Foster Family Training Needs Assessment in the Northwest Territories

by

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Research Practicum Report
Presented to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Masters of Social Work

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Acknowledgments

When I was accepted into the Master of Social Work program it was with mixed feelings. I was elated and apprehensive. It had been eighteen years since I had last attended University and I wondered if I could do the work? Throughout the process of obtaining my degree I continually referred back to scripture that encouraged and strengthened me. One biblical verse that motivated and sustained me through the program comes from Philippians chapter 4 verse 13, " I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." I give all praise, glory, and honor for my accomplishments to the Lord my God.

It is with sincere thanks that I would like to credit all of the participants (foster families, social workers, supervisors, management and the oversight committee) who willingly agreed to partake in the research. Without your input and insight I could not have done the needs assessment.

Where would I be without family and friends? It is through their support, patience, and encouragement that I was able to further my education. I was blessed to have this opportunity and I do not take it for granted.

Lastly I would like to thank my practicum committee consisting of Dr. Harvy Frankel, Professor Alex Wright, and Mr. Blair Dunbar for their support, guidance, wisdom, and patience. I know that I can be headstrong but I did heed your advice and direction. It was most appreciated.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Currently in the Northwest Territory (N.W.T.) there is no standardized, consistent, and structured framework for foster parent training. This impacts on the quality of service provided to children in care.

Research has shown that children currently entering the Child and Family Service system who require placements are more difficult to work with than in the past due to more complex problems and needs (Greenblatt, 2000). Some of the reasons for the increased complexity of children's problems and needs are due to the consequences of a variety of stresses on modern families such as: marital breakups, single parent homes, latchkey children, poverty, and a lack of close-knit communities and extended families (Hauprich & Joy, 1988). The presence of these high needs children with multiple problems contribute to the perception that foster families are providing services far from "normal parenting" (Waldock, 1996). As a result foster family training is a critical factor in preparing foster parents with the required skills and knowledge to parent these children effectively.

Foster parents are motivated to provide care, but if not properly prepared and trained, the demands of caring for children with increased needs may prove to be overwhelming. Potential successful families withdraw from fostering as a result of limited experience and inadequate preparation and training. The end

result is an inability of agencies to retain foster homes and children experiencing disrupted placements.

The Child Welfare League of Canada (CWLC) was hired by the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) in 1999 to do an assessment and review of the child welfare services in the N.W.T. and the linkages with its services partners. In May 2000 the CWLC released their findings in a report called, "It Takes a Community." This report recommended that the foster care system require attention and resources in the areas of recruitment, screening, assessment, and training. It also stressed the importance of developing these areas with input from foster families and social workers.

This report gave the DHSS the impetus to focus energy and funding into developing a foster parent-training program. When developing a training program, it is imperative to seek input from the potential learners and stakeholders to ensure the program is designed to have immediate usefulness to them (Vella, 1994). The process of seeking input in order to identify needs, gaps, or discrepancies, between what actually is and what ought to be is referred to as a "needs assessment" (NA) (Kaufman, 1992). The fundamental premise of a NA is that in order to make effective decisions about current or future training, data must be gathered.

The practice component of my graduate work focuses on a three-phase NA as it pertains to foster family training in the N.W.T. The purpose of the NA was to collect data on foster family training through in-person interviews with foster parents, social workers, supervisors, and the DHSS. The NA focused on

the training needs as they pertain to content, format, audience, delivery mode, trainers, and scheduling. The collected data was analyzed and assisted in the formulation of recommendations that were forwarded to the DHSS. These recommendations will be instrumental in the future planning and designing of a standardized and structured foster family- training program.

Practicum Rationale

The significance and relevance of foster family training to the social work profession stems from our role as child protection workers and advocates who provide a safety net for children who cannot be adequately cared for at home. It is our responsibility as child protection workers to find the best possible substitute home for children requiring out of home care. Child protection agencies and social workers have an ethical, professional, and legal responsibility to children, their birth parents, and the community to ensure foster families are licensed and trained to provide quality, substitute and in some cases long term family care for children.

As a social worker I may feel I know the training needs of foster families. This presumed knowledge is only a subjective opinion until I can provide corroboration of these needs in the Territory. The NA will assist in the identification of the training needs of foster parents in the N.W.T. Based on this input a training program can be developed.

Practicum Objectives

There were five learning objectives of the practicum: 1) To learn the process of writing and submitting documents necessary for a research process

a) Scientific Research License from the Aurora Institute in the N.W.T and, b)

Human Ethics Approval from the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board at the

University of Manitoba. 2) To develop new skills in writing interview questions

and in data collection through the implementation of an NA. 3) To develop

communication skills including: presentation and networking. 4) To apply the

research finding to program training and development in the N.W.T. 5) To, learn

how to analyze data from the interviews which will be formulated into

recommendation to the DHSS for future planning and designing of a

standardized training program.

Overview of the Practicum Report

The practicum report begins with a literature review that encompasses the

history of foster care beginning in Britain during the Elizabethan times through to

the modern era in Canada. This review will highlight some of the challenges that

are currently facing the foster care system such as: the imbalance between the

availability and demand of homes; the lack of culturally appropriate homes; the

lack of training; and the on going debate of redefining the role of foster families

from that of a volunteer to team member.

Integral parts of the literature review are devoted to foster family training.

There are many national and international training programs that are available

on the market today. In researching foster family training curriculums I found

three programs that have potential consideration for the N.W.T. The three

training models that are discussed in the literature review are: 1) Parent

Resources for Information, Development and Education (P.R.I.D.E.); 2) British

Columbia Foster Care Education Program; and 3) the Alaska Foster Parent Center. Each training model is discussed highlighting their strengths and limitations.

When considering a training program for adults it is imperative to have an understanding of how adults learn, so skill development and maximized learning can occur. Part of the literature review highlights Benjamin Bloom's (1956) classification of learning objectives. He conceives acquiring knowledge as a progressive process that moves from concrete to abstract. When considering a training program the trainer must select the taxonomic level that is reflective of the learner's knowledge. The notion of adults as "relevancy-oriented" is discussed. Adults want to be able to relate content of the curriculum to specific contexts in their lives. These contexts often take the form of a problem or concern, and the learning has to be applicable to these circumstances to be of value to them.

Chapters four, five, six and seven of the practicum report concentrate on the process of the NA and its three distinct phases. The three phases in the NA are: 1) pre-assessment, 2) assessment, 3) and the post-assessment. The pre-assessment phase of the NA focuses on establishing a management plan and defining the purpose of the NA. In this phase data is collected via an archival data review and through interviews with stakeholders in order to determine major need areas or issues pertaining to foster parent training. Research questions are developed based on archival data collection, prior research, and issues

raised by key informants. It is during the pre-assessment phase that the boundary and scope of the needs assessment are established.

The second phase of the NA is the formal assessment also called the data gathering stage. At this phase the preliminary work in obtaining a research license and ethics approval is required. It is during this stage of the NA that sampling procedures, recruitment of the participants, and conducting the interview are outlined. The main focus of this stage is to document the current state of foster parent training in the N.W.T. and compare it with the vision of, "what should be?"

The final stage of the NA is called the post-assessment phase. The main task in this phase is for the assessor to analyze, evaluate, and make recommendations and disseminate the data, and the findings. An important component of this phase is to communicate the results of the NA via written reports and oral briefings to the DHSS, stakeholders, and interested parties. The results of the NA are outlined in the form of recommendations that are instrumental in the future planning and designing of a standardized and structured foster parent-training program.

The final chapter of the report is a summary along with an evaluation of the learning experience taking into account the learning goals I set at the beginning of the practicum.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Needs Assessment and Evaluation

The purpose of the literature review is to identify and be aware of the literature that speaks to the field of inquiry of my practicum and the intervention utilized. This literature review encompasses theoretical, empirical, and descriptive material in the following subject areas:

1. Needs assessment and evaluation

2. Family foster care and foster parent training

3. Adult learning

Needs Assessment (NA):

Ideally, planning should precede the development of a program (Kaufman, 1992). The first step in the planning process for any new program is a NA, which is the cornerstone for responsible planning. The process of seeking input in order to identify needs, gaps, or discrepancies, between what actually is and what ought to be is considered a need (Kaufman, 1992). A NA can be defined as:

> A systematic set of procedures undertaken for the purpose of setting priorities and making decisions about program or organizational improvement and allocation of resources. The priorities are based on identified needs. (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995, p.4)

NAs are based on the belief that groups of people have needs that are not being met or addressed adequately. When people are cognizant of such needs,

the awareness is often expressed as complaints or demands. When they are not aware, the need is often unexpressed. NAs seek to unearth unmet needs both recognized and unexpressed.

An NA is conducted to obtain information and perceptions of values as a guide to making policy and program decisions that will benefit certain groups of people. The NA for my practicum focuses on foster parent training in the N.W.T. and is intended to direct change, action, and improvement by making decisions regarding priorities for the program. The NA will be the foundation for designing a new and improved program of service.

There is no one "right" way that applies to every NA, but there are general guiding principles that are crucial to successful assessments.

- Choose suitable means of gathering information about issues and other data.

- Recognize core values in the group whose needs are being assessed.

- Remember the value and importance of broad based participation by stakeholders.

- NA is a participatory process.

- NA cannot ignore political factors.

- Data gathering methods alone are not an NA. A NA is a decision making process, in which the data is one component (Witkin & Altshculd, 1995).

Keeping these principles at the forefront ensures the NA will have positive outcomes and be reflective of the needs of the people.

A NA is accepted as a critical element of adult education programming, but is under utilized (Kowalski, 1988). When a training program is being developed, it is important to seek input from the potential learners and other stakeholders to ensure their needs are communicated. This way, a program can be designed that has immediate usefulness and relevance (Vella, 1994). A properly utilized NA can provide solid data on which to base decisions regarding program content, method and format, delivery mode, audience, site, and scheduling. It is accepted by adult educators that program planning is enhanced significantly by involving potential learners in program planning activities (Knowles, 1982).

When doing an NA you generate different information depending upon who is involved in the assessment. Brookfield (1986) proposes that the needs and wishes expressed by learners can be considered "felt needs". Those expressed by trainers, supervisors, and management regarding skills, knowledge, behavior and values that learners should obtain are considered "prescribed needs." A successful training program ensures there is a balance between "felt" and "prescribed" needs.

Evaluation:

An evaluation can provide information regarding a program meeting its stated goals. It can also provide pertinent information for future planning. Knowles (1980) and Brookfield (1986) believe that participants in a NA must be actively involved in the evaluation process. Selecting participatory evaluation procedures is grounded in the central features of adult learning. Involving

participants also indicates that their experience and observations are an important part of the process.

I utilized a formative approach in evaluating the NA. Formative evaluations focus on process and are used to adjust and enhance interventions. This method of evaluation does not rely upon a specific methodology; instead it focuses on acquiring information that would be beneficial for program improvement.

Lastly as part of the overall evaluation I will be evaluating my five learning objectives outlined in Chapter one page four to determine if I achieved my goals.

Summary

This brief literature review on NA stress there is no one "right" way that applies to every NA, but there are guiding principles to a successful assessment. This is an important statement. Throughout my research on NA there were numerous types of NA to draw upon. When I was considering which assessment tool I wanted to utilize as part of my research practicum I referred back to the guiding principles. I wanted to ensure the NA I was going to use encompassed these principles. I will be discussing in more detail in the following chapters the NA that I selected to utilize as part of my research practicum.

I used a formative approach in evaluating the NA. This method of process evaluation permitted me to focus on information that would improve program services. This evaluation method lends itself to qualitative research since it does not rely on a specific methodology, but focuses on gathering information. It is through this format that I was able to make appropriate adjustments to the NA

based on input from the oversight committee and my practicum supervisor.

Being able to be flexible and adjust the NA based on data gathered allows for a

process that is geared toward ensuring the best possible outcomes.

Chapter Three

Literature Review

Foster Care and Foster Family Training

Family Foster Care

Introduction:

Foster care is a term that encompasses not only family foster care, but also

placement of children and youth in group homes, residential settings and

kinships placements. For my practicum I focused on family foster care, which

has been defined as:

> An essential child welfare option for children and parents who
> must live apart while maintaining legal and usually, affectional
> ties. When children and parents must be separated because of
> tragedy of physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, maltreatment,
> special circumstances, family foster care provides a planned,
> goal directed service in which the care of children and youth
> takes place in the home of an agency-approved family. The
> value of family foster care is that it can respond to the unique,
> individual needs of infants, children, youths and their families
> through the strength of family living, and through family and
> community supports. The goal of family foster care is to provide
> opportunities for healing, and development, with safe and
> nurturing relationships intended to be permanent. (National
> Commission on Family Foster Care, 1991, p.6)

The above definition reflects the principles that are accepted in the field of Child

and Family Services (CFS). Family foster care is conceptualized as a

comprehensive family support service. It is no longer seen as solely providing

substitute care.   Family foster care is intended to provide services and

opportunities that can help children and biological parents become better functioning.

Foster family services operate in all provinces and territories in Canada. Children are placed into foster care for various reasons and through processes that vary from province to province and territory to territory (Pecora, Whittaker, & Maluccio, 1992). Most children still enter foster care because of the consequences of parent-related problems, largely child abuse or neglect (Berrick, Barth, & Jonson-Reid, 1988; Kadushin & Martin, 1988). Foster care serves as a way to protect children from continued abuse. Children are also placed in foster care due to special physical or developmental needs, children from multi-problem families, children from substance-abusing families, and adolescents with serious behavioral and or emotional problems. Placement may occur due to a parent's request for temporary help on a voluntary basis, or a court order for temporary or permanent placement.

History of Foster Care:

Family foster care in one form or another has a long history, going back to the rescue of Moses from the bulrushes (Humphrey & Humphrey, 1988). An early form of family foster care originated with ancient Jewish laws and practices of placing orphaned children with relatives who reared them for adult life (Slingerland, 1919). Children from every culture continue to be raised by their kin when parents are unwilling or unable to fulfill the parental role. Kinship care or placement with relatives is probably the most common precursor to family foster care. Kinship care can be defined as:

> The full time nurturing and protection of children who must be
> separated from their parents by relatives, members of their
> tribes or clans, godparents, stepparents, or other adults who
> have a kinship bond with a child. (Kinship Care Policy and
> Practice Committee of the Child Welfare League of America,
> 1994, p.2.)

