



# Caring for a child or youth through the **Extended Family Program**

## Short-term care with a trusted provider.

When a parent cannot care for their child or youth, they may choose a trusted adult—such as a family member or someone from the child’s Nation or Indigenous community—to provide care. This care provider may receive support through the Extended Family Program (EFP), while the parent remains the child or youth’s legal guardian. EFP arrangements are sometimes referred to as kinship care.

A child welfare worker from the Ministry of Children and Family Development and/or an Indigenous Child and Family Service Agency (ICFSA) can help set up the EFP agreement. If the child or youth is Indigenous, their Nation or Indigenous community may also participate and offer support to the child, care provider, and parent. EFP arrangements do not involve the courts.

### An EFP agreement requires that:

- The parent assigns the care provider responsibility for the child or youth’s daily care, supervision, and decision-making.
- The parent retains guardianship of the child or youth.
- The care provider must not be the child’s legal guardian.
- The care provider makes decisions about the child or youth’s education and health care and receives information about their well-being.
- The parent, care provider, and child welfare worker all agree the arrangement best supports the child or youth.
- The child or youth, as they are able, also agrees the arrangement is best for them.

## EFP agreement and roles

The goal of an EFP agreement is to reunite the child or youth with their parent whenever possible. It outlines:

- Supports and services for the child/youth and care provider
- How the parent-child relationship will be maintained
- How the child/youth’s cultural connections will be maintained

The care provider must follow the agreement, including supporting contact between the parent and child/youth. Because the parent voluntarily transferred care, they may resume caring for the child at any time. The care provider must inform the child welfare worker if this occurs.

## Screening and assessment

Before an EFP agreement begins, the care provider must be approved by a child welfare worker. This process includes:

- Criminal record checks for all adults 18 and older in the home
- A review of any past child protection involvement
- Reference checks
- A home visit to confirm safety and identify any additional needs
- An assessment of the child/youth’s needs and how the care provider can meet them

Each care provider is assessed with the child’s best interests first. Past criminal, child-welfare, or health issues don’t automatically rule someone out; what matters is their current situation and relationship with the child or youth.



## Cultural connections

Children and youth have the right to meaningful connections to their culture and community. If the child or youth is Indigenous, their Nation or Indigenous community may be a part of the EFP agreement to help support the child or youth, the care provider, and the parent.

Care providers from a different culture should actively support the child or youth's cultural, linguistic, religious, and spiritual heritage, and help maintain their identity and community connections.



### Rights of Indigenous Children and Youth

Indigenous children and youth have the right to guidance, encouragement, and support to learn and practice their traditions, customs, and languages, and to belong to their Nation or Indigenous communities.

## Supports for care providers

EFP care providers receive monthly financial support to meet the child or youth's needs. To learn more about Federal benefits (including Canada Child Benefit) or tax implications, contact Canada Revenue Agency.

Care providers can apply for the Affordable Child Care Benefit. MCFD and/or an ICFSA may also provide a child care subsidy referral to help cover the cost of child care for care providers.

### Other available supports may include:

- Respite care
- Extended health and dental benefits
- Counselling
- Cultural supports

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Child Welfare Worker

- Manages the record for the child/youth and parent
- Refers the family to community supports as needed
- Visits in person at least every 90 days
- Involves the child/youth's Nation or Indigenous community, if the child/youth is Indigenous

### Care Provider

- Meets the child/youth's daily needs (clothing, school, health appointments)
- Provides a safe, nurturing home and safe sleeping arrangements
- Supports family contact as outlined in the EFP agreement
- Reports safety concerns to the child welfare worker
- Supports the child/youth's cultural, heritage, and spiritual connections
- Inform the child welfare worker of any unmet needs
- Notifies the child welfare worker if the parent resumes care

For help, call the **Kinship Care Helpline:**  
604-558-4740 or 1-855-474-9777 (toll-free)



Ministry of  
Children and Family  
Development

[gov.bc.ca/kinshipcare](http://gov.bc.ca/kinshipcare)

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