

North Island Community Services Society (NICSS)

# Participant Handbook

Foster Caregiver Support



## Contact Information

Hours of Operation:

Monday- Friday 9:00am-4:30pm (*some program hours may vary*)

105-1705 Campbell Way

Port McNeill, BC

V0N 2R0

T: 250.956.3134

or

Mailing Address

PO Box 1028

Port McNeill, BC

V0N 2R0

E: [reception@nicommunityservices.ca](mailto:reception@nicommunityservices.ca)

W: [nicommunityservices.ca](http://nicommunityservices.ca)

## The Purpose of This Handbook

This is a handbook to help you to know some of the basic information about the program you are accessing through NICSS. We want to make sure that all participants have the information they need about the services they receive. This handbook will outline your rights, our approach to how we will work with you and protect your information, and necessary health and safety information, and what to do if you have any concerns or complaints.

The Program Coordinator or staff person you are working with can review this handbook with you and help to answer any questions you may have.

## NICSS Philosophy

NICSS programs adhere to the person-centered model, which affirm that all people/families learn throughout their lives and are at the center of their own planning

## ABOUT NICSS

North Island Community Services Society (NICSS) is a nonprofit agency, established in 1978. We are a CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) accredited agency, as of 2017, maintaining a minimum standard of excellence in quality services for the people of the north island. NICSS provides a variety of community services to the communities in the Mount Waddington Region, including but not limited to Port Hardy, Port McNeill, Alert Bay, Sointula, Coal Harbour, Fort Rupert and Quatsino.

NICSS employs approximately 30 people, and it has an Executive Director and a volunteer Board of Directors. We offer a variety of programs, including

- Family Life Support Program
- Foster Caregiver Support
- Child and Youth Mental Health Counsellor
- Teen Centre
- Toddler Time Drop In
- Strong Start (Port McNeill, Port Alice and Alert Bay)
- Family Connections
  - CAPC (Community Action Program for Children)
  - CPNP (Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program)



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- Community Links
  - Community Inclusion Day Program
  - Customized Employment
  - Outreach
  - Personalized Supports
- Second Look Thrift Store in Port McNeill
- Happy Trails Childcare Centre

# NICSS Purpose, Vision and Values

## PURPOSE

Dedicated to building healthy community.

## VISION

A healthy community of empowered, thriving individuals, who are realizing their potential through program and connectedness.

## VALUES

**Person centered:** *We are respectful of and responsible to the needs and values of individuals.*

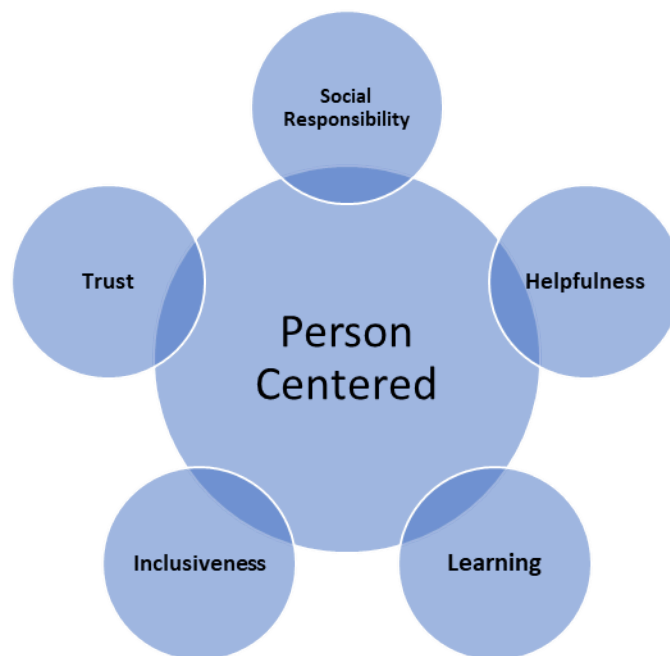
**Inclusiveness:** *We create a safe space where voices are heard, self-advocacy and inclusion are promoted.*

**Helpfulness:** *We respectfully walk beside our diverse cultural communities by empowering individuals in a the most meaningful way for them personally.*

**Learning:** *We learn without limits and provide the opportunity for all to succeed.*

**Social Responsibility:** *We committee to putting the benefit of the community at the center of what we do.*

**Trust:** *We follow through on our promises.*



## Rights and Responsibilities of Persons Served

NICSS strives to create and foster an atmosphere that recognizes and supports both the rights and responsibilities of the participants and families we support.

