

Members of the Federation of Foster Families of Nova Scotia  
&  
Staff Members of the Mi'kmaw Family & Children's Services of Nova Scotia  
Shubenacadie, NS  
June 6, 2024

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Attendance:**

Gary Landry, <i>Executive Director</i> .....	FFFNS
Jill Martin, <i>Allegation Support</i> .....	FFFNS
Shirly Howard, <i>Coordinator of Training</i> .....	FFFNS
Rob Richardson, <i>FFFNS Board Member</i> .....	FFFNS
Margaret MacMillian, <i>Coordinator, Foster Care Services</i> .....	DCS
Jodi Phillips, <i>Foster Care Supervisor</i> .....	MFCS – Mainland
Denise Maracle, <i>Children in Care Supervisor</i> .....	MFCS – Mainland
Carolyn Wells, <i>Recruitment Social Worker</i> .....	MFCS – Mainland
Darlene Arseneau, <i>Foster Parent</i> .....	Mainland
Erica Bilodeau, <i>Administrative Assistant</i> .....	MFCS – Mainland
Natalie (Curly) Doucette, <i>Child and Family Wellbeing Specialist</i> .....	MFCS – Eskasoni
Sheraine Young, <i>Foster Care Supervisor</i> .....	MFCS – Eskasoni
Cindy Kabatay, <i>Kinship Assessor</i> .....	MFCS – Eskasoni
Mickella Francis, <i>Family Support &amp; Case Aide Supervisor</i> .....	MFCS – Eskasoni
Sophie Francis, <i>Recruitment Social Worker</i> .....	MFCS – Eskasoni
Sheena Williams, <i>Children in Care Supervisor</i> .....	MFCS – Eskasoni
Meg Bernard, <i>Pride &amp; Pre-service Trainer</i> .....	MFCS – Eskasoni

**Regrets:**

Jen Nutter, <i>Intake and Investigations Supervisor</i> .....	MFCS – Mainland
Leeann Higgins, <i>Family Support &amp; Case Aide Supervisor</i> .....	MFCS – Mainland
Lesley McKee, <i>Adoption Supervisor</i> .....	MFCS – Mainland
Lucinda Hiscock, <i>Intake and Investigations Supervisor</i> .....	MFCS – Eskasoni
Darlene Francis, <i>Foster Parent</i> .....	MFCS – Eskasoni

**1. Agenda**

- Reviewed and approved.

**2. Welcome and Introductions**

**3. FFFNS Updates**

- The Federation's AGM was recently held in Sydney, it went well. The next AGM will be held in the western region.
- Shirly Howard is the new Coordinator of Training. She will be focusing on updating the Sensitivity training, with a tentative roll out in October. If anyone would like to be a guest speaker during the training, please reach out to her.
- Curly will send Shirly the contact information for someone who can do the blanket exercise.
- Rob Richardson is the Chair of the Federation. There are board members all across the province. There is one seat that is open. If there is a foster caregiver that is interested in being part of the board, please let Rob know. They must have fostered for 2 years to be eligible for the position. The position is usually a 3-year term, but exceptions can be made for those only interested in doing it for a year or two.
- The goal is to have a collective voice for foster parents.

#### **4. Allegations and Support Program Updates**

- The CAIT team now has two social workers and are handling all investigations.
- Investigations are up from last year but it is normal to fluctuate.
- It is important to let the foster caregivers know that the Allegations and Support Program is separate from DCS. They are there to support the foster caregivers, not the DCS workers. If the foster caregivers wants Jill involved, then she will attend the meetings between the foster caregivers and the CAIT worker.

#### **5. DCS Updates**

- Margaret is currently working on a full policy review.
- Looking into offering training to constellations based on group interests.
- All foster caregivers must be up to date with their sensitivity training. It will now be a one-day training session instead of two days.
- Funding has been approved for a 2<sup>nd</sup> Allegation and Support worker. It will be a designated position.
- The Ambassador program will tentatively be ready to commence in the fall. They are going to try to recruit former children in care and foster caregivers. It will be a voluntary position, but they will receive honorariums.
- They are currently working on a program to enable PRIDE Training sessions to be held virtually. It will be done in three phases: PRIDE Preservice, ATOC and core PRIDE modules. They want the training information to be current and culturally sensitive.
- Fifty constellations have been set up around the province. There have been some issues with regards to geographical distances.
- The Emergency receiving homes will open in the fall. There will initially be one home per region.
- Will look into getting the training running for the PRIDE trainers.

#### **6. MAAK Updates**

- Referrals are still coming in. Families that have had circles have positive reviews.

- Would like a Family Group Worker to do a presentation at the constellation gatherings.

## **7. MFCS Updates**

- Sheena would like a presentation on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome to be arranged for the foster caregivers.
- Ella has left the Agency and now works for the Indian Brook Band office. The new mainland recruitment worker is Carolyn Wells.
- Annette has left her training position and now works for the Adoption team.
- Meg is the new PRIDE trainer for Eskasoni and Sophie is the new recruitment worker.
- There have been some kinship homes that have not been receptive of the new redesign and do not want to be part of the constellations.
- Curly would like feedback, positive and negative, from families regarding their experience in the constellations

## **8. Foster Parent Updates**

- There have been numerous positive reviews of the redesign and the constellations. However, geographical issues have been a problem in some cases.
- Looking forward to the Ambassador Program starting.

## **9. Positive Stories**

- Mockingbird is going well. Families have positive things to say about the gatherings.

## **10. Dates and Times of the next meetings**

- October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024, in Antigonish at 10:30am