every week with the 4Y staff working on essential skills, such as employ-ability skills, financial management, and healthy eating.

We are proud to announce that the 4Y program has two new staff members. Diane and Travis will be working directly with the youth in the program. We are so excited to have them on board!

The 4Y Program also now has its own office space! Located in the same building as the FFC, the 4Y Program now has an office for staff, as well as a space for the youth to come, hang out, and work on activities or homework.

If you or someone you know could benefit from the 4Y Program please contact Korry Garvey at [support@ffcnwt.com](mailto:support@ffcnwt.com) or give her a call at 867-766-3326.



# 4 STEPS TO MANAGING YOUR CHILD'S SCREEN TIME

Is it just me or does it seem like children have lost their playfulness? Many of us can recall summer days spent playing games outside with friends, riding bikes, playing hopscotch, or making forts in the woods.

Now, though, it seems that most kids prefer to lead a wired existence, constantly connected to some electronic device. Many parents are exasperated by their child's constant technology use and the degree to which tablets, TVs, video games, laptops and smart phones have taken over their household.

I once talked to a desperate mother whose child was sending upwards of 20,000 texts per month (No, that is not a typo.) Like this mom, many parents who we hear from are fed up and looking to take back control. Here are 4 steps you can take to manage or limit your child's use of technology so that it works for you and your family.

## Step 1: Know the Risks that Come with Screen Time

You've probably asked yourself, "How much screen time is too much?" There really is no formula to determine this. When deciding what is appropriate and in what quantities, consider the potential risks as well as your child's ability to recognize and avoid dangerous situations.

One issue that stands out to me as a school counselor is the impact screen time has on the development of social skills. This is one of those "chicken or egg" questions: do children who lack adequate social skills gravitate toward technology as a source of social connection? Or do children who spend a lot of time in front of a screen either lose or fail to develop adequate social skills? While spending a lot of time in front of a screen could potentially be linked to poor social skills, it's not always the case. Games and technology in general can be very rewarding—kids can interact and quickly get positive feedback from peers online, from other players in live games, or from scoring points in the game. But if your child has trouble fitting in and getting along with peers, it might indicate that he needs more face-to-face social interactions or some coaching on how to better connect with others from either you or a counselor.

Another pitfall of children being surrounded by technology is that it can expose them to predators, inappropriate images, stories, or other content, even when they are not looking for it. Children often do not have the critical thinking skills to determine what is real and what is not, which makes them that much more



vulnerable to hoaxes, scams, and the lure of influential internet figures, real or fictional.

Along with possible exposure to inappropriate content comes the risk of your child overexposing him or herself. For example, sharing too much information about where they live, where they go to school, or sharing revealing photos of themselves with others. Children and teens often have a difficult time seeing the potential harm in this and find it hard to believe that others would target or hurt them. They feel invincible, thinking “that will never happen to me.”

## Step 2: Know Your Goals So You Can Set Rules

Your child’s screen time and use of technology should match up with your goals as a parent. Consider the following:

- What types of technology do you want to allow into your home?
- How much time do you think is reasonable for your child to use technology each day?
- Where will your child be allowed to use these devices?
- Are certain times of day off limits for technology use?
- What types of content you will allow your child to view or interact with?

Whatever rules you establish, be sure that they are communicated clearly and enforced consistently. To assess whether your limits are working, ask yourself these questions:

- What will we see if the screen time rules are working?
- What will we *do* if they are working?
- What will we see if the screen time rules are not working?
- What will we *do* if they are not working?

We also recommend that you talk with your child ahead of time to plan for how he will handle himself if he doesn’t get to play when or as long as he wants.

