

Advisor

Summer 2012



Advisor

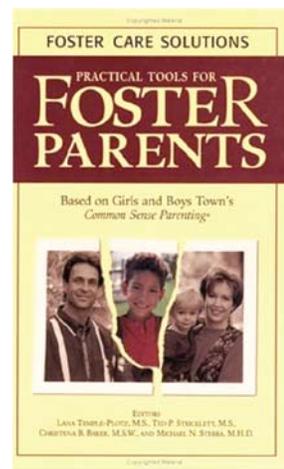
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Practical Tools for Foster Parents

by Michael N. Sterba, Lana Temple-Plotz

More than half a million children today live in out-of-home care, and many have special problems. The need for well-trained, loving foster parents has never been greater. With this book, Girls and Boys Town offers these committed people the professional tools they need to not only care for foster children but to actually help them get better. New or experienced foster parents as well as grandparents and other relatives caring for a child forced from home by a crisis will find help and hope in this book.



Paperback, 200 pages

Published November 1st 2001 by Boys Town Press

ISBN 1889322490 (ISBN13: 9781889322490)

Check out the SFFA website

Please visit our website for the latest information on fostering in our province.

You'll find:

- Updated **manuals and policies**
- A **calendar of events** for the whole province
- Continuous **announcements** from our staff
- A list of our **Resource Centre materials** ... and much more!



We ask that all SFFA Local Committee Executive members notify us of all current and upcoming events as well as any training so that we may post them on our website calendar.

www.sffa.sk.ca



our
Children,
our
Future

**Friday, June 8 and
Saturday, June 9, 2012**

Radisson Hotel
405 - 20th Street East
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

**For more information, call
1-888-276-2880**

(Conference details listed on pg 4)

SFFA 2012 CONFERENCE • SASKATOON

Letter from the Executive Director

As I write this note to our membership, I begin to reflect back over the last number of months and the accomplishments of our association, and that we have continued to make positive changes and strides on behalf of our membership.

In 2008, our office in partnership with the Ministry of Social Services piloted a project that would provide in home supports to foster homes that exceed the suggested number of children outlined by provincial policy. The association continues to offer this support and service to foster homes in the Saskatoon Region. Over the past four years, this program has been successful in supporting foster families that are requiring additional supports within their foster homes, which has led to fewer foster home investigations.

This past fall the Ministry of Social Services committed further to the safety of families and provided carbon monoxide detectors to all foster families throughout the province. Since that time, it has been reported that in one incident this has saved the lives of one of our families.

December 2011, Saskatchewan Government Insurance donated over 2700 books to the children that



“We look forward to the continued partnerships and strive in providing further supports to our families and the children and youth that they care for.”

had been placed in foster care. The association matched this donation and distributed books not only to the children in care but also to the foster family’s biological and adopted children.

February 2012, in order to further enhance the safety of children in foster care, certification in first aid and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation

(CPR) is now mandatory for all Saskatchewan foster parents. One-time funding of \$561,400 from the Ministry of Social Services was provided for the certification of foster parents (680 foster homes) across the province. The SFFA will co-ordinate, track and monitor training of foster parents with St. John Ambulance. We are always striving to ensure that foster children receive the best care possible. This mandatory training will provide foster parents with the type of skills required to improve the outcome of emergency situations.

In closing, I would like to thank our Board of Directors, our partners (the Ministry of Social Services, Children’s Advocates Office, and the Youth in Care Network) and the Provincial Office staff. Without the strong partnership and commitment from everyone, we would not have been able to reach the milestones, which we have. We look forward to the continued partnerships and strive in providing further supports to our families and the children and youth that they care for.

Deb Davies

Deb Davies
Executive Director, SFFA



Reminder to all foster parents

1. To respect confidentiality of all information regarding a child, the child’s family and his/her background. This includes posting pictures and any identifying information on the internet (Facebook, MySpace, blogs, etc.)
2. That any damage claim you wish to submit should be submitted directly to our office and not the Ministry of Social Services.

Our Children, Our Future — SFFA Conference 2012

CONFERENCE WORKSHOP SESSIONS INCLUDE:

W.I.S.E. Up!

The W.I.S.E. Up! Program first helps children realize that they are smarter than their peers – or WISER about adoption because of their experience of growing up in an adoptive family. They can take on the role of “expert”. This understanding alone helps introduce and prepare adopted children for the distinct likelihood that they will get asked questions and the reasons why.

Second, children learn to think about who is asking the question/making the comment and what they think is the motivation behind the question. Is the question coming from a trusted friend, from the class bully, from a teacher, etc. Is the person just curious or trying to tease?

Third, children learn to identify how they feel about the person asking the question/making the comment when the question is being asked – are they alone with their friend, or in front of other classmates; what kind of mood are they in – how are they feeling at that particular moment how they feel about the question/comment. Children are usually shown a list of possible feelings including – sad, angry, surprised, shy, happy, confused, embarrassed, etc.

In the final and fourth step, children learn that they have four possible options for responding – each represented by the four letters of W.I.S.E., a tool designed for quick memorization. They actively CHOOSE how to respond.

Lifebook Workshop

Every child who is adopted from foster care deserves a clear, detailed record of his or her life prior to adoption. Once a child is placed with a permanent family, life books are a connection to the past and will assist children in understanding their history and moving forward with their future.

Gender Creative Children

This presentation traces a personal journey towards understanding a gender creative child. The presenter will review and discuss how they’ve gone about educating themselves and others: where, how and what information that they have sourced.

Newcomers in Foster Care

Our province has become home to many families from around the world. This workshop will provide you with an overview and understanding of the many different cultures of newcomer families to our province.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Friday, June 8th, 2012

Location: Radisson Hotel

5:00 pm

Conference Registration

7:00 pm to 10:00 pm

Social Event – Radisson Hotel

Saturday, June 9th, 2012

Location: Radisson Hotel

7:00 am to 8:30 am

Breakfast and Registration

8:30 am to 8:45 am

Opening Remarks

8:45 am to 10:30 am

Keynote Address:
Bev Wiebe, Alternatives to Discipline

10:30 am to 10:45 am

Nutritional Break

10:45 am to 12:00 pm

Continuation of training
Bev Wiebe, Alternatives to Discipline

12:00 pm to 1:00 pm

Lunch

1:00 pm to 2:45 pm

WISE UP! Empowering Children and Youth

2:45 pm to 3:00 pm

Nutritional Break

3:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Workshop Breakouts (W1, W2, W3)

SFFA Banquet

Location: TCU Place
35 - 22nd Street East
(transportation included)

6:00 pm to 6:30 pm

Cocktails

6:30 pm to 10:00 pm

Saskatchewan Foster Families
Association Recognition
Banquet and Awards
Presentation

Registration forms can be found online on the SFFA website at <http://www.sffa.sk.ca/news/>. Registrations will not be accepted after June 1st, 2012.

