

**Kinship & Foster Family Network of Manitoba**

*Collecting the Voices of Kinship & Foster Parents*



# **Placement Transitions for Children in Care**

## **2018/2019 Forums**

Results of a series of community forums for Kinship and Foster parents

September 2018 to May 2019



# Placement Transitions for Children in Care

2018/2019 Forums

## Table of Contents

**Page 1** Forum Focus

### 4 FORUM QUESTIONS

**Page 3** What types of transitions have you had to navigate?

**Page 4** What was the process and timeline of the move?

**Page 6** What was your role in the process?

**Page 8** What are the key elements of transition planning that serves the best interests of families?

### PARTICIPANT TRANSITION STORIES

**Page 8** Successful and Unsuccessful Transitions Stories

### PARTICIPANTS THOUGHTS ON RELATED TOPICS

**Page 11** Information Sharing and Communication

**Page 12** Fears

**Page 12** Case Plans

**Page 13** Impact of Transitions

**Page 15** Customary Care and New Legislation

**Page 16** Recommendations/Reflections

**Page 17** Acknowledgements

**The Kinship & Foster Family Network of Manitoba**  
90 Terracon Place  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R2J 4G7

**Phone: 204-940-1280**  
**Toll Free: 1-866-458-5650**  
**Email: [manfost@mffn.ca](mailto:manfost@mffn.ca)**  
**Website: [www.kffnm.ca](http://www.kffnm.ca)**

# Placement Transitions for Children in Care

## 2018/2019 Forums

The Kinship and Foster Family Network of Manitoba believes in supporting and empowering Kinship and Foster families.

Each year, our organization invites Manitoba's kinship and foster parents to participate in a series of community forums.

These forums offer kinship and foster parents an opportunity to share their wisdom and express their experiences and opinions on the challenges and rewards of kinship and foster parenting.

It is our hope that the ideas presented in these forums will improve the Kinship/ Foster Care experience for everyone involved.

Over the last 10 months we engaged kinship and foster parents across the province to share their thoughts on the topic of "*Placement Transitions for Children in Care*".

A total of five forums were held in three different regions of Manitoba;

- ⇒ Thompson, on September 21st and 22nd, 2018,
- ⇒ Winnipeg, on February 5th and 6th, 2019,
- ⇒ Steinbach, on May 14th, 2019.

The same four questions were presented for consideration and discussion at each event:

- 1. What types of transitions have you had to navigate?**
- 2. What was the process and timeline of the move?**
- 3. What was your role in the process?**
- 4. What are the key elements of transition planning that serves the best interests of families?**



**Transitions** were defined as the process of moving a child from one environment to another environment. Changing from one system or pattern of care to another system or pattern of care was also identified by kinship and foster parents as an additional challenging type of transition.

Kinship and foster parents identified that they have and are currently providing care for children and adolescents who have experienced many transitions.

Although Manitoba is a vast and diverse province, common themes and challenges did emerge as forum participants shared their stories.

- Systems confusion, uncertainty and fear characterized several participants responses.
- A lack of information and communication regarding roles and responsibilities in the transition process were also cited.
- A commonly identified concern was that the transition process in Manitoba doesn't always seem to serve the best interests of children and their families.
- Manitoba's kinship and foster parents would like greater input and participation in decisions affecting not only themselves, but their foster children, biological children, extended families and their communities.