The development of foster care in Canada generally parallels that of the United States and Great Britain (McKenzie, 1993). Canada's idea of benevolence was influenced by the early seventeenth century Elizabethan Poor Laws whose principles were instituted in Canada in the nineteenth century. In 1850 asylums had been established in most Canadian cities and they were for children of the "deserving poor". These were children whose parents could not provide for them due to circumstances beyond their control, such as an industrial accident or illness. These orphan asylums were the first form of acknowledged institutional and treatment of children in need of protection.

Children of the "undeserving poor" whose parents were considered to have refused to work and their moral character were considered weak were placed in poor houses. These children of the undeserving poor seemed to have always been poor. The poorhouses focused their attention on punitive discipline and attempting to change the children's behaviors, work ethics, and personalities. The distinction between the "deserving poor" and the "undeserving poor" was an important one in the nineteenth century.

Indenture was another widely used form of early foster family care. The Elizabethan Poor Laws provided for the apprenticing of dependent children until their twenty-first birthday. The master accepted the dependent child into his home, provided them with food, clothing and the necessities of life, as well as

accepting responsibility for teaching the child a craft or trade. In return, the child worked for the master around the house and in the craft or trade as an "employee." Indenture was recognized as a business deal from which the person accepting a poor child on indenture was expected to receive from the child, a full equivalent in work for the expenses of his support, care and teaching (Thurston, 1930).

The experience of indentured children varied from being slaves to being a member of the family. During this time there was little guarantee of protection of exploitation for children. This type of placement permitted abuses and exploitation of children and continued to be a popular form of placement until the beginning of the twentieth century. The focus of foster care during this era was to provide children with placements with families that provided at least minimal care.

Modern foster care stems from Britain's and United States influences. Charles Loring Brace and the "placing out system" he established with the New York Children's Aid Society in 1853 (Cook, 1995; Down, Costin & McFadden, 1996; Hacsi, 1995). Family foster care as Brace practiced it, began as an effort to "rescue" children whose parents were inadequate or on charity and had abandoned them (Pecora et al., 1992). In 1854, Brace transported the first group of children via train from the city to farm families in groups of 40 to 100 per trip to pre-selected spots in the rural Midwest. These children soon became know as "train orphans", who were met at the railway station by families interested in caring for them in exchange for work. The New York Children's Aid

Society retained custody of the children and could remove them at anytime. However distance and time prevented supervision and follow-up from ever occurring. This method of placement was used for 75 years and approximately 100,000 children were transported and placed via orphan trains.

Whereas "orphan trains" were common in the United States, the "home children" were very much part of our Canadian child welfare history. These "home children", immigrated to Canada from Britain in 1869 to 1939. During this sixty- year period between 80,000 and 100,000 children were shipped to Canada from British orphanages and "placed out", which for many took the form of indentured labor with families across the country (McKenzie, 1993).

It was not until after World War II that a formalized foster care system became the preferred option for placing children. Although foster care was promoted as an alternative to institutional care in the early 1900's this reform was slow to ignite in many parts of Canada and in Great Britain. In 1947 the orphan asylums that were used as a means of educating and treating children were abolished due to a more cost effective system called foster family care. It was the closing of the asylums that gave impetus to the use of foster family care.

Modern Era of Foster Care:

Family foster care has changed from its original intent established over a century ago. The children who were moved on the "orphan trains" or the "home children" who emigrated from Britain to Canada were placed in "traditional" foster families. These families were composed father who was head of the household and a mother at home that was willing and able to care for the

children. Biological parents were not actively involved, agency supervision was minimal, and children were expected to grow up in foster care until the age of 21. At this time they would become emancipated.

Over the past 50 years, there has been an identifiable progression from providing care for "homeless neglected" children to a social service that provides care to children and youth who have severe emotional, behavioral, and psychological problems, due primarily to abuse within their own families (Woolf, 1990). Foster parenting is not the relatively uncomplicated task that it once was. For example a 1984 study done in New York on children in foster care reported that 40% were categorized as having symptoms of thought disorder, paranoia, suicide attempts, eating disorders, self-abuse, and attention deficit disorder (Ingalls, 1984). A similar study conducted in California demonstrated that children and youth in foster care not only had a large number of the above stated problems, but also exhibited sexual acting out behaviors, attacks on people, and property, and substance abuse (Fitzharris, 1985).

During the past 20 years, children and youth in family foster care have been divided into two groups: those who are not considered to be in need of special services, and those whose social, emotional, behavioral, and medical problems require special services. Today, children requiring services of foster care usually present with some kind of special needs; the remainder have what can be termed extraordinary needs. These children require a level of service that traditional foster care and child welfare services were not designed to address. There is agreement that foster children have become more difficult to provide

care for and that foster parents need more supports and training to meet these needs (Downs, Costin, & McFadden, 1996; Pecora et al., 1992; Titterington, 1990; U.S. General Accounting Office, 1989).

<u>Dilemma of Supply and Demand in Foster Care:</u>

Compounding the issue of children being more difficult is the fact that the supply of foster homes has not kept pace with the growth of foster care population. From 1985 to 1990, the number of children in foster care in the United States increased by 47 per cent, whereas the number of foster family homes declined by 27 percent (Spar, 1993). This trend is evident in Manitoba where the number of children in care increased by 56 percent between 1985 and 1991 and the number of family foster homes failed to grow proportionately (McKenzie, 1994). The DHSS in the N.W.T. does not have a centralized system in place to capture the number of foster families providing service. There is however evidence to show that between 2000 and 2001 there has been a 29% increase in children in permanent custody and an increase of 34% of these in temporary custody (Government of the Northwest Territories, 2002). This trend is similar to the United States and the province of Manitoba regarding the increase of children coming into care.

The growing shortage of foster homes can be attributed to the growing number of women seeking employment outside of the home who might have provided full time foster care. Other contributing factors are: the low reimbursement rates; the higher needs of children and youth placed in foster

care; inadequate support service, such as respite, and insufficient preservice and in-service training opportunities for foster parents.

<u>Lack of Culturally Appropriate Homes:</u>

Nationally and internationally kinship care is increasingly being used as a placement choice in an attempt to address the increase in number of children coming into care. It is also being utilized due to the decrease in the number of regular foster families and lack of culturally appropriate homes.

Currently, there is an overrepresentation of minority children in care and a lack of culturally or racially appropriate foster homes. This is a controversial issue, particularly in relation to Aboriginal children in Canada and African American, Hispanic, and Native American children in the United States (McKenzie, 1993).

The effectiveness of kinship placements has not been well established. However, research has shown that kinship placements last longer than regular foster placements (Scannapieco, Hegar, & McAlpine, 1997; Berrick et al.1993; Meyer and Link, 1990; Dubowitz, Feigelman, Tipper, Sawyer & Davidson, 1990) and placements with extended family do appear to be very stable (Berrick et al. 1993; Inglehart 1994; Dubowitz et al. 1990). Unfortunately, kinship placements tend to be less effectively monitored, supported, and trained than is the case with regular foster care (Scannapieco et al.1997; Everett 1995). If children coming into care are more difficult to work with than those in the past due to more complex problems and needs (Greenblatt, 2000), then we need to ensure

that all foster and kinship families are equipped with the knowledge, skills and

support to do the work.

In the N.W.T. 94 percent of the children who are in permanent care and 97

percent of children who are in temporary care are of aboriginal descent

(Government of the N.W.T., 2002). The N.W.T. Child and Family Services

Standards and Procedures Manual addresses the issue of provisional/extended

family foster services and culturally or racially appropriate placements by having

a standard that states:

> Child Protection Workers will seek to place children in
> provisional and or extended family care as the first placement
> option. (Department of Health and Social Services, Child and
> Family Services Standards and Procedure Manual, p.903,
> 1998.)

This standard requires social workers to first explore options within the culture,

and as a last resort, consider other resources outside the immediate community

and culture of origin. This criterion has been instituted to ensure appropriate

family members are considered as a placement option prior to anyone else. It

also allows social workers to place children in a home where there is familiarity

based on pre-existing relationships and ongoing life within the cultural

community of origin.

This reality of children's placements in the N.W.T. reflects that regular foster

homes are utilized more frequently than extended/provisional homes.

Provisional homes are those homes with which a child has had a pre-existing

relationship. The DHSS completed a one-day snapshot of children receiving

services in care on March 2002 and found that 75 percent of children placed

permanently in care were in regular foster homes and 14 percent were in

extended/provisional homes. For children who were placed in care temporarily,

56 percent of them were placed in regular foster homes and 36 percent were

placed in extended/provisional homes. Historically the N.W.T. has considered

kinship homes as the first option for placement of children. The difficulty lies

with the number of kinship and culturally appropriate family homes that are

approved by the Authorities. One problem is that a large number of culturally

appropriate and extended family homes cannot be approved due to the fact that

someone residing in their household has a criminal record. Some of these

families or individuals have made positive changes in their lives but have not

gone through the process of being granted a pardon. There is a significant

amount of work to get a pardon and for a number of provisional and extended

family homes this is a deterrent to proceed with the process to foster.

Redefining the Role of Foster Families:

The demands and expectations of foster parents are growing with the varying

needs of children placed in care. This is creating the impetus for redefining the

foster parent role. Foster parents are increasingly being viewed by child welfare

agencies as a new kind of resource to the system. Mandatory pre-service

training programs combined with extensive in-service training opportunities for

foster parents have become widely available through national resource centers,

individual agencies and university efforts. The establishment of foster family

training (Boyd & Remy, 1978; McFadden & Warren, 1981; Paztor & Burgess,

1982) is redefining the role of foster parents from that of a volunteer to team member who works with the agency on the child's case plan, home visits, and reunification with the biological family. As the demands for higher level of care and improved services are expected of foster parents the perspective that foster parents should function and be perceived as professionals is now widely supported (CWLA, 1990; Costin, Bell, & Downs, 1991; Minuchin, 1992). Current foster care practice reflects a sometimes confusing mix of traditional and contemporary beliefs (Gil, 1984; Meyer, 1985; Armstrong, 1989; Pelton, 1989; Fein, Maluccio & Kluger, 1990; Kates, Johnson, Roder, & Struder, 1991; James Bell and Associates, 1993). This lack of role clarity contributes to the well-documented tensions that sometimes arise between foster parents and agencies/social workers. This unfortunately leads to increased levels of frustration and stress for everyone, which impacts negatively on the service of foster parents (Galaway, 1972; Tinney, 1985; Brown, 1987). This also contributes to the loss of competent foster parents. At a time when the number of foster homes is not keeping pace with the number of children coming into care it is imperative to retain the existing resources. The view of fostering as "voluntary" continues to conflict with efforts to recognize fostering as a profession.

In the N.W.T. we continue to struggle with the issue of role clarity. There is the expectation that foster families provide quality service and meet the needs of the children in their care. The DHSS and the Authorities however, are confronted with the reality of funding constraints and are often unable to meet

the expectation of foster parents who require more support, training, and remuneration in an effort to fulfill expectation for quality care. From a practice perspective, the Authorities fluctuate between expecting foster parents to provide quality care while they continue to treat them as volunteers. The image of volunteers is reflected in the per diems paid to foster parents, which depends on the community you reside (Inuvik $32.00 per day), the inadequate orientation and training offered, and the limited ongoing support provided in terms of respite care and intervention services. Funding is a primary obstacle to the professionalization of foster parents but the fiscal argument is invalid and shortsighted. The N.W.T. already pays a high price for limited remuneration for foster parents with dissatisfied foster parents, low retention rates, limited quality services for children, ongoing investigations into alleged abuse, and studies to improve foster care service.

Foster Family Training:

The nature and needs of children in care require that foster parents have knowledge and skills to care for and work with the children in an effective and healthy manner. It should not be assumed that parents who have successfully raised their own children have the knowledge and skills to foster children; particularly those who have experienced physical and sexual abuse, or neglect. Expertise of foster parents grows out of their own personal experiences with foster children, interaction with other professionals and formal group training provided by Social Services agencies. Training plays a large role in providing the knowledge and skill (Heintriz & Frey, 1995) and there is widespread

agreement concerning the need for   training (Aldgate, Maluccio, & Reeves,

1989; Chamberlain, Moreland, & Reid, 1992; Child Welfare League of America,

1995; Euster, Ward & Varner, 1982; Hubbell, 1981; Kamerman & Kahn, 1990;

National Commission on Children, 1991; Ryan, Warren, & McFadden, 1979).

The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), in its "Blueprint for Fostering

Infants, Children, and Youths in the 1990's", recommended that action be taken

to:

> Require mandatory pre-service and in-service training for foster
> parents. Such training shall: (1) be based on nationally
> recognized training models; (2) include, at a minimum, joint
> training with family foster care social workers; (3) include
> interdisciplinary training related to such issues as HIV infection,
> chemical dependency, and accessing special education, health
> care, and mental health for children and youths in foster care;
> (4) be culturally responsive; and (5) provide foster parents with
> support for transportation and child care costs incurred while
> participating in training. (Blueprint for Fostering Infants,
> Children, Youths in the 1990s, 1991, p.83)

The term "training" implies an educational procedure for foster parents. The

general goal of "pre-service" and "in-service" training courses is to help foster

parents offer improved care to children placed in their homes.

Pre-service training gives prospective caregivers an overview of the child

welfare system and its mission. It also provides information about the purpose

of foster care services, the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of

caregivers, parents and the agency staff.   Pre-service also offers a beginning

understanding of the types of children and families served by the agency and the

difference between foster parenting and other kinds of parenting (Hughes &

Rycus, 1998). Attendance at pre-service training gives potential foster families

sufficient information to make an informed decision whether to pursue foster parenting and proceed to the family assessment.