The **rights** of individuals served include but are not limited to the following:



- I have the right to confidentiality and privacy
- I have the right to be treated fairly and with respect.
- I have the right to not be discriminated against under the laws of Canada.
- I have the right to make informed decisions and choices about my life.
- I have the right to plan for the future and set my own goals.
- I have the right to make mistakes or change my mind.
- I have the right to have people support me that are helpful and treat me nicely.
- I have the right to receive support making decisions.
- I have the right to speak my mind and give my opinions.
- I have the right to talk about my feelings.
- I have the right to show feelings, make complaints, and say “No” and be free from retaliation if I make a complaint.
- I have the right to have people listen to me when I talk and to have people try and understand me.
- I have the right to ask questions if I need to know more.

The **responsibilities** of individuals served include but are not limited to the following:

- As we treat you with respect, we expect that you will also treat others with the same respect.
- That you participate in the planning of your services.
- Tell us if you are going to be away or late to program or meetings.
- Let us know how we can support you (if this is difficult you may choose for someone else to tell us).

Participant Signature

Date

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### Program Description: Foster Family Support Program (FFSP)

Foster Caregiver Support Handbook

Effective: June 11, 2024

Version 1.1

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Contracted to the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), the Foster Caregiver Support Program provides services to approved ministry caregivers/foster parents and Ministry staff.

Support services can include (but not limited to) education, consultation, and child/youth behavior strategies. We serve as a relationship bridge between caregivers/foster parents and MCFD, as well as other support resources. The program provides direct in-home foster parent support services, exploring specific support needs, strategies, and coping tools for challenging situations. The position promotes awareness of MCFD guardianship standards, caregiver support standards, and other applicable standards and protocols. However, at the end of the day, the primary goal is to support the caregiver- you!

North Island Community Services Society- Foster Caregiver Support program provides consistent and specialized support to caregivers. We work to make these placements in your home as successful and as possible with a family-focused community-based approach.

What you can expect from the Foster Caregiver Support Program:

- Trauma informed care is the guiding principle of NICSS Foster Caregiver Support.
- In-home/outreach support by the Foster Caregiver Support & Resource Coordinator.
- Support at meetings ... all associated in role as a caregiver; liaison with other services related to your role.
- Support with the challenges of navigating the MCFD system; gaining understanding of process and procedure, etc.
- A place to connect with other caregivers; with common concerns for the purpose of supporting one another.
- Advocacy for foster caregivers; the provided support is an active liaison with the Ministry of Children and Youth Development.
- Connection with other agencies, when necessary; helping to connect the caregiver with support/resource.



- Assistance in support and intervention can be provided to maintain or prompt a change in behavior. i.e. Help in gaining understanding what the issue maybe vs what the behavior is showing us.
- This is a voluntary service to MCFD contracted caregivers; contracted caregivers are not obligated to use this service.
- Referrals come from the MCFD or as a contracted caregiver, you may choose a self-referral; either way ... support is here for you!
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- Referrals come from the MCFD or as a contracted caregiver, you may choose a self-referral; either way ... support is here for you!

## Foster Parent Start-up

Necessary documentation that you will receive as we begin ...