*“Transitions can devastate the whole family.”*

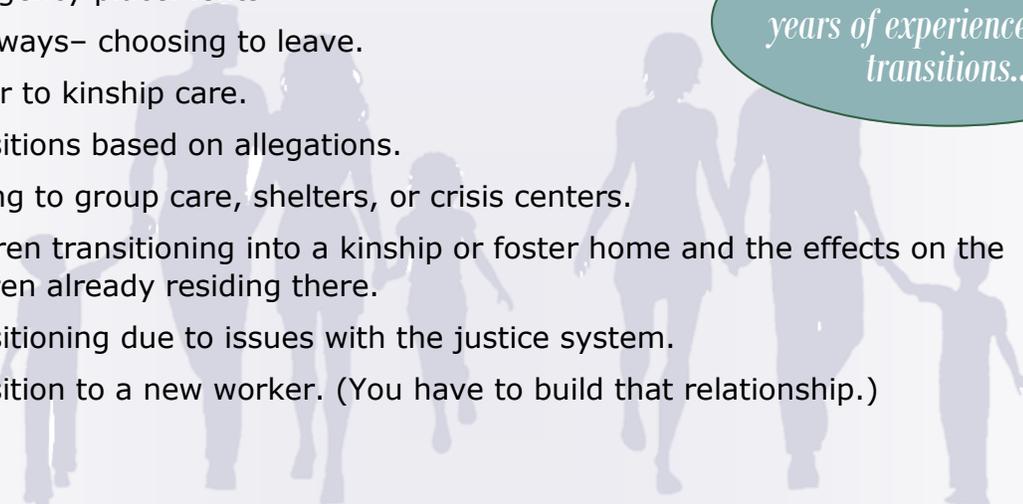
# Question 1

## What types of transitions have you had to navigate?

A variety of transitions were discussed.

### Responses from forum attendees:

- Re-unification with bio-families.
- From one foster home to another foster home.
- Adoption.
- Transitioning into adulthood/ independent living.
- Apprehensions
- Emergency placements
- Runaways- choosing to leave.
- Foster to kinship care.
- Transitions based on allegations.
- Moving to group care, shelters, or crisis centers.
- Children transitioning into a kinship or foster home and the effects on the children already residing there.
- Transitioning due to issues with the justice system.
- Transition to a new worker. (You have to build that relationship.)



*“We’ve had 22 kids. 16 years of experience. A lot of transitions..”*

### Themes Identified:

Consistently, forum participants identified that communication is vital for a successful transition. The situation can be difficult for everyone involved and some situations are managed better than others.

Participants conveyed a belief that building strong and healthy relationships with all involved would greatly improve facilitating supportive transitions.

*“Moving a sibling from my home to your home because you have the other sibling. Another transition for the child.”*

*One foster parent shared the story of an eleven year old child, in her care, who had been in forty different placements in ten years.*

## Question 2

### What was the process and timeline of the move?

#### Responses from forum attendees:

- "Goal –sustained, reduced trauma, attachment. Reality– 3 visits and 'Good luck'."
- "Depends on the social worker and agency whether the foster parent has a role in the process. Not always reasonable timelines which are good for both sides."
- "We've had 5 different transitions. All very different."
- "Transitioning is difficult. Different sets of rules for different houses. It is difficult when a child returns from a visit."
- "It is better not to transition in the middle of a school year."
- "Feel that agencies aren't sharing information about the reunification process timeline. How much time do I have left with these little ones?"
- "Tuesday a.m.-received a call that the children were leaving the home on Friday."
- "Smoothest when the foster parent can connect with wherever the child is going. This could be adoption, natural parent, other foster home, etc."
- "Knew about relinquishment and could pre-plan."
- "Seeing kids afterwards really helped the kids-once a month and then less often. Send a scrapbook with pictures."
- "It's harder when the transitions are really fast or really long. Fragmented."
- "I was told not to create a bond with the babies. How do you do that? They are babies!"
- "The foster parent having some connection to the birth family usually helps the transition go well."
- "Children are coming into a home with a very new way of life."
- "Picked up one baby in a parking lot on a Friday night."
- "Got stuff ready, a good transition, everyone involved. Visited, but couldn't separate. Hard on child to see foster parent again sometimes."
- Went to Mom for a week and didn't return. Later, Mom lost them and they went to family.
- 24 hours notice of decision and new placement.

*"The foster parent is the last person to know."*

*A participant stated they were caring for a family of children who had experienced five placements during their twenty months in care.*

## Responses from forum attendees (cont.):

- “Very little preparation or notice.”
- “I don’t like a long transition. Pre-placement; at some point the foster child switches and wonders, “Who is the parent?” It becomes confusing for the child. Short transitions ( a month is good), but not a three to six month timeline. It doesn’t work well.”
- “Some say, as soon as you do a sleepover, the child should stay at the parent’s house.”
- “There is no ideal timeline. It is very dependent on the situation and it depends on the kids.”
- “One foster parent has had ten foster children, but has never had a pre-placement visit.”
- “The experience was overwhelming. Nobody told us the rules. There was no direction or communication.”