## Step 3: Decide What Comes *Before* Screen Time

When deciding how to approach screen time in your home and how to best use it to your advantage, weigh these factors:

- **The maturity level of your child:** Before authorizing more screen time, consider your child’s maturity level. Ideally, as your child ages, he or she will be able to have more and more autonomy to self-manage. However, this is not always the case. If your teen is very immature, irresponsible, or struggles with self-discipline, more limits might be appropriate. The bottom line is that you know your child best and what he or she is capable of handling. Gradually add more freedom as children become better able to self-manage.
- **Your priorities and values:** What do you want your child to learn in life? What are your values as a family? For example, if you really value family time together,

then build that into your daily routine before any screen time can occur. Priorities are just that—they come first, before other things like screen time.

- **Your child's responsibilities in the home:** Most parents believe that their child should help out around the house in some way. For example, a child as young as 4 might be expected to put his or her own toys back in a specific place when done, whereas teens might have multiple, more complex [chores like vacuuming the house or cleaning the bathroom](#). Any responsibilities your child has should also come before screen time.

Let your child know exactly what needs to be done each day in order to earn the privilege of screen time. Once they've checked everything off the list, screen time is earned. For example, you might decide that your child needs to make her bed, play outside or with a friend for at least an hour, do something creative for one hour, spend time in a planned family activity like a picnic or trip to the pool, and then once all of that is done, screen time is an option. In this example, priorities (family time, creativity, and healthy/social play) as well as responsibilities (making the bed, unloading the dishwasher) must be checked off the list before screen time is available. The final reward of the screen time can help to motivate your child to accomplish some more productive goals in the course of a day.

I completely understand that it's not easy to do this in some cases. If you have a child who resists your rules and boundaries at all costs and seems to constantly find ways around your consequences, then read on for some tips on how to regain some control of the many devices and gadgets at your child's disposal.

## Step 4: Know Your Options and Use Them

As a parent, you are in control of the technology in your home, even if you don't feel like you are. But first, let me say that it's never effective to get into a physical power struggle, a literal tug-of-war over an electronic device (or anything for that matter!). If your child hides his device, sneaks time on it in the middle of the night, or simply refuses to hand it over, here's what you can do.

**Passcodes and passwords:** Many devices can be set to require a password or numeric code in order to allow access. You can even set some devices to completely erase themselves after 10 failed log-in attempts, which may deter your child from trying to guess the code. Steer clear of familiar numbers such as phone numbers, dates of birth, or other number combinations or words your child might guess. Newer devices that have fingerprint scanners often use numeric codes as backup, so make sure your code is iron clad and never share it with your child.

**Parental controls:** Video game consoles come equipped with parental controls built in via the system menu. Using these controls allows you to restrict internet access,



purchasing ability and games with restricted ratings. Some devices can even be set to shut themselves down for the day after they have been powered on for a certain amount of time.

**Guided access:** This is especially helpful for younger or less savvy children and is available on some tablets such as the iPad. It allows parents to easily turn the guided access function off and on by touching the home button a certain number of times and entering the passcode. Parents can restrict their child's use to a specific app, and they can even circle parts of the screen they don't want their child to have access to during use.

**Facebook privacy/security settings:** Facebook's security and privacy settings can prevent your child from showing up in public search results, prevent people from posting on his or her page, restrict who can send friend requests, and much more. My suggestion is to get your own account and play around with the settings and help menus. This way you can see what settings work best for your child's account.

**Cellular services:** I discovered that my cell phone provider allows me to suspend and reinstate service just by logging into my account and clicking a couple of buttons. Cellular providers also offer affordable monthly apps and subscriptions that enable you to track and limit your child's usage, activity, and contacts.

**Disabling the device:** Your child won't hand over the game controller? No problem. When you have the opportunity to do so without a confrontation, you might find it useful to remove the power cord, the cable cord, or disable your wireless router. With my cable service, I have a hub that controls everything, and if I unplug the hub, all services are kaput.

Don't be afraid to seek help. Contact your cellular providers or the manufacturer of the device in question. A lack of knowledge is no excuse to be lax with technology limits. In our ever-changing and increasingly technological world the demand for parents to stay informed is more critical than ever.

## STAY IN SCHOOL AWARD



Have you heard about Stay in School Awards? The Stay In School awards are for kids involved with social services that are enrolled in K-12. Recognize the hard work that a child is putting into school, and help them potentially win 300\$! The next upcoming deadline is January 30th so apply now!

Visit our website at [www.ffcnwt.com/youth-financial-support](http://www.ffcnwt.com/youth-financial-support) to learn more and to fill out an application!

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# Camp Connections 2020

The dates for Camp Connections 2020 are here! Check them out below

Session	Ages	Date
Session 1	7-11 coed	June 29th - July 5th
Session 2	12-14 coed	July 10th - July 16th
Session 3	7-11 coed	July 21st - July 27th
Session 4	12-18 coed	August 1st - August 7th
Session 5	7-11 coed	August 12th - August 18th



**To register a camper visit our  
website at  
[www.ffcnnwt.com/campconnections](http://www.ffcnnwt.com/campconnections)**

The International Foster Care Organization (IFCO) Conference is now accepting Abstracts and Registration for their 2020 Conference, which will be held in Montreal. The conference theme will be Close Ties: Relations at the heart of child and family wellness. If you're interested in attending please visit the IFCO website at [www.ifcomontreal2020.com](http://www.ifcomontreal2020.com) to learn more, or to register.



## IFCO2020

International Foster Care Organization Conference

Montreal, Canada  
June 25-28

**Close Ties: Relations at the heart  
of child and family wellness**

# HEALTH AND WELLBEING FUND

Have you heard of our Health and Wellbeing Fund? This fund is to assist families with financial costs of various health needs of children and youth who are involved with social services.

Think you know someone that could benefit from this? Give us a call at 867-766-3326, send us an email at [ffc@ffcnwt.com](mailto:ffc@ffcnwt.com) or check out our website for more information.

<https://www.ffcnnwt.com/youth-financial-support>



## FFC Board of Directors

The Foster Family Coalition has room on its board for new board members. We are currently looking for one board member from the Deh Cho, one from the Beaufort Delta, one from the Tlicho, two from the Sahtu, and one from Hay River. If you are interested in becoming a board member please contact us at 867-766-3326, or send an email at [ffc@ffcnwt.com](mailto:ffc@ffcnwt.com)

### The Board of Directors

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# Craft Corner

## EGG CARTON PENGUINS

You will need:

- Egg Carton
- Black Paint
- White and Orange Paper
- Googly Eyes
- Glue

Step One: Trim the “cups” out of the egg carton. Then cut out a beak and feet from orange paper and a belly from white paper.

Step two: Paint the egg carton cups black and let dry for 1-2 hours.

Step three: Glue the white belly onto the little bump that juts out of the egg carton. The shape makes a perfect belly, so if you have white paint, or even white out, go ahead and paint that little bump instead of using paper.

Step four: Glue on the beak and eyes.

Step five: Fold the feet and then glue them to the inside of the egg carton cup.

Voila! Enjoy your egg carton penguins!





As always we at the FFC are here to support you in your fostering or adoption Journey. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions please reach out to us.



Foster Family Coalition of the NWT



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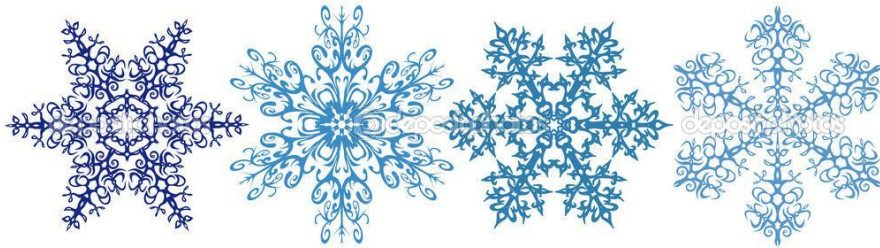
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FROM ALL THE STAFF AND BOARD  
MEMBERS OF THE FFC WE WISH YOU A  
VERY HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