Government moving forward on child welfare transformation

As recommended by the Saskatchewan Child Welfare Review Panel, the Government of Saskatchewan is embarking on discussions with key stakeholders regarding a review of the province's child welfare legislation.

"Our Child Welfare Transformation Strategy is guiding our efforts to change the child welfare system based on the themes of working differently, prevention and renewal," Social Services Minister June Draude said. "Reviewing and updating our legislation is an important step in renewing our system, and we are moving forward with our partners to begin this critical work."

The legislation to be discussed includes The Child and Family Services Act (1989), Child and Family Services Regulations (1990), Adoption Act (1998) and Adoption Regulations (2003). Any revisions to the legislation will take into account changes in society as well as in child welfare practices that have occurred since the legislation was last amended.

"Carefully examining the current legislation is one of several key steps required to successfully transform the child welfare system in our province," Children's Advocate and former Chair of the 2010 Child Welfare Review Panel Bob Pringle said. "My office has encouraged the Ministry of Social Services to begin this process and we welcome the opportunity to participate with government and community stakeholders to foster creative solutions and better outcomes for children, youth and their families."

Throughout April and May, the Ministry of Social Services will hold initial discussions with its partners, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, and key stakeholders including First Nation Child and Family Service Agencies, Métis Family and Community Justice Services, Saskatchewan Children's Advocate, Saskatchewan Ombudsman, Saskatchewan Foster Families Association, Saskatchewan Youth in Care and Custody Network, Adoption Support Centre of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers and Social Services staff. The purpose of these early meetings will be to review the Child Welfare Review Panel's recommendations in the context of legislative renewal and determine the potential scope of the legislative recommendations. Following these meetings, broader consultations will be held regarding changes to the legislation.

In December 2010, the Saskatchewan Child Welfare Review Panel presented their final report to the province. The report contains 12 recommendations for fundamental change to the child welfare system and the systems that support children, youth and families. In response, government formed the Cabinet Committee on Children and Youth and launched the Saskatchewan Children and Youth Agenda to provide a co-ordinated, cross-government approach to the complex issues facing children, youth and families.

Progress to date includes:

- Changes in child welfare

service delivery, including a risk assessment model pilot project, a new approach to home assessments for First Nation children, the launch of a treatment foster care pilot program and new intensive family support programs;

"Reviewing and updating our legislation is an important step in renewing our system."

- Forty new pre-kindergarten programs in 23 communities and increased participation by First Nation and Métis people in apprenticeship programs;
- Increases in direct client service hours for children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder of up to 750 per cent across health regions; and
- Through the Community Mobilization Prince Albert initiative, a reduction in crime and violence levels, emergency room admissions, prosecution files, and child and family protective files.

"Although relatively new, the Saskatchewan Children and Youth Agenda is already having an impact on at-risk children, youth and families," Draude said. "Our \$34 million investment last March is paying off in better supports for some of our society's most vulnerable people, and that is indeed a success."

For more information, contact:

Trish Alcorn

Social Services, Regina

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Cell: 306-536-1479

The Canadian Foster Family Association—who are we?

The Canadian Foster Family Association (CFFA) is a national organization that was formed in 1978 and was then incorporated in 1987. Our mandate is to speak as a collective voice for foster families throughout the country, with a primary goal to enhance the quality of care provided to children and youth in Canada.

A volunteer Board of Directors comprised of foster parents from across Canada leads the CFFA. There is one director and two delegates who represent each Province/Territory. The Executive committee is elected by the Provincial/Territorial voting Directors and Delegates at each Annual General Meeting.

The CFFA receives no government funding and is maintained through

membership fees, donations, and the generosity of communities in fundraising initiatives. We count on foster parents and other interested parties to support the work of the CFFA by purchasing a donor membership which is \$20.00 per year. Membership forms are available on our website: www.canadianfosterfamilyassociation.ca.

The Board of Directors works diligently throughout the year to achieve the Association's goals and objectives which are:

- To create public awareness of the role and contributions of foster families in Canada
- To provide a central resource for information sharing and communication between member organizations and the service agencies associated with

foster parenting.

- To provide on-going support to member organizations
- To work in collaboration and partnership with Health Canada and other Federal Government departments for the enhancement of the foster care system in Canada

We are committed to improving the quality of care provided to children and youth throughout Canada and supporting foster parents in their commitment to children and youth no matter where in Canada they reside.

For more information about the CFFA please visit our website, www.canadianfosterfamilyassociation.ca or contact any one of the Executive or Board members.

Imagine yourself in the club this summer!

WHAT is the TD Summer Reading Club?

It's a free program just for kids, that runs at libraries across Canada every year. Kids who register will receive a free poster and activity book, and a sticker with a secret code for every book they read during the summer. There are nine stickers to collect, and the secret codes will unlock reading rewards on this website. See if you can collect them all!

WHO can join the club?

Any kid in Canada can join the club, and it's free!

WHERE can I join the club?

Check to see if the club is running at your local library, then drop in to get your poster and activity book.

You can also participate through this website.

WHEN can I join?

As soon as school finishes in June!

WHY should I join the club?

Because it's going to be SO MUCH FUN! There will be cool programs, games and activities, and lots of other neat things to see, read and do. This website is also going to be full of lots of amazing stuff, including secret content, just for club members.

The fun starts in June. See you then!

Visit the Canadian Camping Association for your free handbook! <http://www.ccamping.org/index.php?id=19>

For potential or new camp parents who need to know:

- the benefits of camp
- how to choose a camp
- how to register
- how to prepare your camper before camp
- what to expect once your child goes to camp

Download a free copy of a complete handbook for camp parents: *Camp, The Best Time of a Child's*

Life! on the Our Kids Go To Camp website. Written by Catherine Ross, CCA/ACC Executive Member.



What can an advocate do for you?



