

# Family Connections

Event Takeaways

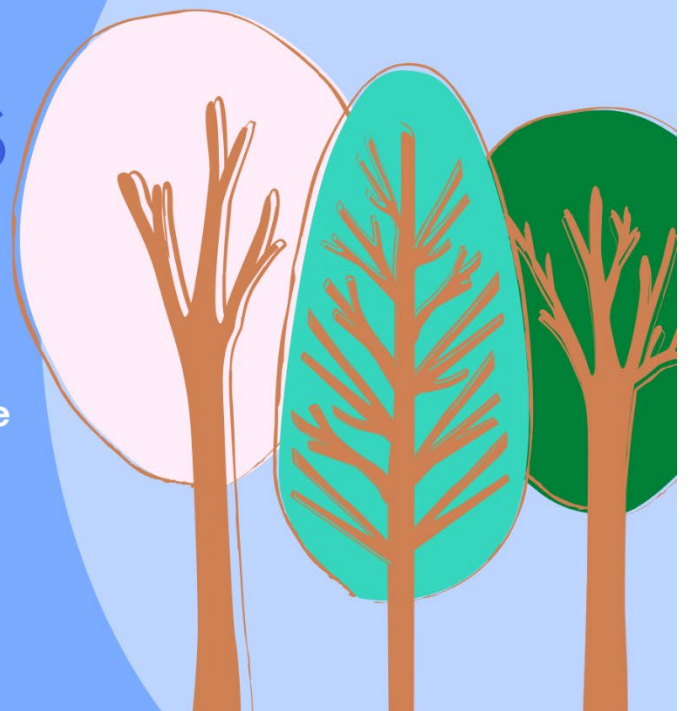


Child Welfare League of Canada  
Ligue pour le bien-être de l'enfance du Canada

## Family Connections

An online discussion for foster and kinship families on maintaining connections and relationships with family, language, community & culture

Tuesday, June 16th  
6pm EST



**CWLC LBEC**  
Child Welfare League of Canada  
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On June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, in collaboration with the **Canadian Foster Families Association** and the **ALIGN Association of Community Services**, the Child Welfare League of Canada (CWLC) hosted a discussion on creative ways to protect, maintain and increase young people's connections to family, community, culture and language – both now and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are some of the key event takeaways:

- The last few months have been very difficult for children. We need to keep our **hearts open** to those who are in our care. Without that connection, the results can be so tragic - Beverly Keeshing-Soonias
- We need to think of alternative care as **co-parenting relationships**. We are not only caring for the child, but for the whole family. Everyone gives what they can, and each child is wrapped in a **secure environment** of loving adults who are focused on their best interest - Landy Anderson
- Caregivers can remind children who they belong to and let them know that they are not afraid of children loving their parents, their aunties and uncles. “Your heart is like a rubber band. There is **no limit** to how many people you can love.” - Beverly Keeshig-Soonias
- Identity and cultural development is part of brain development. Culture is a developmental **need** and protects children and youth from isolation, suicide, and homelessness - Beverly Keeshig-Soonias
- We saw the impact of COVID-19 on family connections, as the system tightened, and access visits were **reduced or stopped**. This will be remembered and talked about for some time - Kenn Richard
- As families were **forced** to physically distance, the use of video increased. Keeping frequent contact is important, but we do not want to fool ourselves into thinking that virtual visits are as good as the real thing; children need the **sights, smell and spirit** - Kenn Richard

- It is hard to keep someone in your heart as an idea. Little children **need to touch you** - Beverly Keeshig-Soonias
- We need to find **creative and science-based** ways to maintain family connection - Kenn Richard
- We are now changing directions, facing outwards again and making boundaries more permeable. This can be a little frightening, but it is important for **growth and development** - Beverly Keeshig-Soonias
- We can help children **move forward** courageously, so they are not worried about things being perfect. “We follow these rules because we treasure you, because you matter.” Show children how to **be in their feelings**, have **self-respect** and slow down - Beverly Keeshig-Soonias
- Planting a garden is a wonderful way to help children feel grounded and calm. Learn about the **First Nations Child & Family Caring Society’s *Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams*** campaign here: <https://fncaringsociety.com/honouring-memories-planting-dreams-11/12>.
- The **First Nations Child & Family Caring Society** and **Spirit Bear** have identified COVID-19 resources to help everyone feel safe and informed throughout the pandemic. Learn more here: <https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bears-covid-19-resources>.