



September 2011



# THE BRIDGE

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE ALBERTA FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION

## Children Learn What They Live

By Dorothy Law Nolte, Ph.D.



If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.  
If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.  
If children live with fear, they learn to be apprehensive.  
If children live with pity, they learn to feel sorry for themselves.  
If children live with ridicule, they learn to feel shy.  
If children live with jealousy, they learn to feel envy.  
If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.  
If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.  
If children live with tolerance, they learn patience.  
If children live with praise, they learn appreciation.  
If children live with acceptance, they learn to love.  
If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.  
If children live with recognition, they learn it is good to have a goal.  
If children live with sharing, they learn generosity.  
If children live with honesty, they learn truthfulness.  
If children live with fairness, they learn justice.



If children live with kindness and consideration, they learn respect.  
If children live with security, they learn to have faith in themselves and in those about them.  
If children live with friendliness, they learn the world is a nice place in which to live.

### FEATURING...

- How Can I Support Educational Success for Young People in Care?
- Kids These Days: Back to School Blues
- Help Your Child Get Organized
- Letter from the Minister

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Deadline for submissions for next BRIDGE

November 1, 2011

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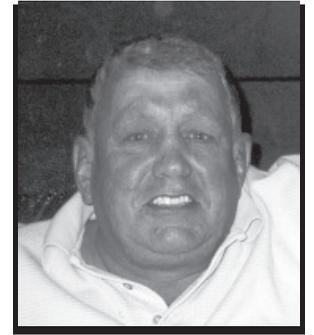
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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## Norm Brownell



Hello foster families, it's time again for another issue of our Bridge. I hope that you have enjoyed your summer holidays. Marie and I spent a week on Vancouver Island with very nice weather the entire trip. We attended our niece's daughter's wedding in Parksville overlooking the Pacific Ocean; what a beautiful setting for a beautiful wedding.

Our special thanks to Karen & Rob Tweedle and their committee who put on a wonderful weekend of Aboriginal events and training at our 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Aboriginal Awareness Weekend. Also, a big thank you to Chef Marlin and other volunteers who helped make the event a success. Please watch your upcoming Bridge Newsletters and the AFPA website for next year's dates.

Our James River Children's Retreat continues to improve every time we have another work bee. We are still waiting to hear if we will get funding to metal clad the outside of the Main Lodge. Thanks to all you wonderful people who take the time out of your busy lives to volunteer at the camp; **"You are special!"**

The 38<sup>th</sup> Annual AFPA Conference package has been mailed to members and by the time this Bridge issue reaches you, you should have received it. It is also available to all on our website at [www.afpaonline.com](http://www.afpaonline.com). Our conference this year is from November 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> and promises to be another great one with lots of excellent workshops and entertainment. This is a time to enhance our skills, renew old friendships and make new ones. Jasper is such a beautiful and refreshing place to hold a function and I look forward to seeing many of you there!

Foster Family Week in Canada takes place from October 16<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011. This is a week that celebrations take place all across this great nation. Please plan activities in your Region's throughout Alberta and celebrate with the rest of the Country.

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Have a great Fall!



**"I can suck pudding up my nose and blow it out the corner of my eye, but they still won't put me in the gifted class at school!"**

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

### Katherine Jones



I hope that you enjoyed your summer as much as I did with my family. I know the weather wasn't all that great here but you have to admit that we did have some beautiful days.

My husband Graham, Nick and I spent three weeks at our place in Abaco which was so peaceful and beautiful. I managed to get in some snorkeling, swimming, bird watching and cycling. It was awe-inspiring and felt great to be outdoors. It was wonderful to see our friends and feel the warmth of the people of Abaco.

Aside from a few issues, the AFPA was quiet during the summer which gave the staff time to clear up outstanding paper work, prepare for conference, send out the nominations and notice of elections and AGM as well as prepare the information for the September edition of the Bridge. This was really good as we have a couple of changes to the office coming up in November just prior to conference and having the work done ahead of time will make the transition run more smoothly. Amey will be leaving on Maternity Leave the middle of November so we will be hiring a temp to replace her



for the time she is away. Amey, we wish you all the best, cannot wait to see baby and you will definitely be missed. In addition to Amey leaving, Lucille will be retiring around the same time so we will be hiring someone to replace her. Lucille has been with the AFPA for four years and has done a wonderful job of tracking the training records and preparing invoices for payment. Lucille you have been an asset to the AFPA and will be missed.

Conference is fast approaching! We have a great line of workshops and a very special Key Note Speaker, Winston Wuttunee, whom I am sure will inspire so many of us with his address. He is a well-known musician, songwriter, and speaker who has traveled the world performing music, telling stories and sharing his Culture, Heritage and Spirituality that he holds so dear. I had the opportunity to attend an event where Mr. Wuttunee was performing and was in awe of how he inspired all those in attendance with his wisdom, storytelling and singing. He is a humble man who gives so much of himself to promote his passion for life and his culture.

I hope you have a great fall season and I look forward to seeing many of you at conference again this year. Don't forget to book your room at the Sawridge early as they tend to book up quickly!

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## VICE-PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### Sylvia Thompson

It's hard to believe that summer is almost over. Our weather has been so varied over the province that many of us feel that we really did not have much sunshine.

Summer camp was a success again this year. We had about 70 children attend our 2 camps this year. Many thanks to our leaders and volunteers. We really could not have done it without you. Week 1 was 5 days planned for siblings and others aged 6 to 11 year olds. This gives children who may not reside in the same home a chance to spend some time together each summer. Week 2 was a 7 day outdoor education camp for 11 – 15 year olds. The focus of this camp is to learn about the outdoors and team building skills. Our plan for next year is to run the summer camps the last 2 weeks in July.

The AFPA is chairing a Transitioning Youth to Adulthood Committee. With representation from many stakeholders, our desired outcome is to have recommendations, for improvement to transitioning, go forward to the Ministry in November 2011. We will keep you posted.

Again this year, the Canadian Foster Family Association has scheduled their second annual board meeting to be held at our campground. The

feeling of the CFFA Board of Directors is that this is an excellent place to hold a meeting. We have time to get our work done without outside distractions and can spend time getting to know who you work with for the betterment of foster families across Canada. It is interesting to find out how things are done in other provinces and territories.

Conference plans are well under way. With an Opening Prayer, an Honor Song, and Aboriginal Keynote and many presentations, our conference promises to be very interesting and informative. We will present on such topics as Love and Logic, Managing Severe Behaviours at Home, Outcomes Based Service Delivery, Sexual Exploitation of Children etc with presenters such as Author Vera Tourangeau, Presenter/Entertainer Winston Wuttunee, as well as Cree Spirituality with Rick Lightning.

Conference is a great opportunity to increase our knowledge base, reconnect with old friends, make new friends, learn what our Ministry is doing and have time to recharge ourselves. I look forward to seeing you all there.



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORTS

## REGION 1 Marlin Meyer

Here in the South, our summer bbq was once again at the mercy of Mother Nature! Imagine that, rain in June! There were close to 150 people RSVP'd for the bbq, but the impending rain lessened that to around 80. The burgers were hot and the ice cream cold, and all who were there enjoyed. We'll try again next June and hope the weather can co-operate.

Plans are in the works for our annual Citation Awards banquet. Please look forward to the invitation in the mail sometime in late September.

Thanks to all the volunteers for our summer kids camps at the AFPA camp. Great job! Thank you also to all those who helped me out in the kitchen!

## REGION 3 John Starkey

The Calgary and District Foster Parents Association has had our AGM and brought in a new slate of Directors, new President, Vice-President and a new Newsletter Editor. I look forward to working with the new Board. The Board is meeting with Rob James, a parliamentarian, to revisit and improve our Bylaws and help develop a Policy and Procedures Manual.

There are a host of activities planned for Foster Family Month in October which include:

Swim & Pizza Party

Laser tag Night & Pizza

Flag Raising at City Hall

Citation Banquet & Recognizing Foster Family and ACYS Worker of the Year.

The AFPA's 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Training Conference is coming up soon in Jasper and plans are underway to hire a bus to transport Region 3 delegates to attend. AFPA members be sure to watch for your brochure in the mail and also check the AFPA's website at [www.afpaonline.com](http://www.afpaonline.com) for the brochure.

## REGION 4 Heather Guard

Summer is almost over and a new school year is about to begin. I can only imagine the flurry of activity taking place in all the foster homes across Alberta. I'm sure many will be hearing the laughter of children waiting for that first day of school; meeting their old friends and hoping to make new ones. Minds fill up with hope and fears of how they'll fit in at a new school. Will they make new friends, or will they be bullied? One thing is for sure though; all of them will be counting on you to help them make it through. So take a deep breath, roll up your sleeves and get ready to help where you can and know when to ask for help if you need it. Just remember, whether the kids show it or not, they need you. So enjoy this time of change; don't just survive it, make the most of all the commotion. Create a few good memories, but most of all, have lots of fun doing whatever needs to be done.

Region 4 is going through changes as well. We have a new CEO, David Tunney. David has come back to Alberta to replace Janet who has moved up North to take on a new position. We will all miss Janet, she worked hard for foster parents and Government workers alike. We wish you good luck in your new position; keep the wind blowing in your face when you're out on your trike!

## REGION 5 Rene Rajotte

Summer has come and gone, well almost. I hope you had a fun and fulfilling one. I know we did.

Soon after September hits we will be having our regional meeting again on September 27<sup>th</sup> in Viking at 10:00 A.M. This is when we will draw a lucky couple from our region for the free registration to the AFPA conference in Jasper. Of course, whoever is drawn has to have their membership fees paid in full. As always, I am once again looking forward to conference this year!

On September 17<sup>th</sup> at the Anglican Church Hall on 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue just west of highway 41 in Vermillion, there will be a presentation by Sarah Davis from 10:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M., with a hot meal catered. She will be presenting on the connection between animal abuse and family violence.

This can be anywhere from child abuse, spousal abuse, and elder abuse. I feel this presentation will be very informative and I would like to thank the foster parents from the vermilion area for contacting Sarah and arranging for this presentation. There is a cost of \$20.00 per person. Betty Thomas is the contact if you are interested and she would like to know by September 7<sup>th</sup>. Phone: 780-853-2903.

Have a great fall everyone and I look forward to seeing many of you at the AFPA conference in Jasper in November!

## REGION 6 Linda Krauskopf

I hope everyone had a good summer so far. I spent two weeks in July at the James River Children's Camps. We all had a fun for the two weeks in the rain, and some sun, although very little. We put our leaders through some tough times; two weeks of getting up early and late nights with the little campers with no time off. They lived the two weeks with no problems. I believe that mostly all slept like logs when they got home.

We have our society's papers and a new name with a new board. We are now called the "Capital Region Foster Family Council." We also have some agency foster parents on the board.

We have started plans on Region 6's Caregiver Conference which will happen at the River Cree Resort & Casino from April 13<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012. This means that we will have three days of training; so be sure to put this on your agenda.

We also have made plans for a CAREGIVER APPRECIATION EVENT which will be held on October 15<sup>th</sup> 2011 from 7:30pm - 10:30pm at Galaxyland in the West Edmonton Mall.

Next we have the CITATION BANQUET which is held in October and is put on by the EDMONTON & DISTRICT FAMILY SUPPORT ASSOCIATION, ALBERTA FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION, and the REGION.

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## Region 9

Region 9 is currently being serviced by FAST reps from out of Region. New reps from Region 9 are being recruited and will be trained as soon as possible!

## Region 10

Region 10 is currently being serviced by FAST reps throughout the many other Regions.

### Message from the Minister of Children and Youth Services

On behalf of the Government of Alberta, I am pleased to recognize October 16 to 22 as National Foster Family Week. My warmest thank you to all the foster parents who open their hearts and homes to kids of all ages: while they are facing some of the most difficult times in their young lives.

During Foster Family Week, Albertans are encouraged to learn about fostering, and recognize foster families for the positive and lasting difference they make in the lives of Alberta's children and youth. By providing guidance and encouragement, foster parents help our most vulnerable children overcome challenges and reach their full potential.

I have had the honour to hear some of the incredible stories of compassion and human triumph that foster parents in Alberta have to share. These experiences demonstrate the amazing generosity of spirit that our families share each and every day with the children in their care.

I believe the true heroes of the foster care system all too often go unrecognized and it is my hope this week will be your time to be heard, to be proud and to receive the respect and appreciation you deserve.

My warmest thank you for the work you do as foster parents. By providing safe and loving homes, you give hope to thousands of young people.

Sincerely,



Yvonne Fritz  
Minister



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### Board Reports - Continued from Page 4

Also, we have been given money to help foster parents to go to the AFPA's Annual Training Conference in Jasper in from November 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Time to start filling your calendar for the year!

I hope you all have a great fall and I will report back to you in December!

### REGION 7 Bev Towe

Well we are now at the end of summer. What a summer we have had in region 7 with the damaging fires in Slave Lake, and all the rain.

We would like to thank the AFPA for all that they do for foster, kinship, and adopted homes. They do a wonderful job; please keep up the great work you do for all of us.

With summer ending, remember to claim for school fees etc. Also, remember the AFPA Conference in November. Please register as soon as possible to make sure you can attend, as the conference fills up very fast.

Once again, Jim Toner is no longer with region 7. We wish him the best of luck in his retirement. Dan Stoesz is the supervisor for all of Region 7 at this time. The region hopes to fill Jim's shoes in September.

I hope to see you all at Conference in November and until then, have a great fall!



Try this with your teen ...

#### Five Good Moments

Suggest to your teen, "Pay attention throughout the day for five moments that make you feel good. The moment can be an interaction with someone or a thought inspired by something that happened or a sight or a sound that you thought lovely. What it is doesn't matter. What matters is that for at least a moment it made you feel good. I'll do the same. When we get together at the end of the day, we'll share our five good things that happened."

Teens are learning to pay attention to all the events that happen in a day and then focus in on the positive aspects by intentionally looking at them. This activity also encourages them to pay attention to how specific events make them feel. It is a reminder that life contains many kinds of moments. Often teens get stuck on a negative moment and enlarge its significance, such as when they hear a criticism and believe that it means they are hopelessly hopeless. This activity shows young people that good moments are always part of the mix if they keep a lookout for them.

Excerpt taken from "Attention Games: 101 Fun, Easy Games That Help Kids Learn to Focus" by Barbara Sher

### Alberta's New "Distracted Driving Legislation"

Effective Date: September 1, 2011

Be informed and visit the following website to view all the details of this new legislation.



<http://www.transportation.alberta.ca/Content/docType3679/Production/FactSheet.pdf>

# How Can I Support Educational Success for Young People in Care?

## AT HOME:

### **Build A Relationship Based On Trust.**

Because many children and youth in care have experienced some level of trauma in being removed from their home, it is critical for caregivers to show the young person that they are important, cared for and valued, even when they may test the boundaries.

