



CODE OF ETHICS
FOR ALBERTA FOSTER AND KINSHIP CAREGIVERS
PREPARED BY THE ALBERTA FOSTER AND KINSHIP ASSOCIATION
APPROVED by the AFKA Board of Directors and the Ministry of Children's Services
October 1 , 2019

PREAMBLE

Foster and kinship caregivers employ a multi-disciplinary body of knowledge, methods and skills in performing professional services and activities. These activities are aimed at facilitating, maintaining and enhancing the developing child's ability to function as a contributing member of society. Further, foster and kinship caregivers are committed to the Ministry of Children's Services, the foster and kinship caregiving profession and the community.

COMMITMENT TO THE CHILD IN CARE AND HIS/HER FAMILY

In recognition of the public trust that is a result of children placed in their care, foster and kinship caregivers recognize their obligation in providing a safe, nurturing environment conducive to the development of each child in care to his or her full potential. In order to fulfill this obligation, the foster and kinship caregivers will make a commitment to the children and to work with the child's family and other professionals.

Foster and Kinship Caregivers Agree To:

1. Regard the welfare of the child as the primary obligation.
2. Respect the worth of all individuals regardless of ability, religion, sex or natural ancestry in the capacity as a foster and kinship caregivers.
3. Deal with children in care and their family in a just and considerate manner.
4. Be discreet with information of a sensitive or confidential nature, sharing such information with other professions only if it is felt that such information would benefit the child, their family or if sharing is requested by law.
5. Refrain from unprofessional comments about the child in care or their family.
6. Avoid exploiting* the relationship with any child in care or their family.
7. Work with the child welfare authorities to inform appropriate individuals and agencies of the special needs of a child in care. Assist other individuals and agencies in their endeavors to provide services, treatment and care.
8. Accept any reluctance of the child in care to discuss his/her past circumstances.
9. Hold themselves responsible and advocate for the quality of services preformed for children in care.

COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY

Foster and Kinship Care are community social concerns. Foster and kinship caregivers recognize their responsibilities towards the community by sharing responsibility in developing sound social policies and programs.

Foster and Kinship Caregivers Agree To:

10. Share in the responsibility of improving services provided to children by the Ministry of Children's Services.
11. Acknowledge the right and responsibility of the public to participate in the formulation of Children's Services policy, and Foster and Kinship Care policy.
12. Evaluate, through professional procedures, the conditions of services through the Ministry of Children's Services and foster and kinship care. Make known to the proper authorities if serious deficiencies exist.
13. Protect the welfare of children against undesirable infringements by advocating for children's rights and opportunities.

COMMITMENT TO THE FOSTERING AND KINSHIP PROFESSION AND FOR THE ASSOCIATION

Foster and kinship caregivers recognize the necessity for continuing education and individual growth within the profession. Foster and kinship caregivers recognize the need for providing a positive and responsive situation to enhance the competency of foster and kinship caregivers. They recognize and encourage the retention of competent and dedicated foster and kinship caregivers.

Foster and Kinship Caregivers Agree To:

14. Distinguish clearly in public between statements and actions that are made by an individual or as a representative of a foster or kinship caregiver association.
15. Recognize that a profession, and a professional association, must accept responsibility for the conduct of its members and understand that its members' conduct may be regarded as representative of all foster and kinship caregivers.
16. Participate and conduct oneself in a responsible manner in the development and implementation of policies affecting children in care.
17. Cooperate in the recruitment and retention of foster and kinship caregivers by providing honest and objective information.
18. Treat with respect the finding, news and actions of fellow foster and kinship caregivers and use appropriate channels such as foster or kinship caregiver organizations to express any opinions.
19. Accord just and equitable treatment to all foster and kinship caregivers in the exercise of their rights and responsibilities and support them when accused or when they perceive they are being unfairly treated.
20. Refrain from exploiting one's relationships within the Profession, the Association and the Community.
21. Maintain the integrity of the fostering and kinship caregiving professions and the Association by basing criticism on careful evaluation of facts.
22. Make appropriate use of the time and privileges accorded by one's position as a foster or kinship caregiver or as an Association official. Accept no gratuities or gifts of significance that may influence one's judgment in the exercise of professional duties.
23. Maintain intellectual honesty and integrity by appropriate interpretation and use of all reference materials, research studies and literature.

24. Accept one's own responsibility towards continuing education and personal development.
25. Accept responsibility to work toward assuring that ethical standards are adhered to by any individual or organization providing foster or kinship care service.

COMMITMENT TO PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND PLACEMENT PRACTICES

Foster and kinship caregivers recognize their role and contribution within the Ministry of Children's Services and in doing so acknowledge and support positive professional practices between themselves and other professionals. Sound relationships with government representatives, community agencies and other professionals are built upon personal integrity, dignity and mutual respect.

Foster and Kinship Caregivers Agree To:

26. Accept child placements only when the terms, policies and practices lead you to believe that your professional skills are adequate to meet needs of the children.
27. Negotiate and execute the terms of all working agreements fairly and honestly.
28. Adhere to the conditions of a working agreement or to the terms of the placement until either has been terminated legally or by mutual consent.
29. Accept no commitment that will impair the effectiveness of one's professional service and permit no exploitation of their professional position.
30. Maintain an attitude of mutual respect when working with other professionals involved in childcare.
31. Follow appropriate channels of resolution when dealing with specific concerns or difficulties.

ACCEPTABLE CONDUCT

Should a foster or kinship caregiver fail to abide by the Code of Ethics as set forth, disciplinary action may be taken which can result in censure, suspension or expulsion from the Association or may require corrective action within defined time limits.

***DEFINITION:**

Exploit: to make use of selfishly or unethically.