## Themes Identified:

As participants elaborated on their experiences and shared their stories, it became clear that every transition is a unique experience. Many were of the opinion that transitions have better outcomes when careful plans, timelines and open communication exist.

Agencies and social workers are encouraged to consider the impact of pace and timing. It was offered that establishing a consistent process, procedures and communication will create more successful outcomes for transitions.

*“The ideal transition would look like this; Professional, agency, child, family, great team. Everyone knows what’s coming and are able to maintain the relationship.”*

## Question 3

### What was your role in the process?

#### Participants see their role as:

- ◆ Preparing yourself mentally and emotionally. The whole family, your natural children.
- ◆ Teacher, negotiator, facilitator.
- ◆ Trying to promote understanding.
- ◆ Guide, negotiate, pick up the pieces.
- ◆ Reconnector of family (siblings).
- ◆ "Mender".
- ◆ No role in transition-going for family visit-no return.
- ◆ Supervising visits prior to a move.

*"There are no standards for reunification. Practical ideas and defined roles would be helpful."*

#### Responses from forum attendees:

- "I Feel that we have no role in the process sometimes. Also, 'not knowing what my role is'. Foster parent to co-parent is seen as the goal."
- "Years ago, we were very involved; smooth transitions. Now more like a server. You're just a foster, not a parent."
- "The agency entrusted the child to you 30 years ago. Now, the child is just placed with you, not entrusted. The child is lost in the whole process, system."
- "As a new foster parent, having a worker say, I have never done this before- How do I do it? Together, we worked out how we wanted to do the transition."
- "No agency support-felt like a lot of responsibility-taking care of child and planning transition. Explaining the situation to the younger children."
- "We are always wondering who the next people will be. We had a newborn, then an opiate baby who didn't sleep. It was hard work."
- "We open up our hearts and homes and we feel we have to take anyone. For example, a social worker will call us at 4 o'clock on a Friday with a baby who needs care. It will have to go to a shelter, otherwise."
- "In one instance, a social worker was driving around with three babies, trying to find a placement for them. She phoned and said, I have some kids in the car, can you take a baby?"

#### A Participant Story

It's a Monday and the judge says kids are to be with the parents by Friday. Then they forget to contact the foster parents. They need to realize that these kids have abandonment issues because they were pulled from home to home. We had five placements. Not one time were they allowed to say good-bye. No attachment to anyone. "Don't care" or so it appeared. The foster girl hated everyone. The first time she visited the therapist, she said, "So, do I get to live with you now?"

## Responses from forum attendees (cont.):

- "It depends on the social worker and agency whether the Foster Parent has a role on the process. There aren't always reasonable timelines and it's not always good for both sides."
- "Some kids can't even remember their bio parents. Their parents don't show up for visits. Sometimes it is difficult to explain to a four year old girl why her dad isn't at the visit."
- "It's hard to navigate. Sometimes you feel like you can't help. You don't know what your role is supposed to be. Voiceless sometimes."
- "Worry about when the child has to leave. I get so attached to them. I don't want to cross that bridge. I worry about how they will adapt to a different environment. How will the bio parent take care of them?"

*"I feel that we co-parent with the agencies. We need to be on the same page."*

## A Participant Story

In the last three or four years, I've noticed a shift way from relationship building to administration. When the administration starts to take the front driver's seat, vision and care go out the window. It's reduced to checkmarks and we move further and further away from relationship building. The administration is so heavy, it makes it hard. We only get a phone call once or three times a month. It's hard to encapsulate things in a ten minute phone call. The social workers say, "Good. Now we can move on to the next administrative task". Dollars weren't being counted fifteen to twenty years ago. The cause for the shift? I don't know that it happens on purpose. Over time, there are shifts in the system-new layers of policy. They don't realize the impact on the entire system. They are playing an administrative game. They are busy moving pieces and kids lose because they are so busy at their laptops. More and more stuff is piled on the system. Kids lose. We've come to a tipping point in the Manitoba system.