WHAT CAN AN ADVOCATE DO FOR YOU? AN ADVOCATE:

- Helps to keep lines of communication open on a regular basis between you and your workers
- Ensures you are being properly compensated for your work. This includes basic maintenance, FFS and DLSA
- Ensure that payments are made on a timely basis
- Assists in strengthening the professional relationship between the Ministry and foster parent
- Helps the foster parent understand why the Ministry may be doing what they are doing
- Ensures that both the foster parent and workers are following the PRIDE model of practice
- Assists the foster parent in following the five competencies of PRIDE
- Assists the foster parent through Ministry procedures such as formal reviews, investigations and yearly reviews
- Is always willing to travel province wide to meet with you and or the Ministry
- Promotes professional relationships by attending local meetings, BBQ's and other events

My name is **Tracey Arnold**, and I have had a few different roles with the SFFA over the past four years. I am currently the Senior Advocate. In this position, I am responsible for the intakes for support and damage claims; as well, I support foster parents in all of the above roles. I have a degree in Psychology, and have had experience supporting people in previous jobs. I love to cook, spend time outdoors, camping and fishing. One of my most interesting hobbies is arm wrestling. I have been arm wrestling for 16 years, and hold many provincial, national and a few world titles. I have travelled around the country and world to compete. As an Advocate, I am dedicated to



providing support and empowering the caregivers of children and youth in care, and I am passionate about the welfare of our province's children.

My name is **Wayne Roman**. I have been an advocate with the SFFA for four years now and have successfully supported foster parents in all of the above roles. Four years in the same position shows my experience, dedication and love for the job. I have a three year BA in Psychology and will complete my four year BA in Sociology this winter. Prior to this position I taught adult computer classes for over 20 years. I love the outdoors and spend time outside whenever I get the chance. During the summer I putter around outside and also spend time on home renovations. I recently committed time to working out and have been at the gym 40 minutes a day since November. I love to travel and can't wait to see the rest of the world. As an advocate I work together with the Ministry and foster parents to assist the foster parent with their concerns.

To contact an advocate,
call the SFFA office at
(306) 975-1580.

How safe is your Sunscreen? *by Nancy Ripton*

CHOOSING THE BEST SUN PROTECTION FOR YOUR FAMILY

Let's face it, baby skin burns fast. But even if you buy a sunscreen specially labeled for children, it may not provide the protection they need. Here's how to make sure your child gets the ultimate sun protection:

Put Your Sunscreen to the Test

The Environmental Working Group (EWG), tested almost 2,000 sunscreens for effectiveness and safety. Two of five brand-name sunscreens either failed to protect skin from sun damage and/or contained hazardous chemicals. (Click Here to find out how your sunscreen measures up.)

UVA versus UVB – there's a big difference

Most sunscreens fare well when it comes to blocking UVB rays – the most superficially penetrating rays, responsible for giving us a suntan (or burn). UVB rays also contribute to skin cancer and aging.

UVB protection is measured by Sun Protection Factor (SPF). "If you have a sunscreen with an SPF15, you can stay out in the sun for 15 times longer than you could without that sunscreen and not get a sun burn," says Dr. Paul Cohen, a Toronto-based dermatologist.

But SPF doesn't protect your or your kids from UVA rays. "UVA rays penetrate deeper than UVB," says Dr. Cohen. Although they don't physically tan or burn your skin, they are the primary rays responsible for premature aging and skin cancer.

Picking the most powerful sun protection

"There are only *four approved*

ingredients known to block UVA rays," says Sean Gray, a senior analyst with the EWG. These include: *zinc oxide, titanium dioxide, avobenzone, and mexoryl.* The bad news is avobenzone and mexoryl are highly unstable and break down quickly in sunlight.



Oxybenzone is a common sunscreen ingredient that has been linked to a host of problems, including allergies, hormone disruption and cell damage.

"Many companies use avobenzone as a UVA blocker," says Gray. "And on it's own, it just doesn't cut it." Some companies, including Neutrogena, La Roche-Posay, Vichy and Ombrelle, add ingredients to increase the photostability of avobenzone.

"At the time, however, there's no

third-party verification," says Gray. "So if you're relying on avobenzone to block UVA, it's a trust issue." To be safe, parents should look for a sunscreen with at least a seven percent concentration of zinc oxide or titanium dioxide. These are stable ingredients that will protect against UVA rays for at least two hours.

Could your sunscreen do more harm than good?

"I'm concerned with the lack of safety testing with sunscreens," says Dr. Rebecca Sutton, a staff scientist with the EWG. There is a long list of ingredients that are potentially harmful, or even cancer causing, that we just don't know enough about.

This is especially worrisome when it comes to children. The surface area of a child's skin relative to his body weight is much greater than adults, so any chemical applied to a child's skin is about 1.4 times more potent.

Oxybenzone is a common sunscreen ingredient that has been linked to a host of problems, including allergies, hormone disruption and cell damage. Oxybenzone may also help other chemicals penetrate the skin. The good news is, oxybenzone is getting easier to avoid – in the last year there has been a 19 percent drop in oxybenzone use in sunscreen.

Dangerous delivery systems?

Dr. Sutton recommends avoiding powder and spray sun care. "The airborne chemicals are potentially dangerous to breathe in and could have a long-term toxic effect on the lungs." And avoid 2-in-1 combos, such as sunscreen mixed with insect repellants. "You need to apply

sunscreen every few hours to be effective and you don't want to put bug repellent on that often," says Gray.

The best sun protection combines a quality sunscreen with a good dose of common sense. "People rely too heavily on sunscreen alone," says Dr. Cohen. Make sure your child wears a hat and UV protective clothing. Avoid direct sunlight during the peak hours of 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and play in the shade when possible.

And, when it comes to choosing a sunscreen, look for a brand with at least seven percent zinc oxide or titanium dioxide and an SPF of 15 to 30. (Sunscreens above SPF 30 block

just one to two percent more UVB rays and contain two to three times more active ingredients.)

This article was reprinted with permission from www.justthefactsbaby.com.

- 40% of brand-name sunscreens fail to provide proper sun protection or contain hazardous chemicals.
- SPF only protects you from the sun's superficial UVB rays.
- To protect your children's skin from UVA rays, choose a sunscreen with at least a 7% concentration of zinc oxide or titanium dioxide.
- Avoid sunscreens with oxybenzone.
- The airborne chemicals in powder and spray sun care could be bad for baby's lungs.

