

# 4 Areas of Connection



## What are The 4 Areas of Connection?

Through consultation with stakeholders, 4 key areas where strong relationships are critical were identified. They describe how strong lasting relationships support overall wellbeing and safety of children and youth. These key areas focus on the importance of human relationships within a family and community context and guide creating and maintaining meaningful connections for children and youth to people who love them unconditionally. The 4 areas of connection expand our understanding of permanency for the children, youth and families we all work with, moving the focus beyond just legal permanence. These connections are established and maintained through collaboration, critical thinking and intentional planning for children and youth.

The 4 areas of connection are:

**Relational** : An enduring connection to family, friends, caregivers and significant individuals that provide a sense of belonging, unconditional love, acceptance, and someone to rely on in times of need.

**Physical**: A place to call home that is stable, safe, and welcoming where a child or youth feels they truly belong.

**Cultural**: Participation and connection to one's ancestral history- language, religion, customs, belief systems, social roles and celebrations and/or birth place that fosters a strong sense of identity, provides a higher self-esteem and self-worth.

**Legal**: A formally recognized family membership that provides legal security.

## What does this mean for child intervention work in Alberta?

The 4 areas of connections will be included in policy and planning forms to assist in creating a clear understanding of the importance of relationships and support meaningful plans for children and youth in care to stay connected to significant individuals in their life.

## What is my role in supporting connections?

Caregivers are an essential part of the team. This includes facilitating connections for children and youth in your care to people that are important to them. It also includes participating with and supporting the child/youth in their connection to cultural, religious and or spiritual practices that honour their heritage.