*"Would like the foster parent's role put in writing. Ask for a clear definition of your role."*

## Reflections

We received an enlightening range of answers to this question. Some foster parents reported feeling marginalized within the system because they were considered "just a foster parent" and their ideas and opinions were dismissed.

Others felt that they were able to help and support not only the child in care, but the child's biological family, as well.

Foster parents need to be included in the planning of transitions as they offer valuable insight.

It was suggested that recent changes within the system were of little benefit for foster children.

Finally, confusion regarding their roles, responsibilities, and rights was a source of anxiety.

## Question 4:

### What are the key elements of transition planning that serves the best interests of families?

#### Responses from forum attendees:

- "Bring new cultural awareness to your own foster home. The ability to adjust. Openness."
- "Foster parents and children want to know the when, where and why of their transitions. When there are lots of changes, it is hard to piece the story together. It becomes a blur."
- "People can learn by example. Foster parents can model parenting behavior. They can teach parenting practices and share parenting skills."
- "It would be nice if a child could chat with a family from a previous placement. The child could call other foster siblings or a foster parent from a previous placement."
- "Attachment and reunification training. Tell us the best way of reunification. All the workers have different ideas."
- "Strength-based approach."
- "There should be planned visits prior to the move."
- "Communication matters in transitions. It would be nice if everyone involved with the child is included in transitions."
- "Continuation. Kids shouldn't lose foster parents to gain bio family. How do we stay connected?"
- "Intake and exit conferences."
- "If a transition has a timeline with stages set up, people feel better about the transition. A process helps."
- "Current child transfer information would help. It would be nice to have a document with a standardized format. Also, an intake conference should be mandated before a transfer."
- "There must be a transition planning meeting prior to transition with the current and new caregivers, social worker, etc. You need a formal structure."
- "Involve the community. They know everyone. When they leave, have a party and sign the guest book. There needs to be an opportunity to say goodbye."
- "I really liked the role we played in the adoption process. Premise– the new family comes in and observes how you do things with the child; routines, how we deal with meltdowns, etc. It's an intelligent process. Most agencies don't have an adoption unit, but it would be very beneficial in the reunification process."
- "Transitions are smoothest when the foster parent can connect with wherever the child is going."
- "The foster family working with the natural family is the best case scenario. It can be the grandparents, not just the mom and dad."

"Collaboration,  
Communication, Co-Parenting."

