



## THETIS SPECIALIZED FOSTER CARE – ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

### 1. If I have children of my own, can I still become a Thetis Foster Parent?

It depends. Sometimes foster parents have their own older children living at home along with the young person they are fostering. The suitability of this arrangement often depends on the age and maturity of their children. Given the complex challenges of the young people referred to Thetis, parents of young children are encouraged to wait until their children are older before taking on fostering with Thetis.

### 2. What are Thetis's expectations of foster parents?

We ask and expect that Thetis Specialized Foster Parents will:

- Make the family care model succeed for the foster child in your home, by treating the child as much as possible like a member of your family. The child placed needs to have their physical needs met (e.g. food, clothing, and shelter) as well as stability, patience, warmth, and structure and kind supervision.
- Maintain records according to agency requirements.  
Submit regular, accurately completed reports to your Thetis Support Facilitator or Manager. This would include a Daily Log, Monthly Reports, medication tracking note and Incident Reports.
- Actively participate in Thetis meetings, including ICM conferences when requested, as well as clinical supervision. Clinical Supervision typically occurs every other week, with the Thetis Support Facilitator.
- Attend TCF-sponsored training events
- Ensure that the appropriate team members know of any significant changes, concerns, or accomplishments of the child in your care. Team members could include your Thetis Support Facilitator, MCFD Social Worker, Guardian, Thetis Program Manager, Thetis Respite Care Provider, Day Program or school staff, Doctor/Psychiatrist.

Your Thetis Support Facilitator helps you keep communication, timely, useful and simple.

### 3. Can I keep my full-time job while fostering?

That depends on your situation. In two-parent homes, at least one parent is usually home full-time, once a child is placed in the home. However, if you have a paid position that allows you to be flexible enough to accommodate the demands of a complex child, this would be considered on a case-by-case basis.



#### **4. How readily available/accessible do I need to be for the Thetis child?**

Children demand different levels of attention from their caregivers, depending on their needs.

MCFD that contracts services from Thetis expects foster parents to be available to the young person 24 hours per day, seven days a week. In consideration of the high needs of the young people in our program, we support Caregivers

- Respite (typically every other weekend)
- 24-hour on-call availability from a Thetis Support Facilitator
- Thetis can help arrange other services that foster families might want to access such as spiritual and cultural care services or psychiatric assessment and consultation services.
- Clinical coordination of the various individuals/services engaged in helping the child
- Monthly compensation

#### **5. Do I need to find my own babysitters or are respite providers available to me? (Respite versus Babysitting)**

Foster Caregivers are entitled to receive respite, which is a break from the day-to-day demands of foster care. Respite Caregivers go through the same vetting and Home Study process that Foster Parents do. The Children's Foundation will provide and pay for Thetis Respite Care. If Foster Parents prefer to seek out their own Respite Care Providers those providers would be required to go through the same screening process.

For occasional babysitting needs, as with any family a Foster family can seek out someone close, trusted and competent. The babysitter would be required to go through the Criminal Record Check process. The Thetis Program will maintain basic information such as name, address and contact information, and dates of the informal care. Babysitting may occur in your home, or in the home of the babysitter. Babysitting costs would be the responsibility of the Foster Parent.

#### **6. What support can I expect from the Thetis Program?**

The Thetis Program supports its Foster Caregivers well. We know that when a Foster Parent takes on the responsibility of care for a child with high needs, support services are vital. The Thetis Support Facilitator will visit your home at least twice a month, and usually weekly to address any questions or concerns you may have. You can also contact your Thetis Support Facilitator at any time with questions or concerns. If the call is urgent and the Thetis Support Facilitator is not available, you will have the contact information for the Program Manager, and the Executive Director.

- Respite (typically every other weekend)
- 24-hour on-call availability from a Thetis Support Facilitator
- Clinical coordination of the various individuals/services engaged in helping the child or manager



Support to Foster Parent contractors is also provided in the form of monthly compensation, yet fostering is a labour of love.