In-service training provides foster families the opportunity to develop skills. As practice in family foster care has evolved during the past decade, training programs have addressed newer practice strategies and principles. Research and literature shows that fundamental skill training should address topics related to the roles and responsibilities of foster caregivers. This includes the philosophy of permanency planning; implementing a team approach to foster care; working with children who have been abused or neglected; the traumatic effects of separation and loss; issues of culture and diversity; and behavior management strategies (Burry, 1999; Child Welfare Institute, 1993; Hughes & Rycus, 1989; Pecora et al., 2000; Sellick, 1992). These program themes are considered essential in the skill development of qualified foster caregivers.

Many prospective families are motivated to provide quality foster care, due to a lack of preparation and training, the demands of caring for children with special needs prove overwhelming. The rate of placement disruption is much greater when inexperienced and untrained families are asked to care for children with emotional and behavioral problems (Runyan & Fullerton, 1981). Many potential successful families withdraw from the program as a result of not being prepared or trained and children experience the disrupted placements. This compounds the problem of an already diminishing resource pool of foster families.

In research, foster parents cite role ambiguity, lack or relevant pre and ongoing training, and lack of support as primary reasons for leaving the program (Denby, Rindflesch & Bean, 1999). In regards to preservice training and ongoing training foster parents, voiced concerns such as:

- The preservice training and ongoing training did not prepare them for the realities of being a foster parent.

- The children placed in their care had challenging behavioral and emotional problems and Child and Family Services lacked the training resources and opportunities to address the problems.

- There was no system to identify the training needs of foster parents (Denby et al., 1999).

In both Canada and the United States training is not universally available to foster parents. This is also evident in the N.W.T. and Nunavut. A 1987 study in San Francisco found that only 46 percent of foster parents reported they had been trained (Pasztor & Wynne, 1995). The James Bell Associates study (1993) found that training was not mandated in two of nine states surveyed. In a random sample of 194 children who had entered foster care in Jackson County, Missouri, fewer than three per cent of the foster parents had received any foster parent training (Mushlin, Levitt, & Anderson, 1986).

Northwest Territories Standards for Training:

Currently, foster parent training in the N.W.T. lacks a standardized, consistent and structured framework. Foster parent orientation is offered sporadically by some HSSA's while other Authorities and others fail to offer any

orientation. When training programs are offered, they differ in content and length of time. According to foster parents and the key informants that were interviewed for this research project, some orientation programs are a full day, others are three days in duration, and some are one hour with prospective foster parents. Ongoing training and support is non-existent. The very limited training that the Authorities offer caregivers impacts the quality of service they can provide and increases the chance of them withdrawing their services. This can result in disrupted placements.

The N.W.T. Child and Family Services standards and procedures manual delegates the DHSS to develop a training program for foster families. The most recently produced foster family training and reference manual is dated 1985. This manual is clearly outdated and as a result none of the Authorities use it. The Department is currently working on the development of a new standardized territorial program. Con-currently the Territorial standards for foster family training require that training must be offered within the first twelve months of the family being approved to foster. The foster care training curriculum minimally consists of the provision of information about the program's operation, communicable diseases, HIV/AIDS and reducing risks of child abuse in care.

Many agencies attempt to provide quality service by requiring foster parents attend an orientation training session. It is known that foster parent training is critical in preparing foster parents with the required skills and knowledge to deal with children who have great emotional, behavioral, and psychological needs. Without pre-service and ongoing in-service training, children, parents and the

community will not be guaranteed a standard level of care and can result in damaging experiences.

There are numerous foster parent-training programs available both nationally and internationally. In order to gain insight, knowledge and awareness in foster parents curriculum it was imperative that I made myself aware of the various programs available on the market. There are three training models that could potentially be considered for the N.W.T. The suitability of two of the programs is based on content, similar geographical and demographic characteristics and community support systems. These two programs are 1) British Columbia Foster Care Education Program and 2) the Alaska Foster Parent Training Center.

The third training program that has potential in the N.W.T. is the Child Welfare League of America's, "Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education (PRIDE). This program is being utilized nationally and internationally and is comprehensive. It is a standardized, structured, and competency based program with a continuum of development that encompasses pre-training and ongoing training. It is the comprehensiveness and continuum of development that makes this program have appeal and potential.

A brief overview of each of these programs is provided in the following section highlighting their strengths and weaknesses.

Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education (P.R.I.D.E.)

The P.R.I.D.E. program is being used extensively in the United States and in four eastern provinces in Canada. The NWT has purchased the P.R.I.D.E. program but has not committed to using or implementing it. They were

interested in the curriculum to determine if they could build upon it or use sections of it in developing their own training program.

P.R.I.D.E. was developed at the request of foster parents in the State of Illinois in 1990. The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Committee of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Service had the vision of an effective training program. They partnered with the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) who is recognized for its international leadership and development of quality programs. In the development of this training program input was sought from; agency staff, foster parents, adoptive-parents, academicians, and trainers.

P.R.I.D.E. is a standardized and structured framework for a competency based continuum of development and support of foster parents. This continuum is a 14-step process that starts with recruitment, preparation, and selection of foster parents. It then continues with training and professional development. This program is all encompassing and quite impressive. It addresses all of the recommendations made by the CWLC 's report, "It Takes a Community" to the DHSS regarding the foster care program. P.R.I.D.E. has two major training components: the pre-service and the core training.

The pre-service training component of P.R.I.D.E. is a program for the recruitment, preparation, assessment, and selection of prospective foster and adoptive parents. Through a series of at home consultations and nine three-hour competency based training sessions, prospective families have an opportunity to learn and practice the knowledge and skills they will need as new foster parents.

A unique aspect of this program that's commendable is it has a co-leader team. This team consists of a child welfare-training specialist and an experienced foster parent. Together they conduct the pre-service training. The co-facilitation of pre-service training gives foster families recognition of their experience, understanding, and knowledge regarding fostering.

This program has a family development plan (FDP), which is a written plan describing a foster family's competencies, annual training goals, and an evaluation of the goals. The FDP guides the ongoing process of developing and supporting individual foster families. The strength of the FDP is that it helps foster parents and CFS agencies to determine how to get the needs specific to the right foster parents. The FDP addresses a key issue that was expressed by foster parents as one of the primary reasons for leaving the foster care program. They terminated fostering due to the fact that there was not a system in place to identify their training needs (Denby et. al. 1999).

The Foster P.R.I.D.E. core training has ten modules of competency-based in-service training. The modules total 84 hours of training and range in duration from three to 15 hours each. The content of the modules are similar to what literature and research shows as fundamental skill training.

This training program is the most comprehensive curriculum I have seen to date, but it was developed for a southern American metropolis. P.R.I.D.E.'s applicability to small remote communities is uncertain. If this training program were to be implemented in the N.W.T. the obstacles that would have to be addressed is the structure of the training program and making the program

reflective of the people being served. One must not overlook the impact on the foster parent who is co-facilitating the pre-service training. If they have to travel they will be away from their family frequently and for short periods. This will have an impact on their biological and foster children.

P.R.I.D.E. has only recently begun to conduct two levels of evaluation: consumer satisfaction and the degree of increased learning for foster parents. This can only be measured over time so this portion of the evaluation is outstanding. They are also in the process of constructing an agency impact study to evaluate and measure how well the program has helped agencies achieve their desired outcomes. It is encouraging to see that P.R.I.D.E. realizes the importance of measuring outcomes. This gives the program more credibility if the training meets the needs of the stakeholders. Evaluations are imperative in ensuring a training program evaluates its effectiveness. This is done by direct assessment of relevant knowledge and skills of foster parents before and after the completion of training (Lee & Holland, 1991).

P.R.I.D.E. is a new program that spent extensive time consulting with people directly involved with fostering. For this reason I am surprised that their program has to be modified for use with kinship families. Especially in light of the fact the number of kinship placements has markedly increased. In 1998 approximately 2.3 million children in the United States were living with relatives (U.S. Census Bureau, 1998).

Overall, this program is one of the best out on the market. It's content is comprehensive and it addresses the full gamut of recruitment, preparation,

selection, and training. P.R.I.D.E. is expensive to purchase but once you own it you can make changes to the program to make it adaptable to agency specific needs.

British Columbia Foster Care Education Program (BCFCEP)

The British Columbia Foster Care Education Program (BCFCEP) is the first training program of its kind in Canada. It was developed by the British Columbia (B.C.) community college system using the adult education model. This standardized program is offered in 16 community colleges throughout the province at no cost to foster parents. It consists of 53 hours of class instruction presented in 14 modules, which is less than P.R.I.D.E. This new program has been in existence for approximately two years. The Ministry of Child and Family Development and the Foster Parent Association are still fine-tuning the implementation of the program.

This program has the potential of being transferable to the N.W.T. due to the similar characteristics shared with B.C. Such characteristics are diverse populations, remote communities, and the availability of three Colleges in the Territory and adult education classes in every community. The content of the training program is Canadian based and the Department of Health and Social Services have already entered into a partnership with Aurora College to offer training in other program areas.

A limitation of this training program is that it only focuses on the educational development of foster parents. It does not address recruitment, selection and preservice training of foster parents. The Ministry of Child and Family

Development is still responsible for these program areas. One other drawback and a challenge for the adult educator would be their ability to draw upon examples or experiences that will augment the learning process.

The educational courses that are offered in this training program are similar to the course content in P.R.I.D.E core services. This education program is still in the infancy stage and an evaluation has not been completed on it. Foster parents who were licensed just after this program was implemented in December 1999 have two years to complete the education program. Existing foster parents have five years. Since this program is only two years old the first group of foster parents to complete it will be finished in 2002. An evaluation of their learning and the program will be done at this time.

There is merit in having a professional educator who has been trained to teach and is knowledgeable in adult learning methods that guide the learning process. The adult education system offers flexible education and skilled-based training. It also recognizes foster parent's current education and skills, and is able to upgrade knowledge and skills where necessary.

The philosophy of this program does not perceive vast distances as a barrier for training. It acknowledges and expects all foster parents throughout the province no matter how remote the location to participate in training offered at the local college to maximize learning. There is recognition that the opportunity to increase foster parents' knowledge promotes a high quality of care.

Alaska Foster Parent Training Center (AFPTC)

The Alaska Foster Parent Training Center (AFPTC) was established to help and support foster parents to obtain training that will result in improved service delivery. Alaska has been quite innovative in their approach. They had to address issues of vast distances, remoteness, and population diversity. These are similar realities for the N.W.T.

The AFPTC offers various methods of training such as classroom training, self study through their extensive library, courses, and videos, that are mailed out free of charge. There is individualized training if a child has a special need and multi-disciplinary workshops are offered to further enhance an understanding of the needs of the child. Alaska has taken advantage of communication technology such as computers, video and audiotapes, discs, and the telephone to afford foster parents the opportunity and flexibility to enhance their learning.

This program is similar to B.C.'s in that it is an educational development program focused on ongoing training for foster parents. This program does not address recruitment, selection, or preservice training. In perusing the library of books, self-study clusters, and videos it is apparent that the information available to foster parents exceeds the requirement for fundamental skill training. This program is not competency based training like P.R.I.D.E. but they have taken into consideration adult learning methods in their approach. This is reflected in foster parents having the freedom to direct and control their own learning needs.

All licensed foster parents in Alaska are required to have yearly training. A single parent needs 10 hours of training each year and a two-parent home needs 15 hours a year shared between the two of them. Each foster parent is required to have a minimum of five hours a training a year. There is the expectation that both parents require training each year. This demonstrates the belief that both parents have a role in the family and in parenting.

Research has demonstrated the significant role support plays in retaining foster parents. The AFPTC has built into their program different methods of support. They offer foster-net, which is a quarterly teleconference for foster parents throughout rural Alaska. Caregivers are connected via phone to a guest speaker and other foster parents to hear up to date information about fostering. They also offer telephone support if you need to inquire about resources or just need to talk. The most recent support and information program is called, " The Parent Mentoring Project". There is recognition that overburdened child protection agencies do not always provide the support required by foster parents who may be dealing with emotional or behavioral issues with foster children in their homes. This project provides a peer-to-peer approach to providing support. Experienced foster parents are trained as volunteer mentors who respond to e-mail communication from other foster parents throughout Alaska. The mentors encourage and assist other foster parents with some of the challenges of foster parenting and provide valuable information on how to care for children who have been abused, neglected, and abandoned.

Overall, this program is different than the norm in that it offers varied and creative methods of delivering training in a vast and remote region. It has taken into consideration the importance of support for foster parents and uses adult learning methods. This training program can provide the N.W.T. with some insight on how to approach the delivery of training in a similar geographical setting.

Figure 1

Summary of the Three Training Programs

	P.R.I.D.E.	British Columbia	Alaska
Number of training hours	84 hours of training 10 modules range from 3 to 15 hours each	53 hours of class instruction presented in 14 modules	Single parent FP requires 10 hours of training per year. Two-parent home requires 15 hours a year shared between the two of them.
Skill development	1) Pre-service focuses recruitment, preparation, assessment and selection of FP's 2) Core training develops skills and understanding in roles and responsibilities, permanency planning, abuse, neglect, culture diversity, behavior management strategies.	Focuses on educational development such as roles and responsibilities, permanency planning, abuse, neglect, culture diversity, separation and loss, and behavior management strategies.	Skill development is offered in various methods such as an extensive library, courses, videos, and multi-disciplinary workshops. Their library offers reading in similar areas as B.C. and P.R.I.D.E.
Technology			Computers, videos, audiotapes, discs, and the telephone.

Strengths	1) Family Development Plan describing FF competencies and annual training goals. 2) Standardized, structured competency based training program. 3) It has a co-leader team consisting of a child welfare training specialist and a experienced foster parent	1) Standardized training offered in 16 community colleges in the province. 2) Training content is Canadian. Province and program has similar characteristics to the N.W.T. such as diverse population, remote communities, and 3 Colleges in the N.W.T. 3) Merit in having a professional educator who is trained to teach.	1) Uses adult education concepts. Multiple use of communication technology in training. 2) Has similar characteristics of the N.W.T such as diverse population, remote communities. 3) Realizes the significance of support by having quarterly conference calls.
Limitations	1) Developed for a southern American metropolis. 2) It does not appear that the training sessions are mobile. 3) This training program has to modified for kinship families	1) It does not address the recruitment, selection, and pre-service training. 2) Adult educators would not have the experience to draw upon to augment the learning process.	1) Does not address the issue of evaluation. 2) This training program does not deal with recruitment, selection, and pre-service training.
Other comments	The training program is one of the most comprehensive on the market	This program is in its infancy so limited evaluation has been done.	This program offers varied and creative methods of delivering training in a vast and remote state.