- Confidentiality Agreement
- Consent for Service and Release of Information
- Participation Agreement
- Complaint Form
- Program Description



## Availability of Support Service ... What will this look like?

Caregiver support services will make every effort to prioritize your time and availability. This support service works hard to be available and relevant to what your caregiving world requires

### When, how, where?

For instance, meeting in your home is often the most comfortable for you and your schedule. We have also found that heading out and grabbing a coffee and walk is wonderfully therapeutic and a nice break from routine. The priority is to connect with you in a meaningful way ... in person, telephone, email, or text. During your time of support, we will most likely use all these modes.

## Foster Family Support Contact Information:

Telephone: 250-230-3484

Email: [c.jorgenson@nicommunityservices.ca](mailto:c.jorgenson@nicommunityservices.ca) or [fcsupport@nicommunityservices.ca](mailto:fcsupport@nicommunityservices.ca)

Locations: Port Hardy- 6855 Market Street (rm 6; Robert Scott Elementary School)

Port McNeill- #105-1705 Campbell Way (upstairs in Pioneer Mall)



### Our Job is to:

- Assist you in your role as a caregiver.
- Ensure your knowledge and priorities are heard.
- Support you as you care and support the placements in your home.
- Ensure you have every opportunity to grow and learn in your role.

## Person Centred Planning

NICSS uses a person-centred planning (PCP) approach to developing individualized service plans (ISP's) for the people with whom we work.

Person Centered Planning:

- Puts you in charge of your own life
- Discovers what is important to you
- Considers your strengths and talents
- Includes your voice and the voice of those who care about you





## Staff Training

NICSS is committed to the ongoing training and development of its staff, to ensure that they are equipped to provide the highest level of service to you.

Our staff are trained in the following:



- Trauma Informed Practice
- Intergenerational Trauma
- SIVA (Supporting Individuals through Valued Attachments)
- Person Centred Planning
- Cultural Competency and Diversity
- Suicide Intervention/Prevention
- Self-Care
- Harm Reduction
- First Aid and CPR
- Family Support
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- Mental Health and Resiliency
- Child Welfare
- Group Facilitation and Leadership
- Community Justice

## Training for our Foster Parents ...

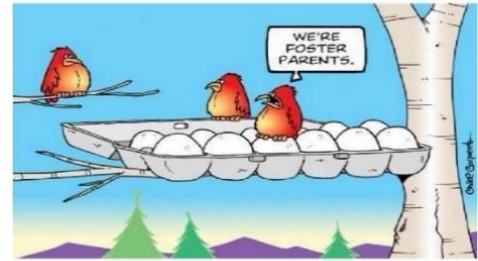
Understanding and training are a priority in the ongoing support of each foster parent/caregiver. As per your contract with the Ministry of Child and Family Development, you will have undergone the mandatory *Pre-Service* training (nine modules of online training). This training is to be completed, as a rule, prior to contract signing and receiving placements. After you have made your decision to proceed with fostering, you will move on to *In-Service* training; 50-55 hours of online training. The MCFD is your point of contact for this training however Foster Family Support is available as you proceed.

The Foster Family Support Program (FFSP) is committed to ongoing training for all our caregivers. You will be introduced to an amazing organization called *Foster Parents Services Society*. This organization is the MCFD's contracted source for foster family training. Via this organization, you will have access to all kinds of training!

Foster Family Support (FFSP) is very pleased to support and facilitate your training/information needs!

## Training Opportunities:

- Creating a Home Emergency Plan for Foster Parents
- Self CARE Summit
- Neurodivergent topics ie. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, ADHD
- Trauma informed care
- Motivational communication
- So much more ...



Training can be individualized, tailored to meet your specific needs and on your timeline. Opportunities to train and learn with other caregivers is available periodically.

NICSS- Foster Caregiver Support sends training/information out periodically- check it out! It will be short but relevant! Don't delete!

Partner plug ... Foster Parent Support Services Society (FPSSS)

As you begin your role as a caregiver, you will begin to receive email from the above team resource. They will offer you amazing training opportunities! Don't delete but check them out- you won't be disappointed.

