

Caregiver Training

Your Role on the Child's Case Team

Participant Material

Alberta Children and Family Services
2025

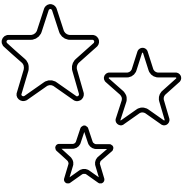


Alberta 

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Building Empathy

Role	What's important to them?	What are their worries?
Child/Youth		
Parent		
CI Practitioner		
Caregiver Practitioner		
First Nation Designate		
Caregiver (you)		



Caregiver Competencies

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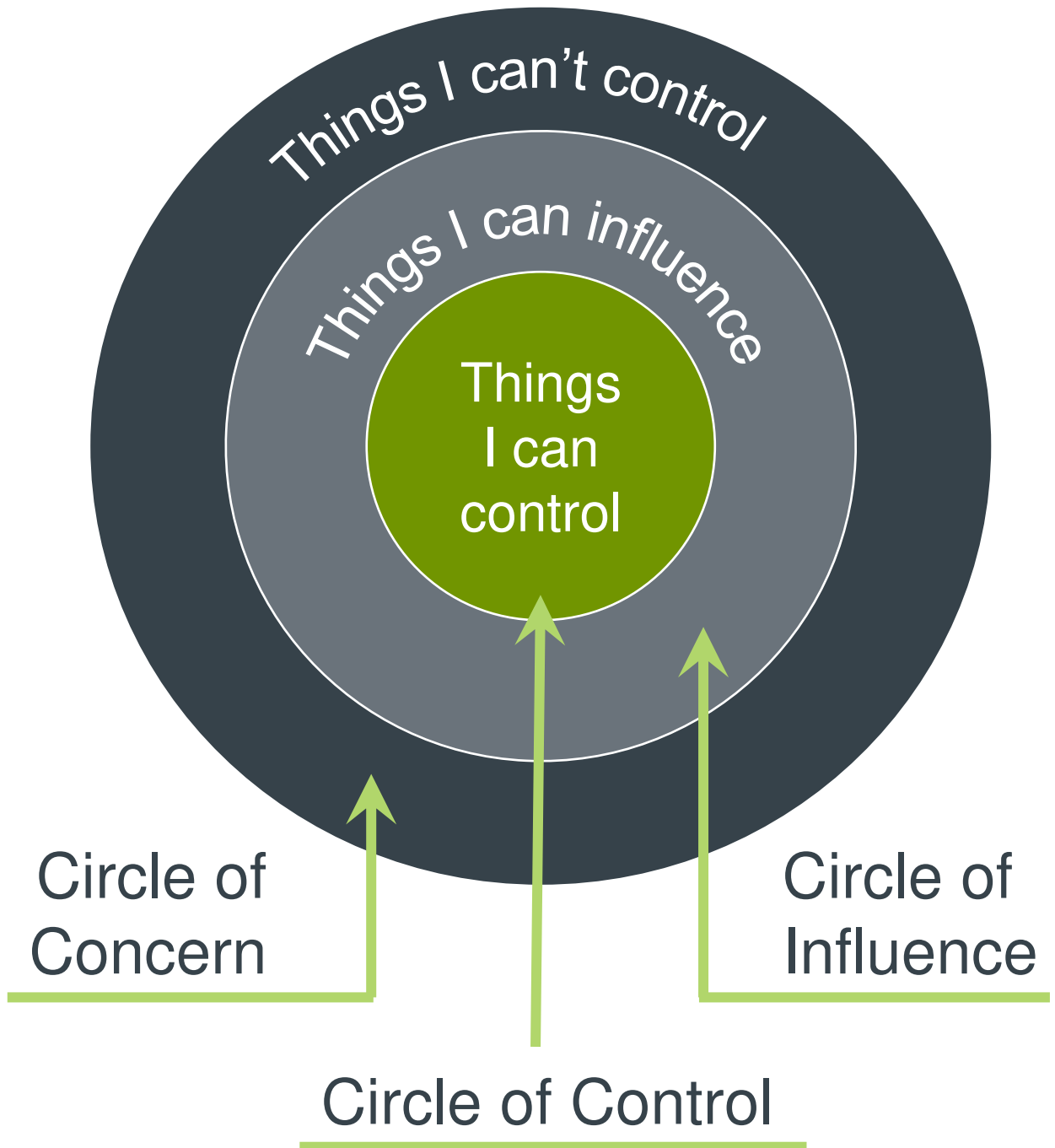
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Guidelines for Case Team Communication

- Consider the urgency.
- Communicate the urgency.
- Use email for important matters.
- Document phone calls.
- Be cautious with text messaging.
- Approach with grace and understanding.