Technological Changes

In less than two decades computers have become an essential part of our daily lives both at work and home. The technology of the Internet/World Wide Web is altering how people work and learn. In relation to foster parent training there is a considerable number of training programs on the World Wide Web. Education and training can be timelier, more relevant and more present focused via technology. Learners can have the flexibility to choose to participate when

via technology. Learners can have the flexibility to choose to participate when they want and integrate their learning into their overall lifestyle. There is little need to sit in a class with others to listen to a presentation when you can pull it up on the Internet. Although my research has demonstrated that most foster parents 80% prefer to have the group interaction and the presence of the adult educator.

The rate of change in communication technology is incredible. Communication technology refers to computer, video and audio technology, facsimiles, and new forms of information storage such as CD-ROMs and video discs. The methods for transmitting signals expand significantly. Cable, satellite, and microwave relay transmissions have linked broadcast television as vehicles for sending video signals. The end result is the capability to do video conferencing and tele-health, which is a benefit in training. In the N.W.T. the impact of communication technology as it applies to instructional and training purposes has paved the way for more varied learning. All of the adult education programs in the N.W.T. have communication technology such as personal computers, audio and video technology, and some of the larger communities have the capability for video conferencing and tele-health. This technology has afforded more people the opportunity and exposure to learning experiences.

When developing a training program there must be an assessment done on the communication technology available. This is so that a program can be designed that can take advantage of this medium. The Alaska Foster Parent Training program has taken full advantage of communication technology. This

has allowed more foster parents to take advantage of training within their own communities and home.

There are many foster parent-training programs available for purchase. Prior to deciding which curriculum is most applicable for an agency, one needs to assess the communication technology that is most applicable for an agency an assessment of the communication technology that is available to the agency and foster parents is necessary. As well, the geographic context, the population demographics and the available budget must be examined. There are numerous foster parent-training programs on the World Wide Web and many others that use CD-ROM's and video discs. These mediums are only useful if the foster parents have access to the technology and the have skills, knowledge, and experience in using them. In the N.W.T. there has been advancement in communication technology but in some of the isolated communities there is limited technical support for these systems. Often the systems are not running due to lack of technical support. Due consideration has to be made when selecting a training program.

Summary

The literature review has highlighted the historical changes that have occurred in the foster care system starting with the ancient Jewish laws and practices of placing orphaned children with relatives, through to the Elizabethan Poor Laws, and up to our current modern era. One fact that has remained constant throughout the history of foster care is the role kinship placements have had as

a viable resource for families and service providers, whether as an informal basis or as a formal service program.

Kinship care has been the foundation to family foster care. Children throughout the world continue to be raised by their extended family when parents cannot or will not take on this responsibility. Research has shown that kinship placements have longevity and stability, but tend to be less effectively monitored, supported, compensated and trained. This placement resource has endured over time and will continue to provide service well into the future. It is crucial to ensure this type of resource receives the same level of support and training as regular or licensed homes if quality of service to children and families is a priority.

The literature review has confirmed the importance of foster parent training. In the report by the CWLC, "It Takes A Community", it is recommended that attention and resources be focused in the areas of recruitment, screening, assessment, and training. This report stressed the importance of developing these areas with input from foster parents and social workers. It is with this in mind that the process of a NA will be conducted.

Providing care to children who have been exposed to maltreatment is a challenge. It is imperative to provide training to foster families so they have the knowledge and skills to address the needs of the children in their home. There is an assumption that foster parent training is available to foster families, however, a review of the literature documents that foster parent training is not universally offered. This results in foster parents who are not prepared and trained, and may eventually withdraw their service. One cannot negate the

importance of pre-service and ongoing training for foster families. Without

training, children, parents, and the community will not have a standard level of

care, there will be limited foster home resources, burnout and continued

disrupted placements. As a result this research practicum makes an important

contribution to the N.W.T. which is currently in the developmental stages of

producing a foster parent training program.

Vast distances in the N.W.T. create a challenge in the delivery of foster

parent training. The foster family training programs developed by British

Columbia Foster Care Education Program and the Alaska Foster Parent Training

Center demonstrate creativity in the delivery of training. The contents of these

programs are not as comprehensive as P.R.I.D.E. but they provide training in a

geographical and demographic area similar to the N.W.T.

The P.R.I.D.E. program is an all encompassing foster family training program

that addresses all of the recommendation put forth by the CWLC report, "It

Takes a Community." It is a competency based program that has the pre-service

and core service component along with an evaluation which makes it a

comprehensive training program. Since the P.R.I.D.E. program is

comprehensive and used extensively nationally and internationally it enabled me

to use it as a base of "what foster training should be" in a comparative analysis

of current training in the N.W.T. see (page 57).

Foster parents support this training curriculum due to the fact that they co-

facilitate the pre-service training, which makes them feel like a member of the

team. I personally like this program due to the family developmental plan. I

believe all foster families should have a training plan that outlines their competencies and their annual training goals. This allows for flexibility in training and ensures the right training for foster parents.

If P.R.I.D.E. were to be used in the N.W.T. appropriate changes and adaptations would have to be made to reflect the northern culture and environment. It is difficult to ascertain if a southern-based urban foster parent-training program can be adapted to northern predominately remote communities.

Chapter Four

Key Elements of Adult Learning

<u>Adult Learning:</u>

Adult learning refers to the process or experience of gaining knowledge or skills. Memory is defined as the capacity of storing, retrieving, and acting on that knowledge (American Heritage Dictionary, 1992). Learning helps adults move from novice to experts and allows them to gain new knowledge and abilities. In order to provide an effective relevancy based foster parent training program, trainers and adult educators must have an understanding of how adults learn. Training can be structured to maximize learning and skill development. The outcome is confident, educated and skilled caregivers.

Benjamin Bloom (1956) conceived of learning as a progressive process that moves from concrete level to an abstract level. Learning is more concrete at the elementary levels and more abstract at the higher levels.

He created a classification of learning objectives that has six levels. To accomplish learning tasks associated with a given taxonomic level, the learner must first have attained the objectives of the preceding levels. When creating a training program the trainer must choose the taxonomic level that is reflective of the learner's knowledge. This is applicable when you are creating pre-service and in-service training. A pre-service training curriculum would be geared at a "knowledge" level and in-service training would be geared more at the "application" level. Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy of learning needs to be considered when foster family training is being planned.

Figure 2

Taxonomy of Learning Objectives From the Cognitive Domain
By Benjamin Bloom (1956)

Level	Process	Type of Performance
	Abstract	
6. Evaluation		Be capable of making critical judgment based on internal and external criteria.
5. Synthesis		Be capable of accomplishing a person-task after devising a of action.
4. Analysis		Be capable of identifying the elements, relationships, and organizational principles of a situation.
3. Application		Be capable of remembering knowledge or principles in order to solve a problem.
2. Comprehension		Be capable of transposing and extrapolating from a certain body of knowledge.
1.Knowledge		Be capable of recalling words, facts, dates, theories, principles, etc.
	Concrete	

Malcolm Knowles (1973) asserts that adults have special needs and

requirements as learners. He used the term "andragogy" to define and explain

the condition. The term refers to learner-focused education for people of all

ages. Learner-focused education encourages learners to have more control and

the condition. The term refers to learner-focused education for people of all ages. Learner-focused education encourages learners to have more control and input into the learning process and content (Hiemstra and Sisco, 1990; Knowles, 1980). Depending upon maturity level and familiarity with the content, an adult learner may have a greater or lesser degree of input into, and control of their learning process. This concept of learner-focused education is especially critical in light of Denby's (1999) study about reasons foster parents leave the system. It was noted that pre-post training did not prepare foster parents for the realities of doing the job. If foster parents had more input and control into the content of the training program, it may have reflected their needs.

Research has demonstrated that adults learn best in a supportive environment that encourages professional development, treats "trainees" as adult learners and involves them in assessment of their training needs and selection of appropriate learning opportunities (Pecora, Whittaker, Maluccio, Barth, & Plotnick, 2000). Adults are relevancy-oriented. They want to be able to relate content to specific contexts in their lives. These contexts are often in the form of a problem or concern, and the learning has to be applicable to these circumstances to be of value to them. Instructors and agencies must involve the learner to identify objectives that are relevant and of value. This view supports Hampson's (1985) report that post- service training provided after children have been placed has greater impact than pre-service training efforts.

Adult learners are diverse, bringing a wealth of life experience and knowledge to learning situations. These assets should be acknowledged,

tapped, and used (Zemke & Zemke, 1984). Adults can learn substantially from sharing and speaking with respected peers. Often, in pre-post service training foster parents have the opportunity to connect with other foster parents for mutual support and recognition, friendship, empathy and problem solving. In most pre-service training programs, there is recognition that experienced foster parents have front line knowledge, understanding, and experience to offer other caregivers. The recognition of their past experience is the basis for why they serve as co-trainers. This is a step towards legitimizing and empowering foster parents as professionals, and it also lends credibility to the training program.

The use of adult learning techniques is found in most foster parent training programs. This entails experiential learning such as; case studies, films, discussions, lectures, critical incident reporting, role-playing, and other interactional experiences. It is important to understand and apply adult learning methods and incorporate adult learning techniques into training. The result is caregivers who have increased their shared knowledge, experience and skill development that leads to improved quality of care.

<u>Summary</u>

The literature review stresses the importance in understanding how adults learn so that training can be established that will maximize learning, skill development and build on individual's knowledge and experience. Research has shown that adult learners should be consulted in the assessment of their training needs and learning opportunities (Pecora et al. 2000). This supports

the importance of ensuring input from stakeholders in the realm of " how they learn" as a vital process of the NA.

The notion that adults are relevancy orientated is critical when planning a training program. If you consult your user group prior to developing a training program you will be able to gear the content of the training towards the specific needs of the group. The outcome will be an improved opportunity of offering a successful training program. Hence the importance of ensuring you involve the foster parents and social workers in identifying information that is pertinent and of value to them.

The P.R.I.D.E. program recognizes the fact foster parents can learn from sharing and speaking with colleagues. This is why their pre-service training program is co-facilitated with a foster parent. There is the realization that adults can learn vastly from sharing and speaking with peers and it also gives integrity to the training program.

The premise that all trainers should have an understanding of and know how to apply adult learning methods and include adult learning techniques into training is crucial. Most social workers and foster parents have limited background and experience in adult learning. Access to training for trainers must be considered if there is an expectation that they will be responsible for portions of the training.

Chapter Five

Three Phase Plan for Needs Assessment

Pre-Assessment Phase

I have selected the three-phase plan for assessing needs as a model for my intervention. I found this approach suitable based on the fact that it is within my skills and technical abilities, the plan gives a visual guide in doing the assessment, and it is outlined in three clear sequential succinct phases. The boundaries between each of the phases are not fixed, however, they give a suggested timeline for a given set of tasks, which allows for flexibility. It is these factors that have drawn me to this approach.

The following chapters six and seven address the three-phase plan of the NA. In each of these chapters I have integrated the reporting of my findings, the discussion and conclusion.

Pre-Assessment Phase

The first phase in this plan is called the pre-assessment or exploratory phase. The purpose of this phase is to investigate what is already known; set up a management plan; determine the focus and scope of the assessment; and gain commitment for all stages of the assessment, including the use of findings for program planning and implementation (Witkin & Atschuld, 1995). In this phase a determination is made regarding the most appropriate data gathering methods.

Management Plan for the NA

When doing a NA one way to avoid misunderstandings and ensure you are on the right track is to set up a management plan that will provide clarity and

direction. As part of my management plan I incorporated written memorandums,

for the DHSS, the oversight committee, and the Inuvik Regional Health and

Social Services Authority. I established an oversight committee, and produced a

Figure 3
Three Phase Plan for Needs Assessment
Based on Witkin, B.R. & Altschuld, J. (1995)

Phase One Pre-Assessment	Phase Two Assessment	Phase Three Post-Assessment
1) Set up management plan for NA. 2) Define general purpose of the NA. 3) Identify major needs areas and or issues (key informants and secondary analysis.) 4) Determine: • Research questions • Sources/Sites • Methods 5) Determine context, scope, and Boundaries of the NA. **Outcomes:** Preliminary plan for phase 2 and 3.	1) Begin and conclude data collection. 2) Document the current state of foster parent training in the N.W.T. and compare it with the vision of "what should be?" **Outcomes:** Preliminary priorities of training needs.	1) Analysis, recommendations and evaluation. 2) Develop recommendations to forward to the DHSS 3) Evaluate the NA 4) Disseminate written and oral reports **Outcomes:** Recommendations and evaluation.

flow chart for each phase that had measurable objectives (Appendix B). The

flow chart gave timelines that were not static but based on the process and

progress of the NA.

An important component of the management plan is for the needs assessor to articulate and document in a written memoranda the purpose of the assessment, the roles and duties of the need assessor, the roles and obligations of the Oversight Committee, and the roles, line of responsibility and authority within the system of DHSS, and the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Authority (Appendix C). The act of putting expectations and obligations in writing and having the documents signed demonstrates consensus of expectations, solidifies and attests to the commitment and support of the DHSS, the Authorities, and the stakeholders.

As part of my management plan I set up an oversight committee whose roles and duties were to provide general direction and support of the assessor, assist with insight and understanding of the N.W.T. political and social environment, be the prime source of support for action plans to meet high priority needs, and to provide the assessor with constructive feedback on presentations and reports. This committee consisted of four representatives of the stakeholders group who met three times over the course of my practicum. The committee meeting lasted approximately one hour. Some members were linked into the meeting via phone. The assessor was responsible for chairing the meeting, providing the agenda and minutes, and dealt with all of the logistical arrangements.