## Successful and Unsuccessful Transitions Stories

### Forum participants said:

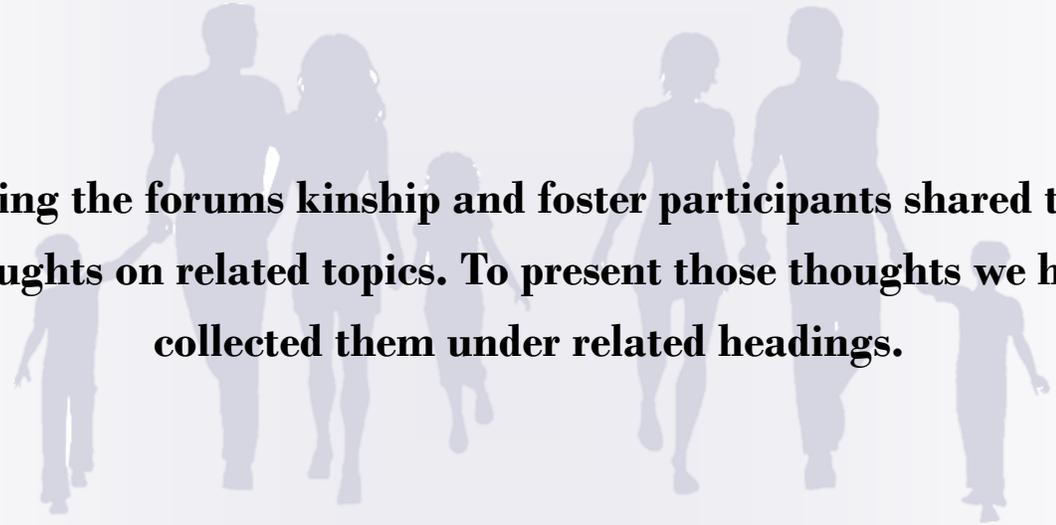
- One foster parent had the bio mom come in and observe before the child went home. Now they come over for supper. A connection and relationship is needed, first.
- A child with drug issues left home in a week. There was no notice. We requested a placement change, but no support or overlap with the new placement. There was no exchange of information with the new placement.
- Can we keep in contact with a child who is moving? It can happen positively. In one instance, a family still keeps in contact and has the child visit at Christmas. They are co-parenting the child and have a letter stating that they could stay in contact.
- In one example of a successful transition, the foster parent had the child during the week for an entire year, while the grandparent cared for the child on weekends. Then the child lived with the grandparents, but the foster parent cared for the child every second weekend.
- We stepped up. We wanted the child to be in a home, rather than a group home, in the case of a young child. We were in charge. We volunteered and created a transition plan. It was a place of safety . We are like grandparents; we Skype and send photos.
- One transition took a couple of months. We kept thinking, "This isn't going to happen". We didn't want to believe it. Then it happened so fast. We felt like we were misled at the beginning of the placement . We had the child for four and a half years and were told that they would never go back to the bio family.
- My favorite is not always practical, it's intense. In an adoption, the agency has done all the background stuff. The family comes into the home every day for 4 days. They observed, saw the feeding schedule, etc. On Friday and Saturday, they brought the child home to stay with the parents. Next, the foster parents visited the adopted child on weekends. The contact with parents and child was good for everyone and the foster kids in the home were able to meet the new people. The adoptive parents could see her current routine. It's good, but hard. The foster parents felt under scrutiny, but it was best for the child being adopted.

### Themes Identified:

Transitions are an inescapable part of life; how a transition is managed can vary. Different methods can have a positive or negative outcome for the families involved in the process. Kinship and foster parents presented as open to finding solutions to the challenges created by transitions. Open, inclusive communication, professionalism, boundaries and supportive aftercare were all elements consistently identified as necessary for supportive healthier transitions.

Kinship and foster parents' participating in case plans, timelines, and information sharing was stressed as very important. A successful transition plan should include the social worker, kinship or foster parent, biological family and (when appropriate) age appropriate children.

Kinship and foster parents expressed hopes to continue contact with the children and families formerly in their care, whenever possible.



**During the forums kinship and foster participants shared their thoughts on related topics. To present those thoughts we have collected them under related headings.**

# 1

## Information Sharing and Communication

### Forum participants said:

- “we are an emergency home. We received very little info, only told that the child hadn’t received any immunizations.”
- “Medical numbers are great, but favorite foods, triggers, etc. are also important.”
- “I didn’t know if the child had glasses, asthma , or HIV.”
- “Sometimes the child’s gender changes between the phone call from the social worker and arrival at your house.”
- “In one example; no medical numbers, can’t transfer schools, didn’t know the children’s last names. The situation has been ongoing for almost one month.”
- “Confidentiality issues are stated as why can’t always share information.”
- “I only got info when in a kinship home first. A friend of the family had written a book full of info on the child.”
- “Sometimes the agency lets you plan the pre-placement visits. This can be better; more information.”
- “When the foster parents are able to have a discussion; that’s where you get more info or when a child comes to a foster home from hospital. More immediate information.”
- “The kids are overwhelmed by transitions and the foster parents can’t help them deal and process if they are “out of the loop”. Especially children with FASD. Giving the kids a voice is huge. Transition may not be what the child wants.”
- “Accountability and transparency are important. Transitions are occurring without information; regarding abuse, for example. Also, not enough medical information. Feel social workers are dismissive and issues are downplayed. Foster parents get “the upsell”.
- “Sometimes the foster parent doesn’t receive all of the child’s information because the social worker is afraid that if they knew everything, they wouldn’t take the child.”
- “You don’t want to keep secrets from the child. Want to be an “open book”. When the kids know things that the foster parents don’t know; how can you answer the kids or be there for them?”