Dr. Paul Cohen, a Toronto-based dermatologist at the Rosedale Dermatology Center. He was named one of Canada's best dermatologists by Fashion magazine. The Environmental Working Group (EWG) is a non-profit organization with the goal of protecting public health and the environment. Sean Gray is a senior analyst with the EWG and Dr. Rebecca Sutton is a EWG staff scientist.

After-hours help now available to Regina families in crisis

The headquarters for an intensive after-hours in-home support program opened its doors today in Regina.

Fox Valley Counselling Services Inc. held its official grand opening this morning thanks to more than \$439,000 in operational funding from the Ministry of Social Services. "I want to congratulate Fox Valley on the grand opening of its new office," Social Services Minister June Draude said. "This new location will allow Fox Valley to provide an Intensive In-Home Support Program in Regina that will respond to the needs of families in crisis with the goal of addressing child safety while reducing the number of children removed from their homes."

"This funding demonstrates the government's commitment to working in partnership with First

Nations and Métis families," Fox Valley Counselling Services Inc. Chairperson Keith Pratt said. "We will now be able to help more families in crisis and, when appropriate, allow more children to remain with their family."

The ministry also partners with Fox Valley through annual funding of \$203,000 to run Talking Circles - a program that helps develop a more co-operative and open relationship between front-line caseworkers and families involved in Child Protection Services.

Across Saskatchewan, programs like Fox Valley are part of an overall initiative to transform the child welfare system to provide better supports that keep more families together. These investments are already having an impact. The number of children coming into care is down for the first

time in a decade and the ministry has been able to increase the number of children placed permanently with extended family caregivers by 47 per cent since 2007.

Overall, the province has invested \$84 million in new funding specifically for child and family services since November 2007. Included in this total funding is over \$48 million in increased support for community based organizations serving children, youth and their families. These funding increases have helped community-based organizations deliver important programs that improve the lives of our most vulnerable citizens.

*For more information, contact:
Andrew Dinsmore
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Phone: 306-787-8689
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Raise a Street Smart child *by Paula Statman*

BUILDING STREET SMARTS WILL HELP KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE

- As soon as your toddler says her first words, it's time to start talking to her about safety.
- Don't frighten your child by expressing your own fears—instead be matter-of-fact when discussing sensitive issues.
- Teach your child to listen to her instincts and know it's okay to say “no” to anyone acting inappropriately.
- Use the five P's—protect, prepare, practice, praise, preview—to teach your child new skills.
- Children who are loved unconditionally feel more worthwhile and are less likely to mistreat others, or allow someone to mistreat them.

1. Be a protector and teacher.

No parent wants to admit that violence, bullying or online predators may find their way into their child's life. Unfortunately, most children will be exposed to at least one of these issues early in life. Be aware of any dangers in your neighborhood so you can better inform and protect your child.

2. Talk safety early.

As soon as your toddler says her first words, it's time to start talking about safety. Let her know it's never okay to feel threatened by someone—and, if she does, she should come to you for help. Teach simple safety tips like never go anywhere with a stranger and if you're lost go to someone of authority.

3. Prepare—don't scare—your kids.

Research shows if you express your own fears when telling your child about potential dangers, she will only remember that you were afraid. Any safety message will be lost. Instead, practice using moderate language and a matter-of-fact tone when you discuss sensitive issues. Focus on what your child needs to learn, rather than why it upsets you. Share your fears and worries with other adults, not your children.

4. Help your child say “no.”

Empower your child with the right to say “no” to anyone acting inappropriately—regardless of their position of power. This is a first

step in turning “nice” kids, who are compliant in most situations, into “safe and strong” kids who obey adults unless they feel confused or threatened.

5. Teach your child to respond to her instincts.

It might be a voice in her head that says, “Uh-oh, this isn't okay.” Or maybe it's a feeling in the pit of her stomach. Teach your child to listen to her instincts and not to try to rationalize another person's behavior or wait for a situation to escalate.

6. Teach and model healthy boundaries in relationships.

Children need to learn what a “respectful distance” looks and feels like. They also need to recognize if someone is ignoring boundaries and what to do about it.

7. Protect, Prepare, Practice, Praise and Preview.

Use these five steps to teach your child the skills she will need when she learns something new, such as crossing the street on her own. The emphasis is on supervised practice, which allows you to gauge your child's progress and ensures that you don't give her a new privilege or responsibility before she is prepared to handle it successfully.

8. Monitor your child.

Protective parenting is not about hovering or being paranoid. It's about being a good observer, supervisor

and sometimes a detective. Listen to, and watch, your child. Be curious, involved and ask questions. Notice any changes in her behavior or mood. You want to catch early signs of a budding problem, rather than deal with a full-blown crisis.

9. Cultivate your child's self esteem and desirable traits.

Enthusiastically praise glimpses of behavior that you want to see more of. Your toddler will pick up on your pleasure in watching her become trustworthy and responsible. She will try harder to demonstrate those kinds of behaviors.

10. Say: “I love you.”

It's easy to say these three words when you are proud of something your child has done, but be sure to express your love when the going gets tough too. Children who are loved unconditionally feel more worthwhile and are less likely to mistreat others, or allow someone to mistreat them.

Paula Statman is an internationally respected educator, speaker and award-winning author, known for her practical, positive approach to raising safe and strong children. A psychotherapist with a Master of Science in Social Work, Statman is the founder and director of KidWISE Institute (a leader in the field of parent education). Statman has also been a regular guest on the Oprah Winfrey Show and the Today Show (www.kidwisecorner.com).

Summer Safety for your child *by Sylvia Winkle*



The statistics are mind boggling. Most injuries that cause accidental death of children between the ages of 1 and 14 occur between May and September.

There are three S's that parents should be aware of that create simple summer safety guidelines for parents to protect their children and potentially teach them safe habits for their entire lives.

SUN • SWIMMING • SPORTS

Research indicates that two or more children's blistering sunburns increase the chance of developing skin cancer later in life. Regular applications of the appropriate sunscreen can greatly reduce the risks. Sunscreen should be applied when outdoors, even on cloudy days, and reapplied after swimming or sweating. Infants under six months should be kept out of the sun completely.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, because children spend more time outside during the hot summer months than most adults, most sun exposure happens before the age of eighteen.