The flow chart was an organizational tool that I used as part of my management plan. It was practical in that it had target dates, measurable objectives for each phase, criteria for evaluating the completion of the NA activity, and a budget. The flow chart was shared with the DHSS, the

Authorities, and the oversight committee. I believed that if I shared this visual guide of the NA with this core group of people they would feel involved in the process from the beginning. This may give a greater sense of ownership of the results.

Major Need Areas or Issues in Foster Parent Training

Conducting a preliminary investigation of what is known about foster parent training in the N.W.T. enables the assessor to identify the purpose and scope of the NA. I was able to determine major need areas and issues based on an archival data review and interviews with key informants. A key informant is an individual who is informed about a given problem based on training or work experience (Royse, Thyer, Padgett, & Logan, 1996). There were six key informants who participated in the interviews and they were; the Foster Care Consultant with the DHSS, two foster care coordinators with the Authorities, supervisors, and the Director of the Yellowknife Foster Family Association (YFFA). Two of the interviews were conducted via telephone and the other four were in person. The interviews were approximately 60 minutes in duration and one open-ended question was asked, "Tell me about foster family training as it exists currently in the N.W.T.?" Extensive notes were taken throughout the interview to accurately reflect the information shared.

The major needs and issues in foster family training in the N.W.T. based on archival data and interviews are:

1. The N.W.T. lacks a standardized foster family training program. The six
   Health and Social Services Authorities in the NWT are responsible for

foster parent training at the community level. This has created several different training programs territorially.

2. Foster parent orientation training does not occur regularly. This means many foster parents are providing service but lack training.

3. There is not a formal comprehensive pre-service training program available in the N.W.T. Currently in the N.W.T. there are various orientations or introductions to foster care that are one day in duration. This is not adequate pre-service training.

4. The N.W.T. lacks ongoing training. Much is expected of foster parents due to the high demands and expectations of their role. Foster families require knowledge and skills necessary to provide quality and effective foster care service. This cannot occur without ongoing training.

5. There are Health and Social Services Authorities where foster parent training is not offered. This is a standard outlined in the Child and Family Services Standards and Procedures Manual.

6. There is a lack of documentation on how the DHSS made the decision to use the P.R.I.D.E. training program. The DHSS needs to ensure this program fits with community and training needs.

7. The current level of funding provided for foster family training is not adequate to provide pre-service and ongoing training. This is especially true of Authorities who have numerous communities spread over vast distances.

8. A teamwork approach is lacking in foster family training. When training is done jointly with foster parents and social workers the power and authority remains with the social service agency.

9. Social workers require training in foster care. Often social workers give misguided and incorrect information due to the fact that they are not familiar or have not kept current with the program.

10. There is no systematic evaluation of foster family training. At this time the DHSS and the Authorities cannot measure the effectiveness of training and the relationship to retention, recruitment, and the impact on service delivery.

11. There is not a centralized system in place to track information on foster families. The current Child and Family Information System (CFIS) is not able to capture this information.

12. Provisional and kinship placements are not consistently offered in-service and ongoing training. The key informants interviewed for this research believe that they are an integral part of the foster family service delivery program and need to be included in training.

Purpose of the Research

The function of this NA is to collect data on foster family training through an archival data review, key informant's, foster family interviews, social workers, supervisors, and DHSS staff interviews. The data will be used to determine recommendations that will lead to a standardized and structured training program that has immediate usefulness to all stakeholders.

Scope of the Research

The NA is focusing on the training needs of foster families as it pertains to program content, format, audience, delivery mode, trainers, and the scheduling of sessions. Due to the vast distance, time and fiscal constraints I could not realistically include the entire territory in my research and have selected the North Slave and Inuvik regions for the purposes of this practicum. The North Slave region consists of the Dogrib Community Services Board, Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority, and Stanton Territorial Health Authority. The Inuvik Region has the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Authority (Appendix C).

Data collection stemmed from archival review and interviews that occurred in June 2002 to August 2002 and the sample size of the research project was 20 participants. They consisted of six key informants, ten foster parents, five social workers, three supervisors, and two senior people from the Department of Health and Social Services. I selected this multifaceted sample size to achieve a balanced view of the "felt" and "ascribed" training needs of foster parents. In order to participate in the research project foster parents had to be approved by the H&SS Authority in their region to provide care in the N.W.T. Social workers had to have their statutory training appointment giving them the authority to be child protection workers in the territory, and supervisors have to have a level five designation.

<u>Methodology</u>

This is a qualitative research project. A qualitative approach corresponds to formative evaluations and the reliance primarily upon open- ended interviews to gather detailed and personal data (Cronbach, 1982). This method is context rich via interviewing and is key to understanding a program's success or failure (Cronbach, 1982). By further exploring and questioning, a researcher may discover unanticipated but meaningful insights into a program's workings. This research method can provide descriptions of how foster parents respond to the current training program and give insight of how their needs can be met effectively.

This research method is empirical and systematic, relying upon careful documentation and analysis grounded in the data (Padgett, 1998). In qualitative research, data describe people's experiences in depth.

> Qualitative data consists of detailed description of situations, events, people, interactions, and observed behaviors; direct quotations from people about their experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts; and excerpts or entire passages from documents, correspondence, records and case histories. The detailed descriptions, direct quotations and case documentation of qualitative measurement are raw data from the empirical work. The data are collected as open-ended narrative without attempting to fit people's experiences or program activities into pre-determined standardized categories. (Patton, 1980, p.22)

Hence qualitative research is a suitable method of data collection in determining the training needs of foster parents.

Interview Process and Questions

As four distinct groups with different functions were interviewed, separate questionnaires were created for each group (Appendix D). The information sought from foster parents and social workers is similar and geared toward program content, format, audience, delivery mode, trainers and scheduling of the training sessions. The information sought from management and supervisors is related towards a contextual analysis of the DHSS and the Authorities. This interview guide looked at trends, issues, resources, purpose and mission of foster care to assess the DHSS readiness to offer training territorially.

Prior to conducting the interviews I pilot tested all of the questionnaires on one person from each category who represented the sample. I made revisions to the foster family and social work questions. The comments shared with me regarding the foster family questionnaire pertained to some of the concepts being difficult to grasp and my language being too technical. I made the appropriate changes to the concepts and re-wrote the questionnaire into plain English, lacking jargon.

The changes I made to the social work questionnaire were minimal. Some of the terminologies used in the questionnaire were not similar to what is used in the N.W.T. In discussion with the social worker that piloted the questionnaire, we were able to use terminology that was reflective of the north. Even though I have worked in the N.W.T. for the last 16 years I still use terminology that is not consistent with our Child and Family Services Manual, (ie. kinship vs. extended or provisional homes and approved homes vs. licensed) The interview guide

utilizes open-ended questions with probes or follow-up questions to further expand on the matter if the participant fails to engage.

Prior to each interview the participant signed an informed consent form (Appendix E). Permission was also sought to tape the interview. All participants were informed prior to the interview that I was requesting their permission to tape the interview. They had the option to proceed or withdraw without consequence. All 20 participants agreed to have the interview taped. I am aware that having the interviews taped may have hindered the free expression of people even with the reassurance of confidentiality. It is my perception that after the initial introductions nominal attention was paid to the tape recorder.

Since I was the principal interviewer for this research project it was not necessary to train others to do the interviews. The pilot test of the interview questions was my practice run as the interviewer. The overall feedback I received from participants was positive with the exception of one comment, which was that I tend to speak too quickly. I taped all of my interviews, which allowed me to continually assess the speed, tone, and clarity of the questions.

The planning and organization that goes into conducting research takes time. The lack of proper planning and organization at the onset of the NA could jeopardize the entire process (Witkin & Altschulld, 1995). Hence the importance of a comprehensive management plan that sets the stage for the NA. I found that the management plan was an organizational tool that gave more clarity to the process and set the parameters and direction for the NA.

Chapter Six

Assessment Phase

Phase two of the NA is the formal assessment or data gathering stage. The main portion of the NA occurs in this phase. The focus of this phase is to document the "what is" or the current state of foster parent training in the N.W.T. and compare it with the vision of "what should be," and determine the significance of the need (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995).

Research Ethics

Prior to data gathering for research purposes I required a scientific research license from the Aurora Research Institute (ARI) in the N.W.T. as well as ethics approval from the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB) at the University of Manitoba.

Without exception all research in the N.W.T. must be licensed. The ARI will not process a license application if appropriate community consultation has not taken place and if you have not remitted $100.00 for the license. Community consultation is a vital part of the licensing process. In the N.W.T. this process must be started at least three months prior to beginning your research. An applicant must provide written confirmation that your plans have been discussed with Health and Social Services Authorities, Community Corporations, Band Councils and Metis Locals.

My community consultation entailed faxing out 65 community consultation letters. Attached to each letter were the Research License Application and the Community Organization Review of Research Application Form (Appendix F). I required a signature from each organization on the Community Organization Review of Research Application form. This signature sanctioned my research in the community. I also contacted via telephone the three Health and Social Service Authorities in the two regions, the DHSS, and the Yellowknife Foster Family Association. Facsimile confirmation was permitted as written confirmation that my research plans had been shared with the appropriate parties. The timeline quoted by the ARI for obtaining a license is accurate. My Scientific Research License was issued in June 2002, which is approximately three months after beginning the process of applying for it (Appendix G).

As a student at the University of Manitoba I had to obtain ethics approval prior to interviewing participants. Since the research involved human subjects a proposal for ethics approval was submitted to the JFREB. This proposal clearly informed subjects that they were allowed to decide freely if they wanted to participate in the research process and to ensure no coercion was used to secure participants for the study. An informed consent form was created that provided a brief overview of the project. It also indicated that the subjects were free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation in the project at any time without penalty. This informed consent form discussed in detail the participant's rights to confidentiality and the precautions taken to keep data and computer information secure (Appendix G).

The timeline and process for obtaining approval by the JFREB was less arduous and lengthy than the ARI. I did have to provide this committee with secondary information pertaining to a script of the initial telephone contact with participants, further details on confidentiality, and my ethical obligations as a social worker and as a member of public if I am informed of abuse. I was granted my approval certificate to conduct my research on June 10, 2002 (Appendix H).

Sampling Procedure

Selecting the ten foster parents for this research project was achieved by approaching the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority, the Dogrib Community Services Board and the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Authority for an updated list of approved foster homes in their region. Four names were randomly selected from the Yellowknife and Inuvik foster home list and two names were selected from the Dogrib list.

The two senior management positions with the DHSS Child and Family Services program were selected as the most appropriate people to interview due to the experience and knowledge regarding contextual issues of planning a territorial foster parent-training program. These two individuals have considerable understanding of the financial implications, policy issues, and the political atmosphere.

Members of the oversight committee suggested the name of a supervisor from each Authority and Board to interview. The supervisors who were interviewed each had over ten years experience providing child and family services in the

N.W.T. The supervisors who are familiar with the workers in their region were given the task of selecting a total of five social workers they consider to be knowledgeable, experienced, and skilled workers in the foster care field. These five social workers were asked if they were interested in participating in the research process.

Recruitment of the Participants

The University of Manitoba's JFREB has a policy that discourages researchers from contacting or approaching possible subjects to request their participation in the research study. This deters any potential conflict of interest. A summer student who was hired by the DHSS was gracious enough to volunteer to make the initial contact with participants. This was done via the telephone. I developed a script for the student to follow and was present when the calls were made (Appendix I). I wanted to ensure the initial contact was positive.

There was very little difficulty getting subjects to participate in the research. There were a few foster families that were going to be on holidays when the interviews were going to be conducted in their region, so they could not participate. Otherwise, everyone was more than willing to take part in the research process.

Conducting the Interview

The section called "Methodology" in chapter five highlights the benefits of using qualitative interviews as it pertains to a NA on foster parent training. As the principal interviewer I set up an interview schedule for each region that

included the time and place for each interview. I personally prefer to interview participants in a neutral environment where they would be away from distractions of home, work, and interruptions. This was not always possible and I was respectful of the convenience of the interviewee. Three quarters of the interviews were done in the social services office and the other half occurred in the home of the participant.

Each interview started with a basic introduction, the purpose of the research and how the outcomes were going to be used. Each participant was given an informed consent form to read and sign. A form was left with each person and I took the signed copy for my records. Permission was sought to tape the interviews due to the fact that each interview was going to be lengthy (approximately 60 minutes in duration) and probes were going to be utilized. Tape-recording the interviews permitted me to be more intent on the information being shared, to observe the non-verbal cues, and to critique and assess my interview skills.

The data-gathering phase of the NA was the most invigorating part of the research process. Interviewing and meeting foster parents, social workers, and management allowed me the opportunity to interact and hear views in an animated, sometimes comical and other times heated forum. I found several times throughout the interview process I had to mask my feelings and opinions and ignore unpleasant remarks made about the social work profession. I kept reminding myself that my role as an interviewer was to ask questions and listen to responses. It was hard not to take the comments personally.

I used a professional transcriber to transcribe the 20 tapes. She was informed of the importance of confidentiality and as part of her contract signed an oath of the same. Using a transcriber was a costly venture but well worth the expenditure. I lack the skills and time required to transcribe tapes so I was fortunate to be able to use this resource. I have to admit that comparing and reviewing the transcripts for accuracy against the tape was time consuming, but it gave me the opportunity to review the data for a second time.

<u>Current State of Foster Family Training in the N.W.T.</u>

Chapter two (p.23) outlines the current state of foster parent training in the N.W.T. Also, chapter five (p.51-53) outlines the needs and issues in foster parent training based on archival data and six interviews with key informants (foster care consultant with the DHSS, two foster care coordinators with the Authorities, supervisors, and the Director of the YFFA). Chapter two and five highlights there is minimal if any orientation offered to potential foster parents. There is no pre-service and only limited sporadic ongoing training provided. The study done by the CWLC also speaks to the present state of foster parent training in its report, "It Takes a Community." This report recommends the foster care system in the N.W.T. require attention and resources in the areas of recruitment, screening, assessment, and training.

<u>Preliminary Priorities</u>

The following page is based on the analysis of data of the current state of foster parent training in the N.W.T. and a vision of what foster family training should be. There is a vast difference in the current state of training and the

vision of what it should be. It is obvious that this program area has been neglected and it will take time, increased funding and a concerted effort to bring foster parent training to an acceptable standard. The vision of what foster family training should be is based on the preliminary searches done in the pre-assessment phase through archival data, interviews with key informants, and research conducted on national and international foster family training programs.