### A participant story

A child came from a group home. There was not enough information. We didn’t know the full story of abuse for a year. Might have parented and adapted things differently if we knew more. What are their routines? Medical history? Social history? Will they be a good fit in your house?

### Themes Identified:

We heard from many participants that better communication between kinship families, foster families, social workers, biological families and the child could improve the transition process for everyone involved.

## 2 Fears

"Fostering in Fear" was a recurring theme at the forums. Unfortunately, certain aspects of the foster care system made the attendees feel uneasy and even fearful. It should be noted that some were of the opinion that their social workers were also fearful. This situation leads to lack of trust and communication, exacerbating the problem.

### Themes Identified:

- Fear of retribution by the agency.
- Fear of losing the child.
- Social workers may also be working in fear. They are stuck in the middle.
- Families feel that they foster in fear. The agencies behave in a random manner.
- Broken people in a broken system. Everyone is trapped in the system together. There are under-skilled, undereducated workers and under-skilled, undereducated foster parents.
- We are afraid to talk with the social worker.
- Foster parents have to take a risk to talk to the social worker openly or the system becomes further dehumanized.
- We want to be part of the team and have a voice on the team. We want to be heard. Still have fears, but if your voice is heard, the fear dissipates and you feel part of the ongoing discussion. If you feel that you can talk, your fear lessens.

## 3 Case Plans

Case planning was identified as an area of concern. A small number of participants identified having had experience with participation in case planning for children in their home. The strong majority of participants (90%) were either unaware that case plans existed or said they did not have input into case planning.

### Forum participants said:

- "The case plan was a wealth of knowledge. It told me what they were going to do. When the social worker changes, the case plan stays in the child's file."
- "Offer to help the social worker draft the case plan. Social workers are busy- especially new workers. It gets the back and forth going. They don't have to go back and dig in the file."
- "When a teen signs a case plan; ownership. She can voice her opinion. Feels she matters. Win-win. We are all working together here."
- "There is a yearly permanency plan, but we were so out of the loop. It was behind closed doors. The social worker said, 'Whoa! At least we should talk to the foster family.' Now we meet every 3 months because of this."
- It would be nice to have it in writing. As soon as a new worker comes in, the plan immediately changes and a case plan would have been nice. I get that plans change, but it's nice to have it in writing. A plan can change; a bio mom can get better, social workers can find a grandmother, but it is nice for the foster parent to be involved.

## 4 Impact of Transitions

### Forum participants said:

Regarding the process of Transitions:

- “Foster parents want to be involved, but then the foster children were not allowed to see the former foster parents after they left because the children cry when the foster parent leaves.”
- “Foster parents, kinship, bio families– Transition affects the whole family– bio kids and foster kids; grandparents , aunts...”
- Some things foster parents have heard from children during transitions: “What if I never see you again?” and “What if I never find you?”
- “In one instance, children were to be adopted. Foster parent brought the children to visits and brought their belongings to the new house. Then they were told that the family wasn’t adopting the children after all. “Sorry, we’re not adopting anymore.” The kids were crying. The foster parents need to know.”
- “It isn’t just the one child, if our family breaks down, we can’t help anybody...foster parents aren’t a disposable resource.”
- “The foster parents’ bio kids call the foster child in their home their brother. It will be hard when they leave because they’ve been together almost four years.”
- “During transitions, belongings are left behind. A child may not see their teddy bear for months. Sometimes, children are sent replacements for their belongings, rather than the original toy, and it is difficult.”
- “Now that the younger kids are older and more attached, it will be harder. Our nine year old wants to keep the foster children. We tell her that we will enjoy them for now as much as possible. We have to think about how the disconnect will affect everybody afterwards.”

“Your child or grandchild worries that if the foster child leaves, they will be next.”

### Themes Identified:

It was a consistent theme presented by participants that maintaining some form of contact with the new placement might alleviate many of the concerns for all involved.

It was stated by several participants; it would be nice if transition plans included a small piece of seeing the kids after the transition. A nice, helpful transition. Good for kids, to know they’re safe.

Participants identified their want and need training to support transitions for all involved.