Circles of Influence



The LEAP Model

Listen

- Actively listen
- Ask clarifying questions
- Paraphrase

Empathize

- Share agreement where you agree
- Consider their perspective
- Rephrase what's important to them

Ask / Assert

- Ask questions to clarify
- Ask for their ideas
- Assert your perspective

Problem Solve

- Identify common goals
- Generate and explore options
- Agree on goals, roles, and next steps



Caregiver Competencies: Performance Indicators

1. Supporting children, youth, and families with historical trauma, loss, and grief

- Advocate for appropriate resources/team/professionals.
- Minimize trauma by maintaining appropriate contact with family/stakeholders.
- Provide emotional support to the child/youth and family.
- Support children/youth who have experienced significant trauma.
- Support the child with loss and grief.
- Manage change, ambiguity, and loss for the child/youth and family.
- Practice self-care.



2. Maintaining a child and youth's culture

- Assist the child/youth in understanding, maintaining, and developing a cultural identity and pride by supporting involvement with the family and/or cultural community and events.
- Develop cultural relationships, involve support networks, and share knowledge related to the child/youth.
- Respectfully balance your personal beliefs with the child/youth's.
- Promote the child/youth's access to knowledge keepers.
- Research and integrate learnings about child/youth's cultural heritage and collaborate with family, Designate and resources.
- Integrate the cultural heritage of the child/youth in daily living.
- Provide opportunities within the home for the child/youth to explore and practice their cultural traditions
- Participate in ceremonies and other cultural activities.
- Access resources to maintain the child's cultural identity in both familial and non-familial settings.
- Discuss with the child and youth about racism and microaggressions.



3. Collaborating for successful transitions

- Ensure the child/youth is grounded in their existing relationships/experiences.
- Organize and maintain memory books.
- Communicate positively about parents and family.
- Support permanency and reunification.
- Maintain family connections/roots.
- Assist with functional needs for moves or transitions to new placements or life events.
- Document and share information including behaviour responses, preferences, and triggers.
- Ensure child/youth and ongoing support network have important contact information (e.g., health care providers and family).
- Assist in connecting the child/youth to people, activities, and services that will be maintained beyond the current placement with the caregiver.
- Attend/participate in collaborative planning meetings, assessments, medical and long-term supports (e.g., AISH/Alberta Works/PDD).



3. Collaborating for successful transitions (continued)

- Update appointments (medical, dental, optical, etc.) in preparation for transitions.
- Enroll child/youth in recreation, education, etc. that can be maintained after transition (in collaboration with ongoing support network).
- Support in obtaining ID (AHC, bank accounts, SIN, passport, status card).
- Collect documents (school transcripts, medical, dental, and optical, contact numbers, and names of professionals).
- Develop and implement rituals to mark goodbyes and new beginnings for child/youth.
- Promote independent living skills.



4. Respond to the demands of the caregiving experience

- Access self-care.
- Instruct child/youth about the different cultures in the home.
- Recognize impact on own family and mitigate when possible.
- Incorporate age-appropriate biological children in caregiving.
- State family rules and expectations in a clear, age-appropriate manner.
- Follow dispute resolution protocol when conflict arises.
- Seek support for self and own family when needed (e.g., understanding your role as a caregiver, managing the needs of a child, etc.).
- Commence and complete required caregiver training annually.
- Access respite.
- Advocate for oneself.
- Prepare and protect against placement concerns.
- Access specific training for supporting biological children.
- Ensure the Foster Care Support Plan meets the needs of the caregiver and the children/youth in their care.



