
Summary of Steps in an Investigation

1. Your **Resource Social Worker** (RSW) will call you when an investigation has begun. He/she will suggest you contact your **Foster Parent Coordinator** (FPC) or another qualified **Support Worker** (SW).
 2. Within 7 days, you will receive a letter from your RSW confirming the type protocol: an **Investigation** or a **Quality of Care Review** (QCR).
 3. You will be asked to attend an in-person meeting with the **Investigating Social Worker** (ISW) and your RSW. The nature of the allegation will be disclosed and you and your partner will be interviewed.
 4. The ISW will conduct several other interviews with your family, neighbours, and any relevant community professionals. You will be kept up-to-date throughout the process.
 5. Your RSW and FPC/SW will provide you with ongoing information and support.
 6. The **Resources Team Leader** (RTL), ISW and RSW will arrange for a second meeting to discuss the outcome with you.
 7. The ISW will notify you (within 30 days) of the decision reached, followed by a letter from the Ministry.
 8. Within 7 days of receiving the decision, you may ask for a review by sending your request in writing.
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Guided by Legislation

Child, Family and Community Service Act

The Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA) is the legislative authority for child welfare in British Columbia. Its fundamental guiding principle is that the safety and well-being of children (birth to 19 years) are paramount.

Criminal Code of Canada

The Criminal Code of Canada provides the justice system with the legal authority to enforce criminal law as it applies to the abuse and neglect of children and youth.



Safeguards for Foster Caregivers



**Is your Family
Protected?**

You and Your Family

Your intention is to make your fostering experience as rewarding as possible. There are many things you can do to increase safety for the children in your care and your family.

Why Do You Need to Safeguard?

While your role as a Foster Parent is similar to that of the natural parents, your task of raising someone else's child is not a common or normal situation. Children in care do not belong to you. They are held in trust with the MCFD, who ultimately have responsibility for the children you care for.

Sometimes, allegations of misconduct are made against caregivers. When you are proactive and take preventive measures, you can reduce the possibility of abuse allegations.

Living in a Fish Bowl

As a Foster Parent, you are held to a higher standard for what could be considered abuse. This puts your family at a greater risk than, for example, your neighbour for allegations to be made.

Foster parents are "public parents". Family life is highly visible to the community and is often held up to public scrutiny. Try to look at the behaviours in your home as if you were watching from the outside in.

It is important to be proactive and make sure you have established safety guidelines to be followed daily, for each member of your family.

Parenting Practices to Reduce Risks of an Allegation of Abuse

Allegations of abuse can happen when you are a Foster Parent. While many of these allegations are found to be unsubstantiated, the chances of an allegation being made can be reduced by

- Having a good working relationship with your RSW.
- A thorough understanding of Trauma-Informed Parenting Practices.
- Engaging in ongoing training opportunities.
- Staying connected to your Foster Parent community.



Record-Keeping and Team-Work

Keep daily logs for each individual child in your care. Ask social workers to read and sign the logs on every visit to your home. Report all unusual incidents to your social worker, by phone, then in a short written report. If you are unable to cope with a child placed with you, notify the child's social worker. Ask for help, or for the child to be removed.

Maintain a good working relationship with your social workers. Talk to them regularly and openly. Try to deal with issues as they arise.

Preparation for a New Placement

Before accepting a child, be sure you have all the information you need to provide a safe environment for the child, your birth family, and the other foster children in your home.

Prepare for Transitions

Children and youth can often experience a lot of feelings when they leave your home. It is important to help them understand which feelings may come up and that it is a normal response. This measure will help children and youth work through their feelings and will help safeguard yourself from any emotionally charged actions, behaviours, or words.

Understanding the Investigation Process

All foster parents are entitled to support if they come under investigation for abuse or neglect. Upon notifying you of an investigation, your RSW will suggest that you contact a support worker.

A Support Worker is an individual with specialized training who:

- Provides confidentiality within legislated limits.
- Is a "listening ear" providing emotional support in a time of stress.
- Can assist as you go through the investigation process.

The sooner a support worker is involved, the more assistance they can give you.