## Forum participants said (cont.):

### Regarding Aging-Out Transitions and Extension of Care (Agreements with Young Adults)

- "Timelines are needed for successful transitions."
- "An extended transition is easier and better for the kids. They learn some life skills."
- "For the government, there are monetary issues. Also, the child's file is closed. Thus, there are less children in care at the end of the year. Where did they go? We cut numbers and costs for children in care, but then we hear from the homeless."
- "Independent Living Program. They go to an apartment, but they can't go back to the foster home. There needs to be a buffer. The ideal situation would involve a transition house, but then the child could go back to the foster home."
- "There is a gap between the Extension of Care kids and Adult Services."
- "Make sure kids have life skills."
- "Some kids at eighteen say, I'm done with child welfare".
- "Can a foster child choose to stay? Can foster parents afford it if there is no extension of care by the agency?"
- "Despite her age, she wasn't really an adult."
- "So many foster children aren't really eighteen, they are really only ten, or twelve, or six."
- "They need a place of belonging and attachment. When they age out, there is no place of belonging or connection."
- "But when you are saying to these kids, you can move out, be an adult, have freedom- How do you be accountable for that? There are huge consequences that an eighteen year old doesn't get. They need a second chance in that situation. They may go and want to come back. As foster parents, you can't necessarily take back those kids."
- "Try to make it as nice as possible. An example of a plan for a twenty year old about to move out was provided. Fostering was to continue until the child was twenty-one. Her room remained at the foster parent's house . Funds were given to the foster parent and then to the foster child. The foster parent was paid to be her support (this is something new). Seen as a positive process and on the right track. The transition was from primary caregiver to primary support. "Can teach them everything, but when they are actually out on their own..."

## Themes Identified:

This particular type of transition was an area of concern for most of the attendees. What does the future hold for Manitoba's former foster children beyond the foster care system? The kinship and foster parents expressed anxiety about the futures of their foster children as they aged out of care. They realized that all children; foster and bio children need to know that they can return home while they experiment with moving into society. A mentor program was suggested to help with these transitions.

Participants voiced concerns that the process and timeline for moving into interdependent living were being set by the teens and some adult parenting guidance is often needed. They want to strengthen and empower adolescents aging out of care through life skills to give them every possible chance of success. They also wish there was a more substantial safety net for these youth.

## 5 Customary Care and New Legislation

Participants said they are aware the system is changing but are unsure as to what changes will occur and how they will be implemented.

As Customary Care Agreements are a rather new system piece, if legislated, many attendees were interested in discussing this topic. Each forum group identified they felt unheard in the planning and decision-making process.

### Forum participants said:

- “48 hours in legislation. Does it give you enough time to prepare and to say goodbye?”
- “Foster care is designed to be temporary. They need to go home and be with their family and community.”
- “Kinship is foster care within your own family. It’s tricky to navigate.”
- “Who suffers? For example, a child is in a home for nine years, but moved because it’s not culturally appropriate. It’s going to be a big issue.”
- “Culturally appropriate needs a better definition. It seems to be a growing cause of transitions.”
- “Due to system changes, the foster children have to stay in their community, or return to their community, depending on their agency.”
- “The legislation changes don’t necessarily keep families together. There is a lack of resources due to block funding.”
- “48 hours notice in legislation for transitions. It’s a large province. A lot of land and few people. Travel time alone can take hours from northern communities.”

“We are on the cusp of significant change. What’s the next step?”

### A participant story

“Social workers are taking children from their foster home and bringing them to group homes in their home communities. Workers come in to help families reunite. Children are taken from the foster home and placed in group homes to reunite families, but reunification isn’t happening and they can’t get regular workers. This situation is very unhealthy and sometimes unsupervised.”

### Themes Identified:

Presently in Manitoba, almost 90 percent of the children in care are Indigenous and some foster parents are concerned about the effect of this new proposed legislation on the children in their care. They would like to receive more culturally appropriate training from their agencies and at the very least, a clear definition of customary care by their agency.

# Placement Transitions for Children in Care

## 2018/2019 Forums

### Forum Recommendations

At times, it appears that the kinship/foster care system in Manitoba faces insurmountable challenges. In the final analysis, however, we are optimistic about implementing strategies and initiatives to create significant positive changes in transition planning.