The outcome of the comparative analysis is the identified needs. The CWLA, "Blueprint for Fostering Infants, Children, and Youths in the 1990's" outlines recommendations and guidelines of what foster parent training should entail. I am using this as an outline for establishing a training program along with the data collected from the archival data review and interviews with key informants. In considering preliminary priorities for training I have taken into account the identified needs, the CWLC report to the DHSS, research on foster parent training programs, and the CWLA recommendations and guidelines.

The preliminary priorities for foster family training are; 1) Offering regularly scheduled standardized pre-service and ongoing training. 2) The training should be culturally responsive to the people it is serving. 3) The Family Development Plan should be incorporated into training so that foster families competencies are recognized and training can be geared to their goals. 4) There should be some joint training with foster families and social workers where applicable. 5) An evaluation component is critical in ensuring that increased learning has occurred and that consumers are satisfied with the training offered.

<u>Figure 4</u>
Comparative Analysis of Current Foster Family Training
and the" Vision of What Should Be"

Current State of Training	Vision of What Should Be
1. Lack of standardized, consistent, foster family training program. 2. Foster family training occurs sporadically. 3. There is not a formal comprehensive pre-service or ongoing training program. 4. The current level of funding is inadequate to provide pre-service and ongoing training. 5. A teamwork approach and attitude is lacking in foster family training. 6. Social Workers require training in foster care. 7. Provisional and extended family are not consistently offered in-service and ongoing training. 8. The current training program lacks an evaluation component. 9. There needs to be a centralized system to track training information. 10. Unavailability and access to training based on geography.	1. A standardized regularly offered pre-service ongoing training. 2. Pre-service training should give foster families an overview of roles, responsibilities, expectation of caregivers, parents, and the Authority staff. It should also give a overview of the types of children and families served by social services. 3. In-service training should give foster parents the opportunity to gain skill development. These skills should address roles and responsibilities, the philosophy of permanency planning, implementing a team approach, working with children who have been abused, neglected, sexually abused, the traumatic effects of separation and loss, behavior management strategies, and the issues of culture diversity. 4. Joint training should occur where applicable. 5. There should be inter-disciplinary training on issues, such as FAS/FAE, accessing special needs, health care, mental health for children and youth. 6. Training should be culturally responsive to the people being served. 7. The Family Development Plan should be incorporated into training. This is a written plan outlining foster families competencies and annual training goals. 8. An individual and program evaluation component is required. 9. Utilization of various training methods such as self-study, classroom teaching, videos, courses, and multi-disciplinary training should be incorporated into training. 10. Trainers should be knowledgeable and experienced in the foster care system and adult education methods.

Chapter Seven

Post-Assessment Phase

Post-Assessment Phase

The final phase is called post-assessment or utilization stage. The main task for this phase is for the assessor to analyze the collected data, recommend action and evaluate the process. This phase is the link from analysis to action. The information that is forthcoming from the NA leads to changes in the system, such as new or revised programs. In this phase the assessor communicates the results of the NA via written reports and oral briefings to the DHSS, stakeholders, and other interested groups. All persons who participated in the NA are sent reports. This enables participants to feel that they have contributed to tangible results (Queeney, 1992). The stakeholders and participants have been an important part of the NA process. Their involvement and their sense of ownership are essential to the acceptance of the results.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is an integral part of any NA. It is the critical ability to find "meaning units" in the data and develop a conceptual scheme that is empirically grounded and richly descriptive (Royse, Thyer, Padgett, & Logan, 2001). Having twenty interviews transcribed verbatim generated an enormous amount of raw data. In order to manage all of the data I categorized all of the interviews under headings of foster families, social workers, supervisors, and management.

I used a code list that I created prior to reading the data. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that this method of creating a "start list" of codes prior to reading the

data is a useful way of beginning to code. This "start list" is not static. It was my experience that as I went through the process of coding, I generated a few additional codes. My advisor and a committee member concurred that this is an acceptable way to begin the coding process.

The codes and categories that I used in my "start list" came from literature review as it pertains to foster family training and adult education. In this practicum there were four groups of people who were interviewed as part of the NA. The information sought from foster families, and social workers were similar and geared towards program content, method, format, delivery mode, audience, site and scheduling. I have used these heading as pre-selected codes for the above mentioned participants. The information sought from management and supervisors is related to contextual analysis such as; trends, resources, and the purpose of the program. I have used these heading as a "start list" for this grouping of participants.

I read through the transcripts. Throughout this process I continually referred back to the purpose of the research to see how the data helped to answer the questions outlined there. The strategy I utilized for analyzing the data was cross-interview analysis. This is the grouping together of answers from different people to common questions or different perspectives on issues (Patton, 1990). The questionnaire I used in the NA was a standardized open-end interview, which lends itself to cross-interview analysis. As I read through the transcripts I made comments in the margins on relevant data and highlighted the information as it pertained to similarities or noticeable differences in the answering of

questions. I designated a color for each answer so that when I referred back to the transcripts it was easier to locate the information. I am a visual person so I wrote the highlighted information of each question on flipchart paper so I could begin to reflect on the data and find the themes.

This process assisted in identifying themes, which are response patterns that continually appear in the data. I organized the data into themes and sub-themes and gave them new codes. I experienced that some of the data could be categorized under different themes so the process was not always clear-cut.

The process of data analysis allows close work with your transcript. One cannot help but notice and critique the interviewer skills. There were a few times that I noticed that I should have probed further, followed up on a comment, or re-directed the interview but failed to do so. I also noticed how poorly I spoke grammatically throughout the interviews.

I gathered a lot of data by using qualitative methodology. It is only natural to want to include all of the information collected in your findings. My advisor cautioned me that all of the data collected would not necessarily be used in my findings.

Findings Section One

This section is structured into three themes along with sub-themes that emerged from the interviews conducted with the foster parents and the front line social workers. Later in this section I will share themes and sub-themes that surfaced from the interviews I did with supervisors and management.

Figure 5
NA Themes and Sub-Themes
Foster Families and Social Workers

Themes	Sub-Themes
1. Credibility of Training	a. Knowledge and Experience b. Creativity and Flexibility
2. Relationship Building	a. Joint Training b. Being considered part of the service delivery team. c. Social workers and social services agencies knowing foster children who are in care. d. Improved communication between foster families and social services agencies.
3. Training	a. Content and insight into fostering. b. Teaching methods. c. Improved Training for foster families and social workers.

Theme 1: Credibility of Training

Theme one titled, "Credibility of Training" refers to the important aspects that need to be considered when determining the most suitable profession or organization to provide foster family training. Throughout the interviews it was made clear that extensive knowledge and experience in foster care was a prerequisite to being a trainer in this program area. Without these qualifications the training content will suffer and the learner knowledge will be limited from the time in the classroom.

Caregivers and social workers have been forthright in expressing that time is a valuable commodity. It is one of the biggest factors in determining if they can attend training. A number of participants interviewed spoke of their desire to obtain training but struggle with the issue of limited time. Since time is precious it is imperative to ensure the trainer has the knowledge, experience, and skills to meet the peoples needs. If the training is not meeting the learners needs they will not make the concerted effort to attend as they view it as an additional infringement on as already limited schedule.

Foster parents have articulated that they feel long term experienced caregivers could effectively co-facilitate pre-service training with a trainer (sub-theme 1.b). They feel that social workers have a role in training as it pertains to legislation, policies, and procedures, but do not perceive them as having a strong knowledge base or experience in foster care (sub-theme 1.a). One foster parent shared her belief that most social workers have limited knowledge and understanding of child development and that this impacts on

decisions made regarding children. I find it interesting that a majority of

social workers feel it is imperative that foster parents have an understanding

and knowledge of early childhood development and the milestones. It is

apparent that knowledge in childhood development is necessary for everyone

working in the foster care field.

A foster parent explains her rationale as to why she believes a caregiver

would make a good trainer.

> Retired foster parents... they'd be good people to train I
> think. Cause they've done it for a long, long time. They've
> must went through a whole of kids. Social worker, I don't
> know if they really handle anybody. They kind of pick the
> children up and put them somewhere else.

A social worker believes there would be benefits if foster parents and social

workers co-facilitated the training. She also shares her views on the attributes

the trainer requires.

> The person who provides the training has to have experience in
> how to deal with difficult children, separation and loss, identity
> issues, need to know values, they need to know about aboriginal
> history, like our native history and dealing with FAS. I think that
> an experienced foster parent is a good idea. As well as a social
> worker who has worked with foster parents over a number of
> years and who has knowledge based on the above noted
> information.

One foster mother believes the personality traits of the trainer are more

important to her than their experience or knowledge. If a trainer is open, patient,

can relate to children, has a positive attitude and listens well then they will be

effective. These are key characteristics of a good teacher.

The perception foster parents have of social workers lacking experience and knowledge in foster care differs from the information shared by each social worker in the introductory phase of the interview process. The five social workers that participated in the research had on average 16 years experience in child and family services. They come with varying degrees of exposure, training and experience in foster care. One social worker has worked extensively in foster care for 21 years. During this period he has obtained extensive experience and knowledge in this program area. Another worker has five years experience developing and providing foster family training. One social worker has worked in the child and family services for 12 years. Prior to working in child protection she worked at a group home for 11 years. She has extensive experience working with children, their families, and foster families.

There is limited contact or interaction between social workers and foster parents even though they are suppose to be working as a team. This contributes to a lack of understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and nature of the work the other does. Without this understanding there is very little insight or awareness into the arduous work that each person is confronted with.

Social workers do not deny that they fail to spend enough time with foster parents. They admit they lack understanding and insight into daily fostering. Four out of five social workers have articulated the desire to be informed and knowledgeable in this realm. One social worker shared her view on how she needs to develop a better understanding of every day life in a foster home.

> The training I would like to have is in regards to developing a
> better understanding of what goes on in foster homes on a daily
> basis. I hear on a regular basis how busy they are, not just with
> foster children but with their own children as well. So, I think
> understanding and appreciating what goes on at home is
> something I want to learn more about.

Another social worker articulates the importance of learning how to work

effectively with foster parents so children in care get the best possible service.

> The most valuable training that I feel could be offered to help me
> in foster care service is to teach me how to work with foster
> parents and how to support this resource.

It appears that both foster parents and social workers require ongoing

training in foster care. Who ever is going to provide the training needs to be

qualified to teach in this program area. Foster parents perceive a qualified

instructor to have a solid background in working with children and experience in

the foster care field. This ensures an understanding of the issues and the ability

to apply practical examples to demonstrate or illustrate points. There was no

mention from foster parents or social workers that the trainers require the skills

and ability to teach. They are focusing predominately on the knowledge and

experience the trainer has in foster care.

There needs to be creativity in the methodology of training and flexibility in

scheduling of the training offered (sub-theme 1.c). A common theme throughout

the interviews was the need for more training and the importance of offering a

training session more than once. Several foster parents spoke of the need to

run training sessions several times throughout the year to give foster parents the

opportunity to attend.

A foster parent shares her thoughts on current training and the need for creativity and flexibility in training.

> I don't always take advantage of what's offered at the agency
> because I find a lot of times, it's last minute, there's one session,
> doesn't happen more than once. If there's something else going
> on were out of luck. I find because of the children we have here,
> I can't just have somebody come in. My husband ends up
> staying and I go or vice versa. It would be nice if the two of us
> could attend or maybe videotape your sessions and pass the
> videotape around and have people sign it, or do a little quiz
> afterwards to prove they actually watched it. There's a lot of
> different ways things could be done.

Another foster parent shares similar views regarding creativity and flexibility in training and offers suggestions that she believes may be viable.

> In current training they tell you you're required to attend, they do
> it during the day and you have to take time off without pay. Like
> they don't give you advance notice and they only schedule once.
> I think there is different ways they can do it. Like they can do it
> in the evenings or on weekends. I'd rather do uh you know a
> bunch of question, fill them out, give them the answers, have
> them marked. You can have a follow-up session where you can
> be doing brainstorming. You could do something like interactive
> CDROM even if you did not have Internet. You can even do
> modular based training.

Several participants sought training from other resources and professions. They felt multi-disciplinary training allowed them to interact with other professionals and see another perspective on matters. It also allowed them to extend their network of support. Several participants sought training outside of Health and Social Services due to the limited training that was offered by the Authorities.

A majority of foster parents feel the most suitable time of year for training to occur is during the school year. The least preferable time is during any holiday period including summer holidays. When foster families have their children at home all day their schedules are full and they are less able to accommodate training.

All of the foster parents preferred to have training occur locally because it would be easier on their families. If training could not be offered in every community and travel became necessary some foster parents in remote communities would prefer training to occur during January to March. This allows them to drive on the ice roads to attend training in the larger settlements.

One participant summed up nicely the importance of creative and flexible training.

> It's essential that people who are actually going to be receiving the training be involved in some measure of determining what kind of training, some sort of schedule, where the training should be uh, its duration, the whole bit you know. You can invest all the money in the world but if people can't take the opportunity to get the training, you know if they're looking after kids uh, we have to look at ways of being able to take the training to the people rather than bringing the people to the training in some instances.

Theme 2: Relationship Building

Several times throughout the process of interviewing participants I detected anger, annoyance, strain, and a sense of frustration from some individuals. It is apparent that the relationship between foster parents and social workers is tenuous. This does not lend itself to solid service delivery. Two foster parents

seriously considered resigning their service due to the conflict they feel between themselves and social workers. At a time when the number of foster homes is declining and the number of children coming into care is climbing we need to retain our resources.

Throughout the interviews, there were recurring themes that addressed ways in which the relationship between foster parents and the Authorities/social workers could improve. These themes are joint training, being a part of the service delivery team, knowing foster children, and improved communication. Even though the latter two themes do not speak directly to training they do address the issue of improved service. I debated about including these two sub-themes but I felt I would be remiss if I failed to include them since they were repeatedly discussed.

There was unanimous agreement from foster parents and social workers that they require further training in foster care. With limited training resources and funding it makes sense to have joint training (sub-theme 1). A number of training programs have designed their courses to accommodate joint training.