**Please call for more training information!**



*Every child deserves a family*



## Privacy



To meet your needs, and with your permission, we can reach out to people you have identified as your support team. Your caregiver support will maintain meeting log notes and all pertinent information on your behalf, inclusive of Ministry meetings, partner meetings, etc.

In the event you wish to see your file or add something to it, contact your support worker for an appointment to discuss your file.

The law says that some information must be shared without your consent. This includes:

- Abuse (this means hurting someone else or hurting yourself)
- Neglect (this means not taking care of yourself or someone else)
- Suicide threats (this means saying you will hurt yourself or take your own life)
- Breaking the law (this means saying that you plan to break the law or telling us you did break the law)
- Subpoenaed information (this means a judge has given us a court order to share information)

### **Where DO We Keep the Information?**

All information is kept confidential and in a locked file cabinet, behind locked doors after business hours or in the absence of foster caregiver support.

Your privacy is important and maintained.



## Diversity and Inclusion

One of NICSS' values is inclusiveness- *"We create a safe space where voices are heard, self-advocacy and inclusion are promoted."* NICSS promotes the acceptance and valuing of people from all ethnic and religious backgrounds, regardless of their age, gender, culture, sexual orientation, spiritual beliefs, socio-economic status, language, or disability. We provide person-centered services that promote dignity and respect.

## Self-Advocacy

At NICSS we believe you have the right to be in control of your own services. But **what does it mean to advocate for yourself?** Self-advocacy means that you are able to share your thoughts and feelings. You are able to ask for what you want and need. You know your rights and you speak up for your rights and you also know your responsibilities. Self-advocacy is about your right to make choices.

## 8 Important Steps to Being an Effective Self-Advocate

### 1. Believe in yourself-

You are worth the effort it takes to protect your interests and your rights.

### 2. Know your rights-

You are entitled to equality under the law. Inform yourself by asking questions.

### 3. Decide what you want/need-

Clarify for yourself what you want/need. This will help you set your own goals and help you be clear to others about what it is that you want and need for yourself.

### 4. Make a plan-

Using information that you have gathered, make a plan or a strategy that you feel will work to get what you need and want for yourself. Think of several ways to address the problem. Ask supporters for suggestions

### 5. Get the facts-

Problem-solve by gathering information. Get the facts in writing. Ask for the policies, rules or the regulations.

### 6. Gather support-

It is helpful to have support from family members, friends and other people who may have similar issues.

### 7. Know your appeal rights-

Ask for clear written information on your appeal rights either within our organization or an outside agency. Know what the next step will be if you are dissatisfied.

### 8. Use communication skills

Have a plan outlining your concerns. Stay calm and express yourself clearly. Be willing to listen because what you hear may be as important as what you say.



Self-Advocacy:  
Know Yourself,  
Know What You  
Need, Know How  
to Get It

## Health and Safety

At NICSS we have plans and steps to help prevent accidents, as well as to help you in case there is an emergency. Each of NICSS locations practices various health and safety drills. As well, our locations are inspected annually, as are our fire extinguishers and fire alarms. If you are a participant in one of our programs, you may be expected to participate in one of our drills at some point.

We also have procedures in the event of an emergency. Each program has its own plan for **fire** or **earthquakes**. Staff will show you and go over it with you.

### First Aid

All NICSS program staff have current First Aid and CPR. There are also First Aid Kits at every location. As well, there are also First Aid Kits in all vehicles used to transport persons served. If you go out in the community with staff, they will carry First Aid Emergency Kits.

### Standard Precautions (for Personal Care)

Program Staff are also trained in Standard Universal Precautions. These precautions are:

- Wear Gloves
- Follow hand washing procedure
- Follow proper clean up and procedures

### Covid 19 Protocols

NICSS has developed COVID-19 specific Policies and Procedures, including enhanced cleaning procedures and transportation considerations. Staff will review with you any information that you need to know or that may impact you, such as changes to transportation protocol or expectations around physical distancing and handwashing.