First and foremost, parents should make sure their children are supervised by qualified, dependable individuals when swimming. Drowning is always an associated risk, especially for children 14 and under. Watch out for the dangerous "too's" – too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, too much strenuous activity.

According to the American Red Cross drowning is second leading cause of accidental death for Americans ages 5 to 44, and drowning is the leading cause of injury death for children 1 to 2 years old. More than 300 children under the age of 5 drown in residential swimming pools each year. Always practice safety first.

Dr. Katherine Nobles of Pediatric Associates recommends taking a hands-on approach when it comes to water safety, by practicing 'touch supervision.' Meaning they should always be within arms reach.

Most team sports require safety gear. It is the responsibility of the parents to make sure that it fits and is worn properly. And with the soaring summer temperatures, watch for signs of dehydration. For more tips and to learn about Encouraging Fairness, Fun, Opportunity, Respect and Teamwork, visit www.masshockey.com/Effort/.

Other popular summer activities include wheeled sports such as bike riding, skate boarding, roller-blading, and skating. The American Red Cross reports that children, ages 5 thru 15, represent the largest percentage of bicycle fatalities and injuries. The fatality rate for this age group of bicyclists is nearly double the rate for all bicycle related injuries. Head injury is the leading cause of death in bicycle accidents. They also report that 45 - 88% of these brain injuries can be prevented by wearing helmets. Parents must teach and enforce the "wear your helmet" rule while participating in wheeled activities.

It is recommended that parents and child care givers take the necessary steps to learn CPR and first aid. This will go a long way in creating a safe and fun summer for everyone.

About the Author: Sylvia Winkle is the owner and creator of SCW Publishing Network.

Suggestions for Engaging Birth Parents

RULES OF CONVERSATION

The social worker should explain the foster parents' role to the birth parents. Together the social worker and birth and foster parents should decide how to conduct themselves and agree on rules for telephone contact such as:

- Time and days for calls should be agreed upon.
- Birth parents should not make promises to the child.
- All adults should talk positively to the child about the other adults and about the child.
- The child is not to be accused of blame for the birth family's disruption.

Don't take personally anything the birth parents might say. This is the birth parent's way to fight for their children until they learn and accept the more appropriate ways.

Telephone Contact

- Contact birth parents within 48 hours of placement, if possible. The child's social worker must approve of contact first.
- Join with the birth parents by telling them you know they must be worried about their child. Assure them you aren't trying



to keep their child and that you want to help them.

- Ask the birth parents for help with their child. Find out from them when the child usually goes to bed, what the child likes to eat, how the parent fixes the child's hair, who the most important people are in the child's life, etc.

Visits

- Visits are more successful if held in a "family atmosphere," such as at parks, fast food restaurants, day care play areas (off hours), or family rooms in an agency or foster home.

- Be sensitive to the birth parents' feelings. Don't overdress the children; understand why the birth parents give candy and other things to the children (to show love); understand how hard it is for birth parents sometimes to face their children on visits.
- Show the birth family the child's Life Book and ask them to help with the book. Ask for family pictures and family stories. Give the birth family copies of photos taken while in the foster home.
- Have children draw pictures or make something for their parents.
- Ask for the birth parents' opinions on parenting issues concerning their child: discipline, foods, rules and other things that enable them to practice parenting while having the foster parent as mentors. This is important especially if the plan is reunification. Trust can be built if the parent is respected for the strengths in their lives.

Reprinted from Fostering Perspectives (www.fosteringperspectives.org)

Benefits of Shared Parenting

By encouraging birth and foster parents to share decisions and work together as a team, shared parenting:

- Maintains the birth parent/child relationship
- Improves birth parents' self-esteem
- Helps foster parents form a realistic picture of birth parents' strengths and deficits
- Gives birth and foster parents more information about the child
- Allows the foster parent to model appropriate behavior and parenting techniques
- Helps birth parents develop an understanding of the child's needs
- Facilitates eventual reunion
- Promotes ongoing support for the family after the child returns home

New York State Citizen's Coalition for Children. (2002a). Shared parenting: Connecting circles for children. Ithaca, NY: Author. Online <<http://www.nysccc.org/linkfamily/Realities/sharedparent.htm>>

Understanding Birth Family Grief

Much of the behavior that pains and puzzles foster parents can be understood when it is viewed in the context of the grieving process that parents go through when they lose their children. The stages of birth family grief are:

1. Shock: Parents cry and plead for another chance. They can't believe their children are gone. They may feel like they are sleepwalking through life. They may be angry and irrational.
2. Protest: Parents show their feelings in more physical ways. They may be sick, can't sleep, are tired, or have headaches. They may cry or lash out at anyone who

seems like an enemy. They may refuse to do anything the judge demands because to do so would be to admit guilt. They may feel everything is hopeless and give up trying to reunite with their children.

3. Adjustment: Things start settling down. Parents regain appetite, sleep through the night, and think more clearly. The more they see their child in a non-threatening, nonjudgmental setting, the harder they may try to reunite with their child. Their self-esteem heightens and they are more open for support.

Reprinted from Fostering Perspectives (www.fosteringperspectives.org)

Hot Summer Safety Tips *by News Canada*



Summer's here and with it comes beach days, relaxation, family trips and special safety concerns. According to Susan Brunt, a Toronto based family physician, safety starts in your home, which may play host to many types of illness-causing germs and odor-producing bacteria. "Most people don't realize that germs don't go on vacation during the summer months. If anything, people need to be even more vigilant about maintaining a clean, healthy home and taking basic summer safety precautions," says Dr. Brunt. Dr. Brunt offers simple safety tips to play it safe this season.

- Kill unwelcome guests: bacteria. More people become ill from food-borne bacteria during the summer season than at any other time of the year. One

way of getting sick is through cross contamination - or the accidental spread of germs from food to food or from surfaces to food. Your hands can also spread bacteria to less obvious places, like the refrigerator, door handles, sink faucets and more. Help protect your family from food-borne illness by using an EPA-registered product such as LYSOL® Antibacterial Kitchen Cleaner to kill bacteria like E.Coli and Salmonella that cause food-borne illness.

- Protect children from excessive exposure to the sun, and especially between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. when the sun's rays are strongest. Use sunscreen or sun block with an SPF of 15 or higher. When applying sunscreen or sunblock, pay special attention to exposed parts such as the face, neck, shoulders, back and tops of feet.
- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water. Whether at work, camp,

or on the go it's important to wash your hands regularly and thoroughly.