Everyone who participated in the research embraced the idea of joint training with the exception of a foster parent and a supervisor who do not support the concept. Those who felt joint training would be beneficial viewed it from the perspective that it would increase their knowledge as well as address the issues regarding relationships. One social worker articulated her view quite clearly, "Foster parents and social workers should train together since you all need to be

on the same page. You need to have the same information. It will also help us to know one another more too."

A majority of foster parents thought joint training was an extremely good idea. They felt the training would promote mutual learning with the added benefit of getting to know and understand each other. One foster parent felt joint training would lead to more awareness and a greater understanding of the challenges of providing substitute care. The foster parent who does not support joint training feels the power and control that social workers have over caregivers would come through in the training.

> Joint training would be difficult because of a lack of trust and respect. Social workers hold so much authority, they rule by intimidation and control. You could not participate without guarding what you are going to say. If I was to start say talk about issues that concerned me and the children in my home I would be afraid that they would say that I was breeching confidentiality. They would hold that against me.

The supervisor who does not support joint training started off thinking the idea was excellent. After sharing her thoughts with me she came to the conclusion that there were pros and cons to the idea of joint training.

> There are pros and cons because sometimes foster parents feel they do not want to discuss an issue because a certain worker is there. They're not going to be honest about situations, so it is going to be a struggle. I would probably go to the foster parents and ask whether they want the social workers involved in foster parent training. I would go to them first because I think it's more important to make foster parents feel comfortable about the training. I've gone from a resounding yes to I don't know.

There were a few caveats to joint training. A social worker and foster parent believes there still needs to be the opportunity for social workers and foster parents to have some training in this program area separately. An example is when foster parents are speaking to potential caregivers at pre-service training about what their foster parent experience has been like. This opportunity should occur without any outside influences, like social workers who may give an inaccurate reflection of fostering due to the fact that resources need to be bolstered.

Another caveat of joint training is that it should not be done with a large group. You still have to consider the training needs of foster parents and social workers based on the needs of the children they have in their care. Some of the training will be reflective of the special needs of the child. Foster parents and social workers should complete a training assessment so that training can be geared towards the children foster parents and social workers have in their care.

The concept of joint training has a lot of support and merit. I do believe it has the potential for greater awareness and understanding of one another, with an added bonus of mutual learning.

There are varied views on (sub theme 2.b), "being a part of the service delivery team." It appears that foster parents and social workers that live in small communities work more closely together in providing the best possible home for the child placed in substitute care. It also seems that being a part of the service delivery team is social worker/foster parent dependent. There is recognition by social workers and the Child and Family Services system that our

foster care program could not survive without this valuable resource. Nonetheless, it appears that there are continual struggles over whether foster parents are professionals. Should they have a role in case planning, permanency planning, coordinating family and home visits, and participating in delivering of training?

In small communities you tend to have more regular contact with foster children and foster parents due to the size of the community and the limited resources. Both the social worker and the foster parent have few other resources locally to call upon in the delivery of service. This tends to draw the social worker and foster parent closely together as a team in meeting the children's needs. A social worker shares her view on what it is like to work with foster parents in a small community:

> Foster parents are an integral part of our service delivery team because they are with the children 24 hours a day 7 days a week. They feel like a part of the team because I spend time with them and have a close working relationship with them. It's not just work related, when you see them you talk to them and see how the kids are doing -especially in the small communities you are closer. You don't have to check on the homes since you see them everyday anyway. Like when you're visiting a friend, you will see how the kids are doing. It is more informal in small communities.

A number of foster parents and a few social workers feel that being a part of the service delivery team is social worker/foster parent dependent. Most foster parents have had several different social workers assigned to their foster children. It has been their experience that the extent of their involvement and information shared on their child's case depends on them acting as an advocate.

One foster mother articulates her experience as being a part of the service

delivery team.

> Depends on the social worker you are dealing with whether you
> feel a part of the service delivery team. A lot of times you're left
> out of the loop. I tend to be pushy enough. I'm a professional,
> you're a professional, just because I'm a foster parent does not
> mean I am dumb. If you expect me to handle this situation
> professionally, then I want the same respect back from you.

The above paragraph stresses a proactive role. There is the perception

that some times foster parents are left out of the loop but due to a assertiveness

a foster parent makes certain she is included. A social worker agrees that some

foster parents are assertive enough to ensure they are an integral part of the

service delivery team.

> Foster parents are not always an integral part of the service
> delivery team. Some foster parents automatically became part
> of the team because over the years they became assertive and
> put themselves in that position for the children. There are also
> times we forget to include the foster parents as part of the team.
> Also we have had some difficult experiences with some of the
> foster parent's being very aggressive and outright disagreeing
> with some of the things that we're doing for the children and
> their families.

Some foster parents see themselves as part of the service delivery team

while others do not. This perception is based on the roles and responsibilities

that foster parents and social workers view the caregivers as having. In some of

the small communities foster parents have made the decision to foster as a way

to help children in their community who require an alternate home for a period of

time. They do not perceive the service they offer as a profession but as service

to their people and community. This is a social worker's view on how she

perceives foster parents in remote communities.

> In the north a lot of our foster parents are just parents. They
> haven't received any kind of training because there has never
> been the opportunity. In the small communities foster parents
> have no education, they do not have a grade 12. But some of
> the best foster parents are those that are more traditional. I
> mean they have a special gift to give to children. They may not
> have a formal education but they can make a living off the land,
> they're hunters and trappers.

Social workers who were interviewed in the larger communities acknowledge

that foster parents are an integral part of the service delivery team, however

social workers do not always do a very good job at demonstrating it. They

expect foster parents to be skilled and proficient in their responsibilities of caring

for the physical and emotional needs of children. This entails being actively

involved in ensuring the child's educational, recreational and medical needs are

met. They are also expected to facilitate home visits leading towards family

reunification, understand the impact that separation and loss has on children,

and how to deal with behavior of children who have been neglected or

traumatized.

The sub-theme of social workers not knowing foster children or spending

enough time with them (sub-theme 3.c) was raised several times by both foster

parents and social workers themselves. Most foster parents have articulated

that social workers do not spend enough time with the foster children to be able

to make case plans and decisions regarding their well- being. The issues of

monitoring foster homes or doing yearly updates on placements does not

consistently occur. This is a standards as well as a liability issue. There is

recognition by social workers that there needs to be checks and balances to

ensure the child's physical and emotional needs are being met in their

placement. The issue of workload and prioritizing is a reality for them. It

impedes their ability to do their job effectively.

The CWLC in their review, "It Takes a Community" (2000), recommended

that the child welfare allocations to Authorities be reviewed based on measures

such as workload, population, and geography with a view of establishing funding

and resource equity amongst the regions. This report substantiates the fact that

social workers' workloads are excessive when compared to reasonable

standards. The CWLC conservatively projected that the Authorities are

collectively under resourced by 22 social workers. Until the DHSS and the

Authorities can address resource allocations, very little will change in the

amount of time social workers spend with children in foster care.

Two foster parents share their viewpoint on social worker's knowing the

children they are responsible for and spending time with them.

> It is me that keeps the social worker abreast as to what's going
> on in the child's life cause there will be years go by and they
> won't see these kids. Sometimes especially the ones that are
> permanent. They've got too many other pressing issues, you
> know.

A second foster parent has similar view as her colleague but is more radical

and derisive in her approach and standpoint.

> I think that they should be able to - they should have to spend
> time with these kids overnight or a weekend at least a weekend.

> You know they can take them for a home visit or take them to a
> school outing whatever but they should find out what these kids
> are about. They do not get the true scope of the whole thing. I
> think they should have at least a weekend. I suggested that to
> the Foster Family Association meeting, ya.

Social workers realize they are not spending enough time with foster children.

As one social worker shares, "they may see a child five or six times a year and

this is dependent on the size of their caseload, how the child is doing in their

placement, and if the child's case is going before the court." The

recommendations by the CWLC have given the DHSS the impetus to increase

resource allocations in Child and Family Services. Hopefully this will have a

positive impact on service delivery.

The last sub-theme under relationship building is "improved communications"

(sub-theme 3.d). This sub-theme was a concern for both parties. There is little

doubt that a lot of work needs to be done to address this issue since it impacts

on the service provided to children in care. This issue is social worker and

foster parent dependent. Some foster parents and social workers feel they have

a good working relationship and regular contact with one another. Others feel

that poor and limited communication hinders their ability to do their work. A

foster mother in her discussion about communication asked, " Are social workers

part of the secret service? How can you work effectively with a child that you

know very little about." The communication difficulty is not due to a language

barrier but the inability to articulate and share information. A social worker

states, "There needs to be training in communication between foster parents and social workers. Everything trickles down from good communication."

One foster parent deals with the communication issue by avoidance.

> I cannot communicate with them. I don't know why I can't. I keep my distance because we do not communicate good. The social worker should communicate with the foster children and family and start to build trust. Due to poor communication and lack of trust we leave everything in the air, that's how I see it.

A social worker shares her experience of working in a small community and the impact a lack of communication can have on service delivery. It is crucial that everyone is kept informed on what is happening with a child in care.

> In the small communities I found that when foster parents took children into their home they truly did take them in and they were part of their family. Because they were part of the family if they were going to get up and get in their vehicle and drive to Edmonton they'd just simply do it. They would forget to inform the social worker. I don't know how you teach the importance of keeping us informed and communication. Serious liabilities occur when foster parents fail to notify social workers about children not being returned home or leaving the Territory.

The theme "relationship building" needs to be addressed in partnership with the DHSS, the Authorities and the Yellowknife Foster Family Association. Some of the sub-themes cannot be addressed without new standards, policies and procedures.

The suggestions made by a majority of foster parents and social workers regarding joint training are a positive way in which people can get to know each other in an informal way. Everyone will be on an equal playing field and this may be conducive to the beginning of an improved working relationship. The

more exposure and interaction foster parents and social workers have with each other, the greater the understanding and insight they will have of the other.

The PRIDE training program has a module called, "Working as a Professional Team Member." In this module the focus is on skill development related to teamwork and conflict management. At the national level there is recognition that the relationship between foster parents and social workers can at times be fragile. This module addresses and recognizes the necessity for training in this area.

Theme 3: Training:

Throughout the interview process both foster parents and social workers were very clear and articulate about their need for training. This is also confirmed in the document, "It Takes a Community" (2000). This document speaks to the training of foster families and social workers. In this report they state, " There was little evidence of consistent and effective screening and training of foster parents on the ground. The foster parents themselves raised concerns with the lack of process, orientation and training at the front end."

One foster parent informed me, "I have been a foster parent for seven years and I have never had any training." All but two foster parents interviewed had no prior training in fostering before a child was placed in their care. The two foster parents who had previous training were caregivers in the south prior to fostering in the north. A social worker substantiated the fact by stating, "As a social worker we often neglect the foster care program and the services that we offer.

We have not put as much energy and time into foster care especially in the area of training. We have not offered training in more than two years." This is not the case for all regions. There are regions that offer orientation training and limited ongoing training. Foster parents and social workers unanimously feel that the amount of training currently offered is not enough.

In both the caregiver and social work interview questionnaires there was a question pertaining to the top three training topics that should be included in the foster care curriculum (sub-theme 1.a). Most foster parents selected topics that were applicable to the child that was placed in their home. This supports adult learning literature by Pecora (2000) that adults are relevancy orientated. They want to be able to relate training content to specific contexts in their lives. These contexts are often in the form of a problem or concern. The learning has to be applicable to these circumstances to be of value to them.

Numerous topics were selected. The one topic that every foster parent expressed the need for training in was FAS/FAE. One foster parent explains why she feels she needs training in this area would improve her parenting and meet the child's needs.

> I would like more training in FAS so I know how to deal with
> those children, you know, what motivates them, you know, what
> cues can we use to get them to do things. I mean there is a little
> boy and you know I told him four times - help me put away the
> groceries and we use UHT milk and I asked him to put the milk
> in the cupboard. He stands in front of the fridge, and he opens
> the door. I said, "No, in the cupboard." Opens the fridge door
> again, I said, "No, the milk goes in the cupboard." Opens the
> fridge again. I said, " The cupboard is over there."
> I would like to know how to deal with these children when they're
> missing part of their brain.

The other training topics that were mentioned frequently by foster parents were how to effectively deal with acting out behavior, different methods of discipline, dealing with belligerent teenagers, how to communicate with children who are dealing with grief and loss, how to have a working relationship and communicate and with social workers, and more background information on what foster family care is about; the guidelines, policies, and legislation.

There was little variation in the topics that social workers and foster parents felt needs to be in the training curriculum. There were two differences that are noteworthy. Social workers have mentioned the importance of training in family preservation and reunification. This philosophy is the premise on which their service delivery is modeled. If foster parents and social workers do not have the same guiding principles, then children and families receiving services will get mixed messages. This may lead to confusion.

The final difference in training content is the topic of special needs. As one social worker stated, "There needs to be clarity on what is a special need? What are we expecting from foster parents in the way of service delivery?" This issue has been raised several times in my interviews with participants. It appears to be a big concern. This is a social worker's view on the matter.

> If you look at occupancy reports you would see that many of the children are deemed to be special needs but they're in a home where there is a number of children. How can that special need be met for that child when there's a number of special needs children in that home? If we're paying for special needs then that child should be getting a service for their special need.

Before training can occur in this subject area the DHSS needs to create regulations, standards and policies relating to this matter. Currently there are no guidelines to assist Authorities with placement issues. As social workers continue to face the daunting fact of limited placement resources there will be occasions when children will be placed in over crowed homes.

Not everyone learns the same way and this was confirmed in my interviews with foster parents (sub-theme 2.b). A majority of foster parents prefer and relish training that entails interactional hands on learning in a group setting. One foster parent shared with me, " I learn best through hands on learning where they demonstrate and I get the opportunity to try the skill. Reading takes awhile to sink in, I may have to read the information a few times." According to foster parents, group learning gives them the opportunity to learn from one another through sharing of ideas and experiences.