Thetis Foster Parents are supported by regular training approximately monthly, that is relevant to the children involved in our program. Training comes in different formats. For example, it may be a mentoring visit from the Facilitator Support Worker or, a brief workshop by an agency staff person, a viewing and discussion of an internet resource or a Community Training Event.

## 7. What topics may be covered during training?

Training topics will reflect current trends and issues.

Basic training includes, CPI (NVCI) de-escalation skills; First Aid, CPR, The Thetis Program will address issues or needs identified by foster parents or staff.

For example: Other topics from past trainings include: Trauma and The Developing Brain (Bruce Perry - The Children's Foundation is the first BC agency to be certified in NMT, Attachment (Dr. Dianne Benoit , Dr. Gabor Mate and others), Child Development, Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Separation and Loss, Nutrition, Suicide Awareness, Cultural Awareness, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (Diane Malbin and others), and OT generated knowledge in reading Nonverbal Cues in Children (Kim Barthel). Intervening with Violence in Families... and many others.

## 8. What is the process to become a Thetis Specialized Foster Parent?

**Preliminary Screening:** From the moment you express an interest in becoming a Specialized Foster Parent with Thetis, a screening process begins. At the time of your inquiry, we will ask you about your present family make-up, experience, strengths, fostering hopes and fears and motivation to foster. This is often done on the phone.



**Meeting/Assessment:** A face-to-face screening interview is scheduled, at The Children's Foundation office or your home, attended The Program Manager and or the Thetis Support Facilitator.

The purpose of this interview is to ensure that all parties understand what is expected of a Specialized Foster Parent and to assess the appropriateness of moving on to the next stage, documents. If there is time at the end of the meeting, documents can be started. These include Criminal Record Checks, MCFD Prior Contact Checks/Child Abuse Registry Checks, as well as personal reference checks, Confidentiality Agreement, etc.

**Home Study:** After the screening interview is complete, Security Checks are completed and sent out. If we are still agreeable to moving forward, a Thetis Home Study worker will be assigned. The Home Study worker will conduct a series of interviews according to the SAFE model, a standardized evidence based evaluation process used broadly in North America. The SAFE Home Study is an in-depth assessment of the family's attributes and the physical environment. This includes completion of an autobiography of each caregiver, and an assessment of strengths and abilities.

**Placement:** Once you receive approval on the items above we will, in collaboration with MCFD, proceed to place a suitable child in your home. This typically include a conference of involved and invited individuals. Then two or more pre-placement visits will be arranged. If the child has supportive and available family, these family members will be familiarized with the plan and the foster home and Thetis. It is important that the Specialized Foster Parent be welcoming honouring of these family members, remembering that supportive family is the greatest treasure a child has. They can help immensely in the progress of the child. To help them build trust in your ability to care for their child engage with them from a strengths perspective.

### 9. What is the role of the Thetis Support Facilitator?

The Thetis Support Facilitator is your support worker, your guide, and your advocate. He/she is there to coordinate the treatment process while ensuring you are receiving sufficient support to continue caring for the challenging child entrusted to your care. The Facilitator is on call 24/7.

### 10. How many children may be placed in my home?

One. This is to help ensure that the needs of the child have the caregiver's full attention.

### 11. How are children referred to the Thetis Program?

All referrals to the Thetis Program are prioritized and referred through the appropriate MCFD Resource Team. An initial MCFD referral query should include a detailed social history of the child, followed by reports by professionals relevant to proper care and treatment of the child referred.

Thetis is a long-term placement program. Thetis is not equipped to receive emergency or short-term placements.

**If you would like to discuss becoming a Thetis Foster Caregiver, or if you are a Social Worker with a potential referral to our program, please call:**

**Stephen Hockey MSW**

**Program Manager at 604 807-4908**

**Or call our switchboard at 604-434-9101 ext. 309**

**Email: [Stephen.Hockey@childrens-foundation.org](mailto:Stephen.Hockey@childrens-foundation.org)**



**For future elaboration:**

1. [I would like to become a Foster Parent.](#)
2. [I would like more information on becoming a Foster Parent.](#)
3. [How can I reach your Website?](#)