- The road to safe traveling requires simple precautions. When it's family vacation time, pack the car with a first-aid kit, non-perishable snacks and water. And for those long road trips, keep a disinfectant product like LYSOL® Sanitizing Wipes on hand. They're a convenient way to wipe away germs that lurk on frequently touched surfaces. They're also handy for food spills and in rest-stop bathrooms

For additional tips on summer safety, call for a free copy of the "Summer Safety—Put Your Family on the Road to a Safe and Healthy Summer" brochure at 1-800-99-LYSOL.

News Canada provides a wide selection of current, ready-to-use copyright free news stories and ideas for Television, Print, Radio, and the Web.

Life (story) Books—how they can help foster children

LIFE (STORY) BOOKS: 'MAKING CONNECTIONS' by James Bevis

The experiences of foster children almost always give them a sense of missing pieces and a confused sense of who they are. Any child separated, even for relatively brief periods, needs to be able to have and keep anchors to their past such as photographs, toys and other things that might seem unimportant to anyone else.

Life (story) Books help put all the memories and pieces together in a way that helps a foster child make sense and ultimately feel good about themselves and their history. Steve, a foster carer, recalled that several years after he was fostered, he read his social services fostering file and found a copy of his Life Book which he had forgotten all about. The best thing for him was that one of his foster carers had written that as a young child, he learned to whistle 'all things bright and beautiful' and everyone would cheer. This was his favourite piece of information which he cherishes today.

"I'm grateful to everyone who bothered to complete the book. No one can understand how much people like me who have lost so much, benefit from the childhood picture painted by the book which I carry in my heart today for myself and my children. My life would have been different without the information on my birth family which helped me to connect with my history and feel more of a whole person."

Life (story) Books are important to all looked after children. They show foster children that people who cared

for them know that their biological connections are important and that by making the effort to keep making entries in the book throughout a child's time 'in care' and during every placement move, the children will be assured that their history will never be forgotten.



LifeBooks help reduce confusion and myths which frees up a foster child to pay better attention in school or be more available to focus on developing talents or following interests. Good Life (story) Books help answer questions, increase self-esteem, and provide children with information about the truth.

Children need to feel proud of their strengths and those of their birth parents. A Life (story) Book with information about birth parents helps in those difficult adolescent years when identity issues begin to come to the fore.

Good Life (story) Books contain what would also be important to people ten or twenty years later in life. They include school work, certificates, birth certificate, locks of hair, and even baby teeth, all mementos which increases a Life (story) Book's value. The Book fills in gaps with facts, descriptions, events, art work and photos, and if little is available, words can create pictures.

Foster carers often have unique opportunities to, with permission, get photos of birth parents, wider family and significant places and events. All absolutely huge pieces of information for foster children who need as much information as possible to enable them to identify and connect with their history and the attachment figures so that the risk of emotional problems later in life can be reduced and they can move on to becoming emotionally healthy adults.

The skill to creating a useful and treasured Life (story) Book is to involve the foster child from the start, and then for everyone involved in the child's history to make sure it is kept up-to-date and that the child feels complete ownership. When a child moves on, always make sure to give it to him or her, or to the social worker.

If the Book only has a few pages, it is proof to the child or adult that people have cared and loved them and thought them precious enough to deserve their treasured Life (story) Book.

Note:

In the UK we tend to use the term 'Life Story Books'. Children understand the term 'story' as something fictional, hence the (brackets).

About the Author: Simply Fostering helps people looking to foster find foster children. They also offer free help and advice to those who are thinking of becoming involved in fostering.

<http://www.simplyfostering.co.uk>

Parent-Child Visits and Shared Parenting

Shared parenting is a practice in which foster parents cultivate positive, supportive relationships with birth parents. Shared parenting relationships are based on trust, while keeping the safety and best interests of the child in focus. Parent-child visiting and shared parenting are a natural fit. As Kate, a mother whose child spent time in foster care, explains in the box at right, contact between foster and birth parents—including contact during visitation—can sometimes blossom into relationships that help parents make the changes needed to reunify their families.

Shared Parenting: A Gradual Process

Shared parenting doesn't happen all at once. Like most relationships, it usually develops gradually. After the initial meeting during the first week the child enters foster care, shared parenting often starts with low-level contact between the birth and foster parents—for example, through the exchange of a weekly journal documenting the child's week and asking questions that only the birth parent can answer.

As everyone grows more comfortable, the relationship between birth and foster parents might progress, involving steps such as:

- Recording the family reading a book and playing it for the child at bedtime.
- Going shopping with the birth parent for shoes for the child
- Having dinner at the foster parent's home.

Visit-Related Shared Parenting

Here are suggestions for engaging



in shared parenting in and around parent-child visits:

- Discuss the family's expectations about contacts and visits within the foster home, birth home, and community. Are visits doable with everyone's schedule? Can the child call the family whenever he wants or just at certain times of the day?
- Welcome the child's family into your home, and set boundaries with both the parents and child about any areas that are off limits (usually bedrooms). Or go with the child and the family if the child wants to give a tour of the whole house.
- Encourage regular contact between parents and children, as approved by the placing agency. Help make parents feel comfortable visiting in the foster home, or work with the family to find a neutral spot where everyone feels comfortable (school, a mall, library, restaurant, etc.).
- Reassure the parents your job as a foster parent is to keep the child safe and provide temporary care. Remind them you are not a replacement for the child's parents.
- Send the child to visits with art work, school work, or even homework they can work on

with their parents.

- Send the child to visits dressed in clothing that the birth parents have provided for them.
- Write down important information such as milestones, illnesses, new food choices, and updates in a journal and send it with the child to visits.
- Try to arrange the child's schedule so that the birth parent can feed the baby a bottle or give their child a snack during the visit.

(Sources for these suggestions: Foster, 2009; Buncombe Co.DSS, 2009)

What Shared Parenting Accomplishes

- Child's relationship with the birth parent is maintained.
- Foster parents form a realistic picture of birth parent's strengths and needs.
- Both birth and foster parents have more information about the child.
- Foster parents model appropriate behavior and parenting techniques.
- Birth parents develop an understanding of the child's needs.
- Smoother transitions back into the birth parent's home.
- Ongoing support for the family after the child returns home.