Even though foster parents prefer to have training in their community or region, they also recognize the value of meeting as a larger collective to expand their scope of knowledge, support, and experience. This supports the research of Zemke (1984) who believes that adult learners are diverse, bringing a wealth of life experience and knowledge to learning situations. Adults can learn substantially from sharing and speaking with respected peers. As one foster mother shared with me, " I wish I met other foster parents from other regions. Sometimes we get children in our home from other parts of the territory and they have a different culture and lifestyle than ours. If I met a foster parent from their region I can talk with them about their eating habits and lifestyle."

A few foster parents preferred one to one training whereby they could work at their own pace and have the full attention of the instructor if required. One foster parent contributes her preference to one to one training to her quiet shy personality. She has a difficult time being a part of a large learning group whereby you are expected to share and contribute to the learning.

In the north, distance education is a common occurrence. Half the foster parents interviewed have taken courses via this forum. Not one of the foster parents would choose this method of learning as their preference. One caregiver shared with me, "I am from the old school where I want somebody in the class with skin on. I want training with a person on site face to face." Every community across the north has an adult learning center whereby the technology is available for distance education. There is an incompatibility with the availability of distance learning and the method of education that a majority of foster parents prefer.

Throughout the interview process there were comments made on how to improve training (sub-theme 3.c). Some long-term foster parents have suggested that an assessment be done on foster parents to determine their knowledge, skills, and training needs. This will ensure that training is geared to meet their needs and is not repetitive.

Several foster parents shared with me that training needs to be more organized and foster families should receive pre-service training prior to placement of children in their home. This is one foster parent's view on the matter.

> Training needs to be offered more than once and it needs to be more organized. Foster parents should be offered pre-service training before they get started so they know what they are getting into. If you have not any experience parenting previously you need more training.

This supports research that many prospective families may be motivated to provide foster care, but if they are not properly prepared and trained the demands of caring for children with special needs may prove to be overwhelming. The need for pre-service training is imperative. As one social worker articulated, " Foster parents are concerned about their limited training. They feel they cannot be effective without knowledge about fostering." The DHSS and the Authorities need to ensure foster parents have the tools to provide the service. As one foster mother eloquently stated, " I think the more training a person has the more confident they are in their skills and ability to work with all the kids."

Findings Section Two: Supervisors and Management

This final section of my findings is focused on the themes and sub-themes that surfaced from the interviews conducted with supervisors and management. The information sought in the interviews was related to the purpose of foster parent training, resources, issues, trends and assessing the DHSS readiness to offer training territorially.

Foundation of Foster Parent Training

Throughout the process of interviewing supervisors and management the theme of the lack of a foundation upon which to build a foster parent training

program surfaced. The DHSS has not developed the philosophy, the guiding

principles, the vision, and the standards of the program. Without developing

these cornerstones, it will be difficult to build a training program that will be

sustainable.

Table 5
NA Themes and Sub-Themes
Supervisors and Management

Theme	Sub-Theme
1. Foundation of Foster Parent Training	a. Philosophy and Vision b. Purpose and Goals c. Standards
2. Resources	a. Human b. Funding c. Training

While interviewing supervisors and management regarding the philosophy

and vision of foster family training (sub-theme 1.a) it became apparent that

everyone had their own vision. There was no clarity on the direction which

training was going to take.

One manager believes there needs to be a standardized territorial philosophy

on foster family training.

> Foster care needs to be a part of an umbrella that speaks to
> permanency planning and appropriate placements. That is tied
> into an overall vision whereby permanency planning and
> transitional planning is one option. We want a training program
> that's integrative so you're working with foster parents, social
> workers, and adoptive families. The training has to also focus
> on transitional planning.

This manager shared with me that the DHSS purchased the license to use the PRIDE training program and that implementation was going to occur before the end of the year.

Another manager shared somewhat different information with me. " Before we decide what model we are going to use for training we have to ensure we have considered other training models on the market. It's not cast in stone at this point that we will use PRIDE."

Supervisors in the outlying regions were not aware of the fact that a new foster parent-training program was being considered nor were they familiar with the PRIDE program. According to management, " The DHSS has communicated to the Authorities only in very general broad terms the direction of foster parent training. Whenever we are taking a new direction we always vet it through the joint senior management committee. (CEO of the Authorities participates in this committee) So, Authorities are aware of the PRIDE program, but on varying levels of understanding." It does not appear that this information has filtered down to all supervisors and they are feeling left out of the decision making arena.

There is unanimous agreement that the purpose and goals of foster family training (sub-theme 2.b) has not been defined by the DHSS. As one Manager at the DHSS has articulated, " We are in the process of defining a territorial purpose and the goals of foster family training." Currently, each Authority defines the purpose of caregiver training and sets their training goals in this program area. There is no standardization in this realm. There are some

Authorities who are offering orientation and limited ongoing training while others have sporadic or non-existent training. As one social worker states, " Our goals and purpose is not written anywhere to my knowledge. But, our director and other supervisors certainly talk a lot about training and some of the goals that we would like to achieve, but we have never really formalized it."

There is a definite need for the DHSS to develop the purpose and philosophy of foster parent training. This will give more clarity to the program and will help set the direction. There should be some consideration regarding a territorial three-year plan that outlines the goals and objectives of this program. It will give all Authorities and the Yellowknife Foster Family Association a clear picture of the direction the DHSS is going with the training program.

In my archival data review I was provided with the draft standards on foster care that was produced in November 2000 by the DHSS. In this document there is one sentence that refers to foster parent training. This line can be found in the objective section of the document and the notation reads, " To continually improve quality of care through training opportunities for all foster parents." This one line in the foster care standards does not constitute training standards. There is recognition by management that standards in this program area (sub-theme 3.c) need to be developed prior to the start of the new training program. As stated by one manager, " We have draft foster care standards but they'll have to be coordinated and augmented with the training standards. We are beginning this process now."

It will be very difficult to develop training standards without a vision of where you want to go and what you want your program to accomplish. The DHSS has to define the purpose and goals of the training so there is clarity in the direction of the program. This fundamental step paves the way for a more productive planning process, which includes the development of standards.

Resources

The second theme that emerged through the interview process with supervisors and management is the important role that funding, human, and training resources have in developing and sustaining a training program. Without sufficient resources the potential program may not have the opportunity to flourish.

The administrative supports and resources (sub-theme 2.a) that have been allocated to develop and implement the foster family training program is a centralized training team with the DHSS. This team is responsible for all Child and Family Services training. One of the managers with the DHSS explained, "We have pulled two positions; one from Yellowknife Health and Social Services Office and the other from Inuvik. These were community-based positions and we relocated them to the DHSS. This small team along with the territorial foster care coordinator will work on developing and producing a training program." The regional foster care coordinators will be utilized on a consultative basis.

The Yellowknife Family Foster Association is another support and resource that could be involved in helping develop and produce the training program. They have the experience and knowledge in creating and producing the "Foster

Family Manual." They know the system and people within it, they already

provide support to foster families, and they are located in the city of Yellowknife.

The issue of funding resources (sub-theme 2.b) for foster parent training has

made some people skeptical about the sustainability of a training program. It

appears that there are sufficient funds to develop and implement the program

but to sustain it is another question. This is one manager's view.

> There are funds available to either purchase a training package
> and make amendments or develop our own. It's not a huge
> amount but it is enough to get us started. Whether the budget is
> going to be enough long term, I'm not sure."

The money available for foster family training is in the base funding so it is

available yearly and is more secure. This money will be tied into the training

team's budget so there will also be access to travel dollars that is associated

with this unit.

It will be difficult to know if the funding will be sufficient for ongoing training

until the vision, purpose, goals and standards have been formulated. There are

budget implications based on the decisions made regarding the four

cornerstones. For example, will the new training program have two distinct

training components, will all new applicants have to take pre-service training

prior to a placement of a child in their home, will training happen at the

community level, what is the frequency of training, what will be the reimbursable

rates, and what will they entail? All of these questions are a part of purpose,

goals, and standards and have significant budget implications.

One supervisor shared their thoughts on the frequency of training and decisions that have to be made before the new training program begins.

> Training should happen twice a year if not more. It is not feasible to hold one training session for all foster parents because there are just not enough travel funds. There needs to be decisions and attention paid to how we are going to compensate foster families who have to take leave from work to attend training. Do they apply for annual leave? What about babysitters?

There are limited training resources (sub-theme 3.c) available to foster parents and social workers in the area of foster care. The Yellowknife Foster Family Association has a lending library available to foster families. It offers books, videos, and pamphlets, but this resource is limited. There are not sufficient funds available to the Association to continue to replenish their library or mail out resources to foster parents. As well, there are limited funds allocated in supervisors' budgets to purchase professional development material. One DHSS manager believes that the Internet has created accessibility to information for foster parents and social workers. The reality is that not all foster parents have access to the Internet or know how to use a computer let alone own one. So, on-line research and reading is not available to everyone.

As one supervisor shared with me, "There is not enough multi-disciplinary training that occurs with foster parents. I have not seen foster parents invited or encouraged to attend workshops within our organization and there have been plenty they could have attended."

Another supervisor supports the premise of her colleague. She does not feel there are enough training resources for foster families.

> I do not feel there are enough resources for this program. Fifty
> to 60 % of our children in care have FAS or ADD. We need
> someone available who has good knowledge and experience
> who could work and train foster parents on how to deal with
> everyday issues.

The DHSS and the Authorities are expecting foster parents to provide a quality service. Hence it is their responsibility to ensure foster families have the training that will provide them with the skills and abilities to provide care for these high needs children.

One manager's closing remarks in their interview is a reflection of their perception of foster care in the N.W.T. in the last two decades.

> Foster care has really been under monitored and under
> valued… there has not been enough emphasis on the kind of
> care that kids might be getting in foster care. I am not sure
> there's been a lot of change in how we work with foster families
> as there was maybe 20 years ago. Permanent wards go to the
> bottom of the list, especially if they are in stable homes. As
> social workers you're dealing with the crisis that's coming up. I
> do not think foster family program has really kept up with the
> times, so to speak. I don't think much has really changed. Not
> to be dismal but I think it needs a lot more work.

There is recognition by the DHSS management that the foster care program has been neglected over the years and needs to be revitalized. This has also been confirmed in the comparative analysis on page 54. There needs to be concerted effort on the part of the DHSS to recognize the significance of infusing this program with increased funding and human resources.

It is clear in the findings that foster parents and social workers have had limited training in foster care. Foster parents have voiced their concerns about having limited knowledge and skills to work with children who have high needs

and multiple problems. If foster families are not prepared and trained to work with these children, then they are limited in the service they can provide. It is the responsibility of the DHSS and the Authorities to ensure foster parents and social workers obtain training so they can provide quality service to children in care. If the DHSS and the Authorities fail to offer training then they are remiss in their responsibility to provide the best possible substitute home for children in care and are not meeting the legislative requirements set out in the "Child and Family Services Act of the N.W.T.

Recommendations

An integral part of the post assessment phase is producing recommendations. The recommendations that follow are drawn from several sources in the NA process such as: the preliminary investigation with six key informants, the archival data review, the comparative analysis of the N.W.T. to the current national training standards, and the valuable information shared by foster parents, social workers, supervisors, and management throughout the NA process. These recommendations will be forwarded to the DHSS in hope that they will be instrumental in the planning and designing of a standardized foster parent-training program.

The recommendations will be numbered in a semblance of priority. I do not believe that the recommendations that follow will be a surprise to stakeholders. However, there may be differing views on how I prioritized particular training issues. That is not to say that all of the recommendations outlined are not significant. The criteria utilized in determining what would be a priority is based

on the potential risk of not taking action to meet the need, the magnitude of discrepancy between the current state of training and the ideal training, the degree of difficulty in addressing the need, and the cost of implementing the recommendation.

Recommendation for the DHSS

1. The DHSS needs to develop the philosophy, vision, guiding principles, purpose, goals, and standards of foster family training prior to developing or purchasing a program.   In the development of the cornerstone of the foster care training program should be foster families, front line social workers, and the DHSS foster care consultant and policy person.

2. A budget needs to be created that realistically captures the long-term cost of a territorial training program. A budget cannot be formulated until the philosophy, vision, purpose, and goals have been developed.

3. Before embarking on training plans and schedules there needs to be adequate base funding to provide long-term regularly scheduled foster parent training.

4. A three-year plan needs to be developed that outlines the goals, direction, and timelines for accomplishing tasks. This will give the Authorities and the Yellowknife Foster Family Association a clear picture of where this program is headed.

5. Training should be culturally responsive to the people being served.

6. Prior to developing a training program there must be an assessment done on the communication technology available in each region. This will allow a program to be designed that takes advantage of technology.

7. The N.W.T. requires a standardized foster family training program that encompasses pre-training and in- service training. This training should be offered to both foster families and social workers. (Foster families encompass approved, provisional, and extended foster family placements)

8. Pre-service training should minimally include an overview of roles, responsibilities, expectations of caregivers, biological parents, and the Authority staff. There should also be a beginning understanding of the types of children and families served by the Authority. This training should allow families to have sufficient information to make informed decision whether to pursue foster parenting.

9. In- service training should provide foster parents with the opportunity to gain skill development. These skills should address roles and responsibilities, the philosophy of permanency planning, implementing a team approach with emphasis on communication, working with children who have FAS/FAE and other special needs, children who have been abused, neglected, sexually abused, the traumatic effects of separation and loss, behavior management strategies, and the issues of cultural diversity.

10. Where applicable joint training should occur. Joint training offers a positive way in which foster parents and social workers can interact with each other in an informal way. This should be conducive to the beginning of an improved working relationship.

11. There should be multi-disciplinary training on issues, such as FAS/FAE, accessing special needs, health care, and mental health for children and youth. There is recognition that the Authorities and DHSS are not the only organization providing training and services for children.

12. Trainers should have knowledge and experience working with children in the foster care system. They should also have knowledge and skills in teaching adult education methods.

13. A trained foster parent should co-facilitate pre-service training. There are numerous experienced and knowledgeable foster parents who would be an excellent resource in augmenting training for new foster parents and social workers.

14. There needs to be flexibility in scheduling of the training offered. A number of participants spoke of their desire to obtain training but struggled with the issue of limited time. