



PRIDE Pre-Service

Summary of Content

What is PRIDE Pre-Service

Parent's Resource for Information, Development and Education (PRIDE) is an online, self-directed learning experience for potential caregivers. PRIDE was developed by Governors State University and has been adapted to include the current program, practice and policy expectations of caregivers in Alberta. PRIDE Pre-Service provides potential caregivers with the information and resources needed to have a greater understanding of the caregiving experience. PRIDE Pre-Service focuses on key learnings about working within the Child Intervention system, understanding the developmental needs of children and youth and commitment to supporting the child or youth's significant relationships with family, culture and others in the pursuit of permanence. Participants will come to a place where they can make a well informed decision as to whether or not caregiving is the right path for them and their families.

Session One- Connecting with PRIDE

This first session introduces participants to the intent and framework of PRIDE training, as well as how to navigate the online learning environment. Participants are introduced to the Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes (also known as 'competencies') that are required for a successful caregiving experience. Participants will be introduced to the requirements and assessment process to become an approved caregiver. The uniqueness of the caregiving experience is explored through the lived experience of children and youth in care as well as their caregivers. The challenges and rewards of caregiving are explored as participants begin to self-assess their readiness to become a caregiver and to work collaboratively within the Child Intervention system.

Session Two- Teamwork Towards Permanence

Session two introduces participants to the importance of supporting the relationship between the child or youth and their family. This extends to learning about the importance of life long connections to support a child or youth in the development of their identity, connection to culture and self-esteem. Legal permanency is introduced with a key focus on maintaining connections. Participants will be introduced to the lived experiences of caregivers who have effectively worked with the child or youth and their family to establish permanence. The role of caregivers within the child or youth's team is explored.

Session Three- Meeting Developmental Needs: Attachment

Session three reviews some of the "basics" of the typical growth and development children and youth. Participants are introduced to the reality that many children and youth in care face developmental challenges due to experiences of trauma, abuse, neglect and separation from family. The importance of meaningful connection is explored in relation to meeting the child or youth's developmental needs. Participants will learn the importance of attachment as it relates to the child or youth's development and ability to form meaningful connection throughout their lifetime. The differences between attachment and bonding are explored to enhance understanding of the role caregivers have in supporting the child or youth's attachments and creating opportunities for bonding between the child or youth, their caregivers and others.

Session Four- Meeting Developmental Needs: Loss

When children are separated from the only family they have known, an overwhelming sense of loss may slow growth and development. This session covers the types of losses children have before they come into care. It explores how placement can deepen the child's sense of loss. The session introduces the stages of loss, and their impact on the child, with an emphasis on how children and youth respond to loss. Loss is presented as something everyone must face. Participants will have a chance to consider their own response to loss. Based on this, they will begin to understand and prepare for the loss experiences that come with caregiving, as well as how they can help children cope with their losses.

Session Five- Strengthening Family Relationships

This session focuses on how families instill identity, cultural heritage, and self-esteem in children. Participants will have the opportunity to learn ways to help a child develop positive cultural identity at different developmental stages. The importance of family connections and continuity is also addressed. The temporary nature of caregiving is explored with a focus on family reunification. Potential caregivers will learn about their important role in supporting family reunification, including the importance of ongoing connection through communication and visitation. The successes and challenges of reunification are highlighted with the lived experience of caregivers.

Session Six- Meeting Developmental Needs: Discipline

Potential caregivers are introduced to the expectations for positive, effective discipline. Challenging behaviour is presented as a child or youth's response to their experiences of trauma, abuse and neglect. Potential caregivers will understand the difference between discipline and punishment as well as the strategies and policies that ensure discipline is positive and effective. Potential caregivers will understand the negative impact of physical punishment and policies that prohibit the use of physical punishment. Skills for positive, effective discipline are introduced as well as specific strategies for meeting the developmental needs of children and youth who respond with challenging behaviours. The session also includes de-escalation strategies for caregivers to use when addressing challenging behaviours.

Session 7- Continuing Family Relationships

In this session, strategies for reaching permanence are detailed, starting with efforts to support reunification and lifelong connection. This session promotes understanding of permanency timeframes, and the importance of the "child's clock" in making permanency decisions. Potential caregivers will learn about various strategies for achieving permanence in a timely fashion. Permanency options for children and youth who cannot be reunited with their families are also explored, including: adoption, private guardianship and independent living. The session includes a discussion of cultural considerations in permanency planning, the impact of inter-racial placements on children and youth, and ways to support a child or youth's developing identity when they are in inter-racial placements.

Caring for Indigenous Children and Youth-

This important session provides an introduction to the historical and current experiences of Indigenous communities, families, children and youth as related to the Child Intervention system. Participants are introduced to important Legislation and policies including: An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families; Best Interests of Indigenous Children, Youth and Families; and, Child, Youth, and Family Enhancement Act Matters to Be Considered.

Participants will begin to learn about the impact of historical injustices, inter-generational trauma and lateral violence. The crucial importance of a child or youth's cultural connection is explored as a means to enhance identity and connection. Potential caregivers are encouraged to explore the importance of cultural connection in their own lives and how they can best support meaningful cultural connection for children and youth who may come into their care..

Session 8- Planning for Change

As PRIDE Pre-Service begins to wind down, this session takes a practical look at some of the immediate and long-term changes and challenges potential caregivers can expect as children and youth are placed in their care. Participants are given an opportunity to begin exploring how placement may affect them, other children or youth in the home and the relationships they have with their extended family, friends and community. Participants will be introduced to skills that can help manage the impact of caregiving on different family members. The session also explore ways to create a safe and healing home environment for children and youth who have experienced trauma, abuse, neglect and loss. The session ends with the importance of accessing formal and informal supports to ensure a successful caregiving experience.

Session 9- Making an Informed Decision

In this closing session, participants will hear from a panel of experienced members of the caregiving team. Birth parents, foster parents, adoptive parents, and other members of the child or youth's case team present their views and answer questions. Potential caregivers will have a chance to reflect on their own growth in the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for caregiving. At the end of this session, potential caregivers will be ready to discuss the possibility of moving forward to become an approved caregiver.