No Pension? No Problem!

by Janea Bellay-Dieno, Financial Advisor with JBD Financial Planning • www.jbdFinancialPlanning.com

“I am fifty-one years old, I have dedicated my life to working with kids, taking care of my family, making sure the clothes are clean, food is on the table and my family is loved. Now that I am approaching retirement age, I am not sure what my options are and how I am going to be supported financially.”

This is a common issue I hear from women, men and couples. How do I save for my retirement while still taking care of my family, and what income will the government provide me when I retire? What do I do if I don't have a pension?

There are ways to save for retirement if you don't have a pension plan:

1. Get a Financial Advisor. In most cases, a Financial Advisor will not charge you for a consultation on how they can help you. But it is important to interview 2-3 Financial Advisors before you choose one you would like to work with and you trust. Ask the Financial Advisor:

- About their education background
- How many years in the business
- How they get paid
- If they will work with you
- If they will design a retirement plan for you that includes tax and estate planning – this is important to having a full approach to your plans
- What kind of products they recommend (i.e. insurance, investments, mutual funds, stocks)
- How often you will meet with them and hear from them

2. Previous work place employment. Throughout your working years, was there a pension plan set up at that workplace? If

yes, you may want to talk to your Financial Advisor about it and get them to draft you up some scenario options of how much you can expect to receive from the old pension.

3. Canada Pension Plan. CPP recently changed their rules on how much you receive in retirement. The earliest you can receive CPP benefits is age 60, with a reduced benefit. You can call CPP at anytime and request a statement of your benefits so you will know how much you receive at age 60, before you turn age 60!

- Call Canada Revenue Agency and request a statement of each of your CPP contributions. You can go online and request the statement, or you can simply call and they will mail you out a copy. You will need your SIN, birthdate and mother's maiden name to complete the request. Phone: 1-800-277-9914

4. Old Age Security. This is a benefit you will receive at age 65. It is income dependent, and if you receive an income over a certain amount, the government will “clawback” some of these benefits and you will not receive the full amount. Talk to your Financial Advisor about how they can structure your income so you don't have an OAS Clawback.

5. Registered Retirement Savings Plans. RRSPs are a good investment if you are in a high income tax bracket NOW, and expect to be in a lower income tax bracket in retirement. Otherwise, you may want to look at alternative investments.

- The concept is simple – If you put some of your income in an RRSP, it grows tax free until withdrawn. The

purpose of an RRSP is to decrease your taxable income and defer tax payments on your investment until retirement. Remember, when you withdraw your RRSPs, you will have to pay tax on the income.

- Have your Financial Advisor show you how much tax you are saving and how your RRSPs are lowering your income tax bracket.

6. Tax Free Savings Accounts. TFSAs are a great retirement tool if used properly. I don't suggest using a TFSA as a “savings” account, but more of an investment account that is going to be saved for retirement.

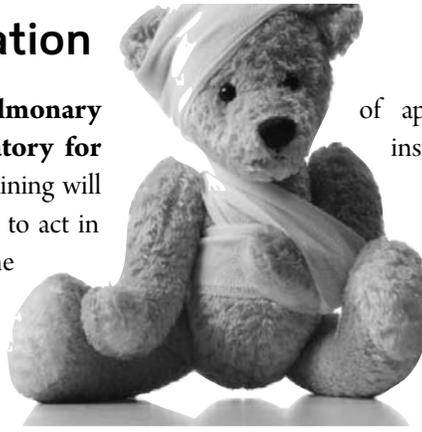
- The money you put into your TFSA will be with after-tax dollars. Any interest earned on your deposits will grow tax free.
- Open a TFSA, but use the money you save here for retirement.
- Invest in mutual funds that match your risk tolerance and retirement objectives.
- Get your Financial Advisor to show you how a TFSA will work for you and potentially how much tax it will save you.

7. Create a financial plan and set GOALS. You may have heard of the term “Pay Yourself First”. Trust me, it works. I see it everyday where couples say they can't possibly save that much. Then two years down the road they are telling me they can save more because when they don't see the money, they don't spend it, and they don't miss it.

Set your savings goals, get a Financial Advisor to help you achieve your goals and you will be on your way to a successful financial retirement!

First Aid and CPR Certification

Certification in first aid and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is now mandatory for all Saskatchewan foster parents. This training will equip foster families with the necessary skills to act in an emergency situation. In conjunction with the essential support foster families are already providing, this certification will further enhance the safety and wellbeing of children in care.



of approximately 17 hours of instruction.

How will the training administered?

The Saskatchewan Foster Families Association (SFFA) will co-ordinate, track and monitor the training of foster parents in conjunction with qualified first aid instructors.

Why is this certification being provided?

The Ministry of Social Services is providing one-time funding to enable all foster homes across the province to be certified.



How long is my certification valid?

The certification will be valid for three years, after which recertification will be necessary.

What happens when I need to be recertified?

The Saskatchewan Foster Families Association (SFFA) will be providing recertification to all foster parents.

What if I am already certified?

If you have already been certified, you must notify the SFFA to provide confirmation of certification.

Do I have to take part in this program?

Yes. This certification program is mandatory for all foster parents in the province.

Will I have to pay for training?

No. As a result, all costs will be covered by the Ministry. You will be paid an hourly wage for taking part in the program. As well, with prior approval, you will be reimbursed for any expenses incurred as a result of participating in the training.

What level of certification will I be receiving?

All foster parents will be given training in Standard First Aid and CPR (Level B). The training will consist

How can I learn more?

You can contact the SFFA Provincial Office at (306) 975-1580.



Submissions to Advisor:

The purpose of our newsletter is to educate, update and inform our foster parents. Above all, we want to support the incredible work that you are doing!

Anyone interested in submitting stories, poems or other items for publication in the newsletter is welcome to send their submission to the office at sffa@sasktel.net. Please note that submissions may be edited for length, content or clarity and names will be changed to maintain confidentiality.