### Transportation

Sometimes you may be transported by NICSS staff, whether in a NICSS vehicle or in a vehicle owned by staff. NICSS staff who drive have a valid class 5 driver's license. All vehicles are insured in case there is an accident. If you are riding in one of the staff's cars, this vehicle also has updated liability insurance to make sure you are safe. We check the vehicles owned by NICSS regularly to make sure that they are safe to drive. Everyone must wear a seat belt in our vehicles and in staff vehicles.

### Illness

If a person served presents with an illness, fever or cold, it may be appropriate to reschedule service or ask the participant to remain home, if they are part of one of our drop in programs. This will help limit the spread of infection and illness.

## Unsafe Behaviours

**Unsafe behaviour in the Program may be handled in the following ways:**

- If you become physically aggressive in any manner to staff, or other people in program, staff will contact RCMP for assistance and you may be removed for safety reasons.
- Staff may also use emergency safety interventions if you choose to hurt yourself, staff or others to keep you safe.

**There are a few things that are not allowed in our programs:**



- **Drugs, alcohol, or weapons of any kind.**

## EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONS

**If you discover a fire!!**



**Sound the Alarm**



**Immediately call for staff assistance**



**Leave through the nearest exit and  
follow the instructions of the staff person**





## **EARTHQUAKES!**



### **What to Do During an Earthquake**

- 1. Stay where you are.**
- 2. Take cover underneath a table. Protect your head and neck. Hold onto the furniture leg.**
- 3. Face away from windows and get away from them if possible.**
- 4. Stay away from objects, which could fall.**

**5. Do not run outside. Falling debris may cause injury.**

## NATURAL DISASTER or POWER OUTAGE



- 1. Follow the instructions of the staff person on duty.**
- 2. If you must leave the program location, the staff person will provide you with instructions on what to do and where to go.**



## Concerns, Questions and Conflict Resolution

### Information about Your Right to Conflict Resolution at NICSS

NICSS realizes that sometimes when people work together, they may not always get along.

For example: you and your family or caregiver might disagree with a decision that has been made that affects you. If you, or others important to you, disagree with something, there is a way to help everyone involved to talk openly and resolve issues.

There is a process if:

- You have a question or concern about your care while you are here,
- You feel your rights have been violated,
- You just feel you have been treated unfairly

*It is very important to us to try and work things out*

*You have a right to voice any concerns or questions you may have*

- You can make a complaint in person, by phone, or by using our complaint/question forms- all complaints may be made in writing to either the Program Coordinator or the Executive Director, Jess Fraser.
- A staff person may assist you to complete the complaint form, if required.
- We take complaints seriously and they may be investigated internally and there will be no hard feelings against you for making a complaint.
- If you are not happy with the outcome or solution, you have the right to carry your complaint forward to the appropriate body (NICSS Board, CLBC, MCFD, PHAC, Ombudsman, MP, MLA).
- Whenever possible, we will use a resolution process; to resolve an issue that may exist between you and another person served or staff.
- All complaints will be documented by the organization including the resolution, within (30) days of the complaint being brought forward. Each person will be notified to the extent possible, of the outcome or resolution.

## Resolution Process



### **Step 1 - Informal Discussion**

NICSS encourages people to discuss the concern face to face and try to work it out between themselves. If this can be done, there is no need to go any further. If not, tell them about the conflict resolution procedures.

The Program Coordinator or Executive Director may mediate/facilitate if individuals are unable to discuss the concern directly to each other. Timeframe should be within 7 days of becoming aware of the concern.

### **Step 2 - Formal Discussion and Documentation**

Arrange for the person with the complaint or conflict to fill out a complaint form and discuss it with the appropriate Program Coordinator or Executive Director.

The Program Coordinator or Executive Director involved will document this discussion.

Timeframe should be within 7 days of the Program Coordinator or Director becoming involved with the concern.

### **Step 3 - Investigation**

The Program Coordinator/Executive Director investigates the circumstances, with the assistance of the employees/participants/advocate involved.

The Program Coordinator/Executive Director discusses their findings and reaches a decision with the persons involved. This should be done within 5 working days of receiving the complaint.

### **Step 4 - Report**

The Program Coordinator presents a full written report to the Executive Director (unless it is the Executive Director responsible for the report) and to the people involved in the complaint/conflict. It outlines the investigation process, results and final decision.

In the case of a complaint initiated by an individual receiving services a copy of the report will be placed on the individual's file.

### **Step 5 - Executive Director Review**

If any party to the process is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may submit a written complaint to the Executive Director.

The Executive Director may revisit the investigation and review the situation with all those involved.

The Executive Director makes a decision and presents a full written report to those involved within 10 days of receiving the written complaint.

In the case of a complaint initiated by an individual receiving services, a copy of the report will be placed on the individual's file.

### **Step 6 – Appeal to Board of Directors**

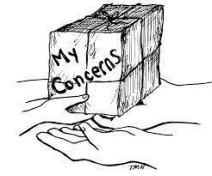
If a client/person served is dissatisfied with the outcome of the review by the Executive Director, or the Executive Director is involved in the complaint they may appeal the decision to the Board of Directors.

### **Step 7 – Advocate for Service Quality**

Participants and their families and/or their advocates may access an alternative grievance process through the funder of the specific program identified in specific Program Handbooks, for complaints or conflicts involving services funded by the government. The Advocate is an independent person who can respond to situations that require mediation or independent intervention.



# NICSS Client/Person Served Complaint/Question Form



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PROGRAM: \_\_\_\_\_

Completed By: ✓

Me

My staff and I

By staff for me

Name of staff helping me: \_\_\_\_\_

## What is this concern about? ✓

### People

- Me
- Staff
- Program Participant
- Friend(s)
- Family

### Things

- Mine
- Staff's
- Family's

### Place

- My Home
- My Work
- My Program

### Other

- Food
- Free Time
- Rules
- Policy
- Recreation
- Health & Safety
- Community



My Question/ Concern: \_\_\_\_\_

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## This is important to me!

Not Very  
Important

①

So-So  
Important

②

Important!

③

Really  
Important!!

④

Extremely  
Important!!!

⑤

Staff Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Complaint made: By Phone \_\_\_\_\_ In Person \_\_\_\_\_ In Writing \_\_\_\_\_

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Was the complaint acknowledged? By whom? How was it acknowledged:

Action taken: (up to and including final response to complainant):

Key Worker Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

(If applicable)

Program Coordinator Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Reviewed by Executive Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Resources

NICSS Programs .....	250-956-3134
Port Hardy Health Centre .....	250-902-6071
Port McNeill Health Centre.....	250-956-4711
School District 85 .....	250-949-6618
North Island College .....	1-800-715-0914
Port Hardy Harvest Food Bank .....	250-902-0332
Mount Waddington Transit (Local Bus Service) .....	250-956-3151
Ministry of Children and Family Development .....	250-949-8011
CLBC .....	1-877-334-1370
Quatsino First Nation .....	250-949-8011
Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Council.....	250-949-8343
Kwakwiltl Band Office .....	250-949-6012

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'Namgis First Nation	.....250-974-5356
North Island Crisis and Counselling Centre	.....250-949-6033
Kids Help Phone	.....1-800-668-6868
Learning Disabilities Association of B.C	.....1-250-370-9513
Autism B.C	.....1-888-715-1914
Inclusion B.C	.....1-800-618-1119
Service Canada	.....1-800-622-6232
Victim Services	.....1-800-563-0808

The Office of the Ombudsperson receives inquiries and complaints about the practices and services provided by public agencies. Their role is to impartially investigate complaints to determine whether public agencies have acted fairly and reasonably.

Phone: 1 800 567-3247      Fax: (250) 387-0198

Second Floor, 947 Fort Street, Victoria, BC