### **Talk to and listen to the young people.**

Communication with young people is very important. Talk with the young person in your care about school, friends, activities, teachers and assignments. Be sure to have a two-way conversation, not a one-way lecture. Be a good listener and let your young person have the stage. Tell them truthfully and confidently what you think and why you think this way. If you're not sure about some issues, it's okay to tell them so.

### **Teach your foster children life skills as you would your own children.**

As one teen says, "For the five days or five years that I am with you, I need you to help me be normal. Give me chores and teach me. If I am old enough, let me cook sometimes, make me file my taxes, and talk to me about RRSPs and credit cards."

### **Provide a quiet study area.**

Equip a designated study area of your home with items such as paper, markers, a ruler, pencils and a dictionary. Keep the area as free from distractions as possible.

### **Help with homework.**

Show enthusiasm about school and homework. When the caregiver takes the time and effort to help a young person with homework, it sends the message that school is important and that you care about their success at school. Talk with the school about the homework needs for the young person. Share your observations with appropriate teachers about how the young person is doing with his or her school work.

### **Help your young person get organized.**

Help the young person break down assignments into smaller, more manageable parts. Teach and help them to set out needed items (clothes, homework, permission slips, etc.) the night before to avoid last-minute rushing around in the morning.

### **Play games and engage in activities together.**

Many young people love to play age appropriate games that also develop and support different aspects of growth and learning. Take them places and participate in different activities together such as sports or cultural events. These support well-rounded development and educational achievement. Having fun together promotes a sense of family togetherness and belonging, and shares your enthusiasm about the importance and enjoyment of learning.

## IN SCHOOL:

### **Recognize that the young person in your care needs extra love, care and respect.**

The youth in your care has extra needs because of their past experiences and circumstances. Work with the school to help the staff recognize, empathize and accommodate for these needs, which are important to success in school.

### **Become active members of the core team.**

Caregivers are automatically a part of the core team that also may include a school point person, the classroom teacher, the caseworker, the student and any other guardian of the student. Make sure that you include yourself in the decision-making process, and keep an open mind. The caregiver has a unique perspective from the amount of time spent with the young person. Share this with the core team.

### **Advocate for the young person to help ensure their success in school.**

Share what you know about what works to support the young person's success. Help school staff understand behaviours and let them know what has been successful at home, as well as what has not worked. Help the student and the school staff to know that some behaviour is a reaction to circumstances rather than a symptom of who the student is.

### **Help school staff understand that the young people in your care may be worried, frightened or miss their parents.**

Despite the difficult situations that young people in care may have experienced within their family, most love and care for their families. They may have ongoing concerns which interfere with concentration, learning, socialization and behaviour.

### **Talk with the school staff on an ongoing basis.**

Decide on a communication plan with the school and the core team that will work for everyone. To better understand the student, ask staff questions related to curriculum, assessments, social involvement, extracurricular activities and other aspects of school life that may arise.

### **Support involvement in extracurricular activities.**

Extra-curricular interests such as sports, drama, clubs and volunteering, all contribute to building positive relationships and self esteem. Encourage and assist the young people in your care to participate in activities they enjoy



Excerpt taken from:

Government of Alberta Publication

"Success in Schools: For Children and Youth in Care  
Tips for Caregivers"

<http://education.alberta.ca/media/1232926/tipsforcaregiverse0331.pdf>

# kids these days

By Dr. David Rideout, CEO  
North Central Alberta Child & Family Services Authority

## BACK TO SCHOOL BLUES

It is that time of year again. Back to school, or for some the first day of school. There is always lots of excitement surrounding the commencement of a new school year – new teachers, new classes, new classmates, new friends, new courses, new school supplies, and many other new beginnings.

I remember in my early career, as a school principal, it was always exciting to begin a new school year. There seemed to be fresh opportunity to start again, see the changes that had occurred in students over the summer, and welcome new parents and staff to the school.

But for some, going back to school can be tough. It may be the fear of bullying, the challenge of studies, or the difficulty coping with new experiences. I think we can all relate to kids these days in this regard because we all either went through that schooling reality or saw many of those situations firsthand.

I can remember when our own kids started at new schools, which they had to do four times because of new job opportunities I accepted. It wasn't always easy; sometimes it was even agonizing, for them and us. But it was amazing to see their growth and development in each of those moves.

Depending on what issues a child may have with school, whether it's anxiety about classes or making new friends, there are ways we as parents and caregivers can help alleviate some of their concerns.

After a summer of late nights and late mornings, kids may find it difficult to get back into the more structured schedule of the school year. Parents and caregivers can help them get back in the groove by ensuring a bedtime which will help them feel well rested.

Another idea that may help is getting things ready the night before. Preparing lunches and the next day's outfit prior to bedtime can ease some of the morning stress for everyone and may help kids feel less rushed.

Talking to teachers or children can also inform a parent to what areas could best assist in routines. Find out if there are any issues and deal with them as they arise, and talking together about them.