Manitoba's Kinship and Foster parents are a valuable and knowledgeable resource and should be given more consideration in all aspects of the transition process for the children in their care.

1. Communication and sharing of information
2. Participation in specific case plans and co-operatively determined timelines for transitions.
3. Clarification of legislated steps.
4. Strength- based approach.
5. Child-centered transitions.
6. Pre-placement visits whenever possible.
7. Training opportunities for both kinship/foster parents and bio families.
8. More collaboration between foster families, biological families and agencies. Transition plans and conferences that include the foster parent, biological parent, social worker, and the child in care, whenever possible.
9. Supportive aftercare to help everyone involved.
10. Kinship and foster parents trained and engaged in opportunities to facilitate family re-unification.
11. Kinship or foster parent involvement in after care transition supports for the child and family.

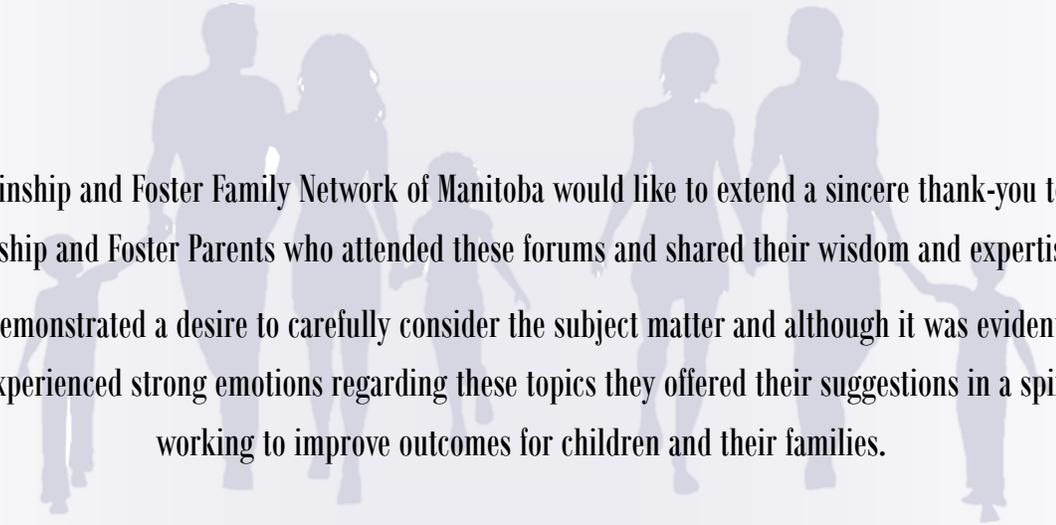
### Forum Reflections

Through narrating their own experiences, sometimes grief and sadness were part of this discussion. Some Kinship/foster parents were conflicted because they are happy about family reunification, but sad to see the children leave. They worry about attachment and adjustment when a child leaves their care. Balancing the best interests of the child with the best interests of the family can also become a dilemma. Often, they are concerned about a transition's effects on both their foster and biological children.

It was consistent them presented

Ultimately, Manitoba's Children in Care deserve the best transition experience possible. Ensuring a healthy transition can be a challenging responsibility, but child centered collaboratively planned transitions, which consider the best interests of the child, are beneficial for everyone.

## **Acknowledgements**



The Kinship and Foster Family Network of Manitoba would like to extend a sincere thank-you to the Kinship and Foster Parents who attended these forums and shared their wisdom and expertise. They demonstrated a desire to carefully consider the subject matter and although it was evident they had experienced strong emotions regarding these topics they offered their suggestions in a spirit of working to improve outcomes for children and their families.



The Kinship & Foster Family  
Network of Manitoba

---

**FOSTERING CONNECTIONS**

**The Kinship & Foster Family Network of Manitoba  
90 Terracon Place  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R2J 4G7**

**Phone: 204-940-1280  
Toll Free: 1-866-458-5650  
Email: [manfost@mffn.ca](mailto:manfost@mffn.ca)  
Website: [www.kffnm.ca](http://www.kffnm.ca)**