Updates to Discounts for Foster Families

There have been some changes to the participants in the discount program. Please refer to this list for the most current information. In order to receive the following discounts, foster families must show their membership card and one piece of identification. If you know of a local business to request discounts from, please call Pam Kostyk at 1-306-975-1580. For complete details on the Saskatchewan Foster Families Discount Program, visit www.sffa.sk.ca

Best Western Seven Oaks – Regina	Discounted room rates
Buttons and Bows – Saskatoon	10% off
Cheestoast, 22nd Street – Saskatoon	10% off (22nd Street location only)
Costco – Regina	\$10 off each new membership
Costco – Saskatoon	\$10 off new membership
Cozy Cradles – Regina	10% off
Dawgs Footwear – Saskatoon	40% off all instore merchandise (Centre at Circle & Eighth Mall)
Day's Inn – Prince Albert	Discounted room rates
End of the Roll – Saskatoon	10% off
Family Pizza – Prince Albert	15% off
FDE Flooring – Saskatoon	15% discount off all regular, retail priced carpet, lino, tile & laminate 10% discount off all regular priced hardwood and cork
Forza Contracting	Call for discount
Heartland Motor Inn – Moose Jaw	10-15% commercial pricing
Horse Drawn Rides – Saskatoon	Contact for special coupon rates
Humpty's – Prince Albert	Kid's eat free every Friday
ICI Paints – Saskatoon	30% off paints and 20% off rollers/brushes
Jet Steam – Saskatoon	10-15% off depending on area
Kart Track Raceway – Saskatoon	2 for 1 coupons (located at Idylwyld Drive)
Katz N Jammers – Melville	Call for discount
Kid's Trading Company – Regina	10% off
Lil Sprouts – Saskatoon	10% off
Lookin Good Family Hair Styling – Moose Jaw	1/2 price haircuts
Once Upon a Child – Saskatoon	10% off
Payless Shoes – Saskatoon	15% off
Picture Perfect – Saskatoon	\$8 per sheet, for all foster children school photos. For in studio portraits, there will be a 20% discount on printed product and services
Plato's Closet – Saskatoon	10% off
Rak's Bowling House – Saskatoon	2 for 1 call ahead for availability
Ramada – Prince Albert	Discounted room rates
Regina Inn and Conference Center – Regina	Discounted room rates
Sport's Excellence – Prince Albert	20% off all regular priced items in store
Super 8 – Prince Albert	Discounted room rates
Second Time Around – Prince Albert	15% off any regular merchandise
Temple Gardens Mineral Spa – Moose Jaw	Guestroom specials
The Brick – Saskatoon	Call for discount
The Brick – Regina	Call for discount
The Brick – Prince Albert	Call for discount
The Brick – North Battleford	Call for discount
The Brick – Moose Jaw	Call for discount
The Fun Factory – Saskatoon	Ages 1-2 \$3.99, 3 and up \$9.25, Wed-\$2 off
The Giggle Factory	10% off
Thomas the Cook – Saskatoon	10% Off
Travelodge – Regina	Discounted room rates
Travelodge – Saskatoon	Discounted room rates
Uncle Ed's Furniture – Saskatoon	Call for discount

Simple Smoothie Recipes

It doesn't have to be summertime to enjoy healthy and refreshing simple smoothie recipes. Whether it is a warm summer day or for breakfast, smoothies are a great way to get kids to drink a cool drink packed with fruit and calcium.

Smoothies are easy to put together. Use whatever fruit you have available and add a little milk, some yogurt and some ice cubes. It really is that simple.

Here are some great ideas to include in your recipes

- Add cream of coconut to a recipe.
- Experiment with different juices including vegetable juices.
- Try adding a handful of carrots or celery to the smoothie recipe. Once it is blended nobody will know it is an extra healthy smoothie.
- Add up to 1 tablespoon sugar or honey for a sweeter flavor.
- Add oat bran, almonds or wheat germ for an extra burst of nutrition.
- If using canned fruit include the juice for extra flavor.
- Add 1 tbsp of peanut butter to your smoothie recipe.
- Substitute milk for juice or juice for the milk in any recipe.
- To make any simple smoothie recipe thinner add more juice or milk. To make any simple smoothie recipe thicker add more fruit.

Source: www.kids-cooking-activities.com

Strawberry Banana Smoothie

1 cup frozen strawberries
2 cups orange juice
1 banana, cut in pieces
½ cup milk
2 tablespoons sugar
Add ingredients together in blender, and blend until smooth.

Blueberry Fruit Smoothie

Carton of blueberry yogurt
1 cup of milk
1 cup frozen or fresh blueberries, strawberries or peaches
½ cup ice cubes
Add together in blender, and blend until smooth.

Healthy Orange Smoothie

1 orange peeled and separated
¾ cup sliced peaches (if canned use juice also)
1 cup orange yogurt
½ cup ice cubes
Blend in blender until smooth. Substitute peaches with different fruit such as banana or a can of mandarin oranges, if desired.

Tofu Smoothie

½ cup tofu
1 banana or 1 peach
2 cups fruit juice, whichever you would like
8 oz. crushed pineapple, with juice
1/2 cup ice cubes
Substitute banana or pineapple for a different type of fruit if you like, and experiment with different juices. Add ingredients to blender and blend until smooth.

Apple Smoothie

1 apple, cored and sliced
1 cup apple juice
1 carton apple yogurt or other flavor
1 tablespoon sugar
1/2 cup ice cubes
Mix ingredients together in a blender and blend until smooth.

Protein Smoothie

Add a scoop or 1 oz. of protein powder to any smoothie recipe.



Tropical Smoothie

1 orange peeled and separated
½ cup lemon juice
¼ cup crushed pineapple with juice
¼ cup milk
1 cup yogurt
Mix ingredients all together and blend until smooth.

Grape Smoothie

½ cup white grape juice
¼ cup seedless grapes
¼ cup pineapple with juice
½ cup milk
½ cup ice cubes
Make any substitutions you'd like for the fruit juice or in place of pineapple. Blend until smooth.

Yogurt Smoothie

1 cup yogurt plain, vanilla or flavored
1 banana or other fruit
1 cup milk
1/2 cup ice cubes
All ingredients together and blend.

Kiwi and Raspberry Smoothie

2 kiwis peeled and cut in half
1 cup raspberries
1 cup yogurt
½ cup milk
1/2 cup ice cubes
Add all together and blend until smooth.

Cherry Simple Smoothie

1 cup pitted cherries
1 cup flavored yogurt
½ cup milk
1 cup ice cubes
1 cup strawberries, one banana or 1 peeled orange
Add ingredients together in blender and blend until smooth.

Jello Smoothie

Small package of Jell-o or gelatin, any flavor
½ cup milk
1 cup yogurt, any flavor
½ cup fruit or 1 fruit of choice
½ cup ice cubes
Add ingredients in blender and mix until smooth.



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