5. Working in collaboration with Children and Family Services

- Represent the child/youth's needs and viewpoint accurately, and advocate on behalf of the child/youth.
- Adhere to the "Powers and Duties" in the "Delegation of Powers and Duties to a Child Caregiver" form.
- Participate as an active member of the child/youth intervention team.
- Carry out specific duties assigned in the child/youth's plan, with direction from the CI practitioner, to help the child/youth and specified family members achieve the plan goals (e.g., health, education, recreation, social and related services).
- Assist the CI practitioner by initiating discussion of appropriate issues concerning the child/youth and family.
- Record and report in detail any significant events/behaviour responses regarding the foster child and their family to the case manager (e.g., critical incidents).
- Prepare for and actively participate in meetings/activities about the child (e.g., case conferences, spiritual ceremonies, counseling/therapy sessions, home visits, medical appointments, court, etc.).



5. Working in collaboration with Children and Family Services (continued)

- Participate in the development of the case plan.
- Maintain a list of contacts for different situations or crises.
- Communicate rights of the child/youth.
- Provide care appropriate for varying (mild to moderate) physical, medical, psychological and social needs of child/youth.
- Provide appropriate nutrition to children according to the Canada Food Guide and/or cultural considerations, directed by the appropriate medical physician with CFS support.
- Maintain the home and grounds according to policy and the standards set in the ESA.
- Maintain First Aid Certification.
- Create social media safety.
- Book a medical examination within two days of the child/youth coming into care.
- Accompany child/youth to medical, dental, and/or optical appointments.
- Supervise the administration of all medications.



6. Building relationships with the child/youth's family

- Involve the child/youth's family where appropriate, making use of opportunities and events to encourage contact and connection.
- Work with the team toward reunification.
- Maintain a daily log that contains observations, child/youth development, significant daily events, positive memoirs, and areas of concern.
- Promote and facilitate consistent sibling engagement, focusing on building strong, healthy sibling relationships (visits, respite, gatherings).
- Maintain and promote positive communication with child/youth's family of origin.
- Be an active participant in a plan for connection with the child/youth's family as per the direction of the CI practitioner prior to the first meeting.
- Remove logistical barriers to family contact (travel, safety, access) through CI practitioner.
- Assist the child/youth in managing and articulating feelings and relationships with their family.



6. Building relationships with the child/youth's family (continued)

- Provide clear and factual information to the CI practitioner regarding family time (noting any worries and what is working well).
- Work with supportive team to assist the child/youth with navigating and maintaining relationships with their family (e.g., therapists, school counsellors, family therapy).
- Participate in any training opportunities that cover Lifelong Connections for a child/youth.



7. Identify and promote the child/youth's development

- Register the child/youth for appropriate community/school programs and encourage participation under the direction of the CI practitioner.
- Maintain a relationship and communicate frequently with the school.
- Attend special events such as parent-teacher interviews, concerts, and sports events.
- Assist with social competence.
- Obtain and advocate for school-related services.
- Provide a physically and emotionally safe and nurturing environment.
- Build trust, attachment, and bonding with the child/youth.
- Create a bond based on the child/youth's needs. If support is needed in creating the bond, the caregiver advocates for support with the child/youth's CI practitioner.



7. Identify and promote the child/youth's development (continued)

- Enact positive strategies for school success.
- Assist child/youth in discovering/nurturing their own personal gifts.
- Use inclusive language, correct pronouns, and chosen names.
- Create a home that is accepting of all types of diversity and does not tolerate discrimination (e.g., race, religion, or sexual orientation).
- Discuss relationships and sex in inclusive ways.
- Insist that other family members include and respect all children/youth in your home.
- Have child/youth participate in activities that interest them, regardless of whether these activities are stereotypically associated with a particular gender.
- Ensure access to medical supports.
- Promote regular school attendance.



Resources

Name and Link	Description
<u>Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act (CYFEA)</u>	Provides authority for Child and Youth Services to provide services in support of children who are abused, neglected or otherwise in need of intervention.
<u>Enhancement Policy Manual</u>	Contains policies and procedures that direct casework staff when delivering services under the <i>Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act</i> . The policies provide direction and procedures for most common situations.
<u>Residential Facilities Licensing Regulation</u>	Provides directions on conditions for licensing a foster home or child and youth facilities and provides information regarding ratios for children in a home, emergency procedures, and records.
<u>Caregiver Support Program - Alberta Foster and Kinship Association (AFKA)</u>	Provides community building, systemic navigation assistance, and guidance during complex times (e.g., dispute resolution).