Some children may experience some anxiety in regards to meeting new people. Connecting these children with teachers or classmates before the start of a school year may ease some of this anxiety. Some schools offer mentoring programs or orientations to new students, so contacting the school would be a good way to find out if there are tours, a meet the teacher day or ways for students to connect with one another before the school year starts. Of course, school websites now often carry much of that information as well.

We can all help best by looking for signs of concern from youth and then responding to their needs. Make time to listen to kids, on their time and on their terms, so they can best work out their feelings. Once you know their concerns, as they see them, you'll be better able to help them.

Of course, adults should always be supportive and involved with their kids' lives but try not to add unnecessary pressures to their lives. Staying positive can be a great way to help kids get over the back to school blues. Share in their enthusiasm as they prepare for new opportunities, meeting new people, and embracing new challenges.

School can be a great opportunity for kids these days to learn and cultivate social skills. Just like any experience, you and they will get out of it what's put into it.

Feedback is welcome and can be sent via email to [david.rideout@gov.ab.ca](mailto:david.rideout@gov.ab.ca)

## AFPA's 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Training Conference "It's All About Kids"

The AFPA conference committee has put together another great program of training and entertainment for all to enjoy from November 3 – 6, 2011. Come and join in on this celebration, meet new friends and relax along with others who have found it in their hearts to care for Alberta's Children and Youth.

It is also a time to honor Foster Parents and ACYS workers who have been chosen to receive awards based on their recognized performance and dedication for Alberta's Children and Youth.



Watch for the Conference Brochure this month in the mail if you are an AFPA member. The brochure will also be available on our website at [www.afpaonline.com](http://www.afpaonline.com).

**Register early to get your first choice in workshops!**

Please feel free to call the AFPA office toll free at 1-800-667-2372 for more information.

To book your hotel accommodations please call the Sawridge Inn and Conference Centre, Jasper at 1-800-661-6427.

## Pumpkin Bread

1/3 cup vegetable oil  
1/2 tsp ground cloves  
1 cup fresh or canned pumpkin puree  
3 eggs  
1 cup flour  
2 tps ground cinnamon  
1/2 cup raisins  
2 1/3 cups Bisquick  
pinch of ground nutmeg



Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 9x5-inch loaf pan. Mix all ingredients together with wooden spoon. Pour into prepared pan. Bake for 45 minutes. Test with knife, if the knife comes out clean the bread is done. If it is not done put back in oven for 10 minutes. Cool before removing from pan. Store in plastic bag.

The AFPA would like to congratulate  
**Katarina Danielle Meyer**  
this year's Bursary Award Recipient.  
Way to go Katarina!

We would also like to thank all those who applied and wish you all the very best with your education!

## Safety tips for young web surfers \ technology

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Parents have worried about their children since the beginning of time. It's part of being a parent, and parents will worry about things both large and small.

One relatively recent concern for parents involves the Internet. Over the last 10 to 15 years, the Internet has become established as a must-have in homes. Parents go online for a number of reasons, and kids are now often required to use the Internet as part of their schoolwork. But as useful and convenient as the Internet can be, it can also prove dangerous, particularly for young kids. Criminals who prey on children have taken their acts online, counting on kids' innocent and trusting natures in order to take advantage of children, which can lead to emotional and/or physical harm.

Parents have every right to worry when their kids go online. However, there are ways to safeguard kids from some of the Internet's ills.

\* Emphasize the protection of personal information. Many websites ask visitors to fill out certain forms when visiting. When discussing the Internet with kids, tell them to inform an adult whenever they visit a website that requests they fill out a form or questionnaire before continuing to the site. All websites must tell their visitors how personal information is used, but kids often cannot understand the privacy policy or will immediately click the "Agree" box below the policy. Since kids don't have their own credit cards, protecting personal information should be discussed in terms of popular social networking sites. Caution kids against sharing too much information, which could potentially make them susceptible to online predators.

\* Preach caution in chat rooms. Kids can be especially susceptible to the dangers of the Internet when they enter chat rooms. If parents are going to allow kids to enter chat rooms or contribute to online message boards, go over a few basics with them beforehand. First and foremost, tell them to never share their address, full name or phone number with anyone in the chat room. Also, ensure kids never arrange to meet up with anyone from chat rooms. If kids do make a few online friends they want to meet in person, always be sure to accompany them to any such meetings and insist on meeting their new friends' parents as well. When meetings do take place, they should always be in a public place, such as a library.

\* Limit time spent online. The Internet can be a valuable resource, but spending too much time online can be just as detrimental as spending too much time on the couch watching television. Limit the amount of time kids are allowed to spend online. The longer kids are on the computer, the more likely they are to drift toward websites where their safety can be compromised.

## Maybe It Isn't Hyperactivity

Not all active children are necessarily "hyperactive". When a child is exhibiting unusual behaviour, we should not immediately assume that she has ADD or ADHD and needs to be medicated. There could be a number of other factors involved. These include:

- abuse - physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional
- allergies
- anxiety
- bullies in school or on the bus
- depression
- disturbing arguments between parent
- hearing loss
- embarrassment at not keeping up with or understanding the teacher
- frequent change of home and school
- petit mal seizures
- unknown chronic illness
- unspoken fears
- visual impairment

A physician, allergist, eye specialist, hearing specialist, speech specialist, and psychologist should ideally test children suspected of having ADD or ADHD before a clear determination is made.

Exerpt from "Creative Therapy for Children with Autism, ADD, and Asperger's" by Janet Tubbs

## Child Safety Seat Information

The [www.albertaseatbelts.ca](http://www.albertaseatbelts.ca) website includes:

- information on child safety seats for parents including tips for buying a child safety seat or booster seat
- printable resources like the Yes Test Series that helps drivers check that they're using the seats properly
- child safety seat information series

## Safe Sleeping

The Public Health Agency of Canada advises that bed sharing (co-sleeping) has been identified as a risk factor for SIDS and can also lead to suffocation. The safest place for a baby to sleep or nap is in a crib. A baby should not sleep on an adult bed, couch or any soft surface (either alone or with another person). Soft surfaces increase the risk of suffocation. Check out the safe sleeping booklet available on the Public Health Agency of Canada Website [http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/dca-dea/stages-etapes/childhood-enfance\\_0-2/sids/pdf/sleep-sommeil-eng.pdf](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/dca-dea/stages-etapes/childhood-enfance_0-2/sids/pdf/sleep-sommeil-eng.pdf)

# Help Your Child Get Organized

Most kids generate a little chaos and disorganization. Yours might flit from one thing to the next — forgetting books at school, leaving towels on the floor, and failing to finish projects once started. You'd like them to be more organized and to stay focused on tasks, such as homework. Is it possible?

Yes, it is. A few kids seem naturally organized, but for the rest, organization is a skill learned over time. With help and some practice, kids can develop an effective approach to getting stuff done. And you're the perfect person to teach your child, even if you don't feel all that organized yourself!

## Easy as 1-2-3

For kids, all tasks can be broken down into a 1-2-3 process.

**1. Getting organized** means a kid gets where he or she needs to be and gathers the supplies needed to complete the task.

**2. Staying focused** means sticking with the task and learning to say "no" to distractions.

**3. Getting it done** means finishing up, checking your work, and putting on the finishing touches, like remembering to put a homework paper in the right folder and putting the folder inside the backpack so it's ready for the next day.

Once kids know these steps — and how to apply them — they can start tackling tasks more independently. That means homework, chores, and other tasks will get done with increasing consistency and efficiency. Of course, kids will still need parental help and guidance, but you probably won't have to nag as much..

Not only is it practical to teach these skills, but knowing how to get stuff done will help your child feel more competent and effective. Kids feel self-confident and proud when they're able to accomplish their tasks and responsibilities. They're also sure to be pleased when they find they have some extra free time to do what they'd like to do.

## From Teeth Brushing to Book Reports

To get started, introduce the 1-2-3 method and help your child practice it in daily life. Even something as simple as brushing teeth requires this approach, so you might use this example when introducing the concept:

**Getting organized:** Go to the bathroom and get out your toothbrush and toothpaste. Turn on the water.

**Staying focused:** Dentists say to brush for 3 minutes, so that means keep brushing, even if you hear a really good song on the radio or you remember that you wanted to call your friend. Concentrate and remember what the dentist told you about brushing away from your gums.

**Getting it done:** If you do steps 1 and 2, step 3 almost takes care of itself. Hurray, your 3 minutes are up and your teeth are clean! Getting it done means finishing up and putting on the finishing touches. With teeth brushing, that would be stuff like turning off the water, putting away the toothbrush and paste, and making sure there's no toothpaste foam on your face!

With a more complex task, like completing a book report, the steps would become more involved, but the basic elements remain the same.

Here's how you might walk your child through the steps:

### 1. Getting Organized:

Explain that this step is all about getting ready. It's about figuring out what kids need to do and gathering any necessary items. For instance: "So you have a book report to write. What do you need to do to get started?" Help your child make a list of things like: Choose a book. Make sure the book is OK with the teacher. Write down the book and the author's name. Check the book out of the library. Mark the due date on a calendar.

Then help your child think of the supplies needed: The book, some note cards, a pen for taking notes, the teacher's list of questions to answer, and a report cover. Have your child gather the supplies where the work will take place.



As the project progresses, show your child how to use the list to check off what's already done and get ready for what's next. Demonstrate how to add to the list, too. Coach your child to think, "OK, I did these things. Now, what's next? Oh yeah, start reading the book" and to add things to the list like finish the book, read over my teacher's directions, start writing the report.

### 2. Staying Focused:

Explain that this part is about doing it and sticking with the job. Tell kids this means doing what you're supposed to do, following what's on the list, and sticking with it.

It also means focusing when there's something else your child would rather be doing — the hardest part of all! Help kids learn how to handle and resist these inevitable temptations. While working on the report, a competing idea might pop into your child's head: "I feel like shooting some hoops now." Teach kids to challenge that impulse by asking themselves "Is that what I'm supposed to be doing?"

Explain that a tiny break to stretch a little and then get right back to the task at hand is OK. Then kids can make a plan to shoot hoops after the work is done. Let them know that staying focused is tough sometimes, but it gets easier with practice.

### 3. Getting it Done:

Explain that this is the part when kids will be finishing up the job. Talk about things like copying work neatly and asking a parent to read it over to help find any mistakes. Coach your child to take those important final steps: putting his or her name on the report, placing it in a report cover, putting the report in the correct school folder, and putting the folder in the backpack so it's ready to be turned in.

## How to Start

Here are some tips on how to begin teaching the 1-2-3 process:

### Introduce the Idea

Start the conversation by using the examples above and show your child the kids' article Organize, Focus, Get It Done. Read it together and ask for reactions. Will it be easy or hard? Is he or she already doing some of it? Is there something he or she would like to get better at?

### Go for Some Buy-In

Brainstorm about what might be easier or better if your child was more organized and focused. Maybe homework would get done faster, there would be more play time, and there would be less nagging about chores. Then there's the added bonus of your child feeling proud and you being proud, too.

### Set Expectations

Be clear, in a kind way, that you expect your kids to work on these skills and that you'll be there to help along the way.

### Make a Plan

Decide on one thing to focus on first. You can come up with three things and let your child choose one. Or if homework or a particular chore has been a problem, that's the natural place to begin.

### Get Comfortable in Your Role

For the best results, you'll want to be a low-key coach. You can ask questions that will help kids get on track and stay there. But use these questions to prompt their thought process about what needs to be done. Praise progress, but don't go overboard. The self-satisfaction kids will feel will be a more powerful motivator. Also, be sure to ask your child's opinion of how things are going so far.

### Start Thinking in Questions

Though you might not realize it, every time you take on a task, you ask yourself questions and then answer them with thoughts and actions. If you want to unload groceries from the car, you ask yourself:

Q: Did I get them all out of the trunk?

A: No. I'll go get the rest.

Q: Did I close the trunk?



A: Yes.

Q: Where's the milk and ice cream? I need to put them away first.

A: Done. Now, what's next?

Encourage kids to start seeing tasks as a series of questions and answers. Suggest that they ask these questions out loud and then answer them. These questions are the ones you hope will eventually live inside a child's head. And with practice, they'll learn to ask them without being prompted.

Work together to come up with questions that need to be asked so the chosen task can be completed. You might even jot them down on index cards. Start by asking the questions and having your child answer. Later, transfer responsibility for the questions from you to your child.

### Things to Remember

It will take time to teach kids how to break down tasks into steps. It also will take time for them to learn how to apply these skills to what needs to be done. Sometimes, it will seem simpler just to do it for them. It certainly would take less time. But the trouble is that kids don't learn how to be independent and successful if their parents swoop in every time a situation is challenging or complex.

### Here's why it's worth your time and effort:

Kids learn new skills that they'll need — how to pour a bowl of cereal, tie shoes, match clothes, complete a homework assignment.

They'll develop a sense of independence. The child who dresses himself or herself today at age 4 feels like a big kid. It's a good feeling that will deepen over time as they learn to do even more without help. From these good feelings, kids begin to form a belief about themselves. In short, "I can do it."

Your firm but kind expectations that your kids should start tackling certain jobs on their own send a strong message. You reinforce their independence and encourage them to accept a certain level of responsibility. Kids learn that others will set expectations and that they can meet them.

This kind of teaching can be a very loving gesture. You're taking the time to show your child how to do something — with interest, patience, love, kindness, and his or her best interests at heart. This will make kids feel cared for and loved. Think of it as filling up a child's toolbox with crucial life tools.

Reviewed by: D'Arcy Lyness, PhD  
Date reviewed: October 2008  
www.kidshealth.org



## After School Snacks

It's a scene that plays out daily in homes everywhere. Kids come in from school and head straight to the kitchen looking for something to eat. How can you make sure your child gets nourished but still has room for a healthy dinner? Read on.

Though kids need less frequent snacks as they get older, it's not surprising that most are hungry after school. Many kids eat lunch early — 11:30 or even before — and then have an afternoon of classes and maybe even an after-school activity before their next chance to eat. It's no wonder the snack food vending machine looks so appealing at the end of the day.

Depending on your child's age and after-school routine, you may not always be able to control what he or she eats in the late afternoon. But don't throw in the towel just yet. Take these steps to guide your child to good after-school snacks that will be satisfying and still leave room for a nutritious dinner.

### Figure Out the Timing

Put yourself in your kids' shoes and consider their eating schedules on a normal weekday. Some younger kids may have a mid-morning snack, but most older school-age kids won't. Get the answers to these questions: When is lunchtime? What and how much do they eat at lunch? Do they ever skip lunch? Does the after-school program serve snacks? This will help you figure out how hungry kids will be when they get home.

You'll also want to think about what time you normally serve dinner. A child who gets home famished at 3 and eats a large snack probably won't be hungry if dinner is at 5:30. Likewise, it may not be reasonable to expect a child whose parents work late to go until 7:30 with nothing to eat since lunch. Think about your kids' schedules and plan accordingly.

### Create a List of Healthy Options

Next, talk about which snacks kids would like to have at snack time. Come up with a list of healthy options together and be sure to include a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. While a slice of cake or some potato chips shouldn't be forbidden foods, such low-nutrient snacks shouldn't be on the everyday after-school menu.

If you can, take your kids along to the grocery store and spend some time reading the nutrition facts labels and comparing products. Pay attention to the amounts of protein, fiber, calcium, and other important nutrients, and don't miss the chance to

talk about portion sizes. Together, choose snacks that are low in sugar, fat, and salt. Being involved in the process makes it more likely that kids will learn to make healthy food choices.

### Make Healthy Snacks an Easy Choice

Don't expect kids — even teens — to cut up their own veggie sticks. It's just too much bother, especially when they're hungry. Kids are more inclined to eat what's handy. That's where you come in. Make healthy snacks easily available by packing them in their lunchboxes or backpacks or by having them visible and ready-to-eat at home.



If you're at home after school, your youngster might enjoy helping you make a creative snack like ants on a log (celery topped with peanut butter and raisin "ants"), egg boats (hard-boiled egg wedges topped with a cheese sail), or fruit kabobs. Older kids may enjoy a fruit smoothie, mini-pitas with hummus dip, or whole-grain crackers topped with cheese and pear slices.

Older kids often like making their own snacks, so provide the ingredients and a few simple instructions. If dinner is just around the corner, consider allowing a "first course," such as a small salad or side vegetable while you finish preparing the family meal.

For those nights when dinner is hours away, you could opt for a more substantial snack such as half a sandwich or a quesadilla made with a whole-wheat tortilla, low-fat cheese, and salsa warmed in the microwave. Nothing too complicated, though. A good snack should take more time to eat than it does to prepare!

If your child goes to an after-school program or to a caregiver's house, find out if snacks are served. If so, what's typically offered? If you don't like what you hear, suggest alternatives or just pack an extra snack your child can eat after school. Easy-to-pack snack options include trail mix, nuts, low-sugar whole grain cereal, whole-grain pretzels or crackers, fresh or dried fruit, and cut-up vegetables.

What if your child comes home to an empty house? Again, the best strategy is to leave something healthy front and center on the kitchen counter or in the refrigerator. A hungry child, like a hungry adult, is likely to take the path of least resistance.

Reviewed by: Mary L. Gavin, MD  
Date reviewed: May 2009  
www.kidshealth.org

**Added reasons to join the AFPA:**

Special pricing is available to AFPA Members at The Brick, Fields, and West Edmonton Mall (Choice Passes). AFPA Members also receive a discount off gas at Hughes Car Wash and Gas Diesel Bar with a Hughes card.

<h1 style="color: red; margin: 0;">MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">January 1, 2011 -December 31, 2011</p>		 <p style="margin: 0;"><b>ALBERTA FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION</b></p>
<p>NAME _____</p> <p>NAME _____</p> <p>ADDRESS _____</p> <p>CITY _____ PROVINCE _____</p> <p>POSTAL CODE _____</p> <p>TELEPHONE _____</p> <p>DATE _____</p> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;">PLEASE COMPLETE ALL AREAS TO ENSURE ACCURATE INFORMATION TYPE OR PRINT</p> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"><b>RETURN FORM AND MEMBERSHIP FEE TO:</b>  <span style="color: red;">Alberta Foster Parent Association</span>            9750 - 35 Avenue            Edmonton, Alberta T6E 6J6            Local phone (780) 429-9923            Phone: 1-800-667-2372 -Provincial Fax: (780) 426-7151</p>	<p>PLEASE MARK X IN THE APPROPRIATE BOX <input type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> RENEW</p> <p>INDICATE CLASS OF MEMBERSHIP WITH X IN THE CORRECT BOX</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> DEPARTMENT FOSTER HOME            Regional Authority Name _____            Regional Authority Number _____            Classification _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> AGENCY FOSTER HOME            Name of Agency _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ASSOCIATE MEMBER</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> SUPPORT MEMBER</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> HONORARY MEMBER</p> <p>Method of Payment <input type="checkbox"/> MASTERCARD <input type="checkbox"/> VISA  <input type="checkbox"/> CASH <input type="checkbox"/> CHEQUE</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Expiry Date _____</p> <p>Credit Card Number _____</p> <p>Authorized Signature _____</p>	

**CLASS OF MEMBERSHIP**

1. Department Foster Home Member: children are placed through the department.
2. Agency Foster Home Member: children are placed through an agency.
3. Support Member: friends of foster care who are not foster parents.
4. Associate Member: individual government staff members in the Department of Family and Social Services or a staff member of a partnering agency.
5. Honorary Member: appointed lifetime members of the AFPA (fee waived).

*The membership fee is \$50.00 per household per year (one card for each parent will be issued). A fee of \$10.00 will be charged for all NSF cheques. If you would like your membership card laminated, please enclose an additional \$0.75 per card.*



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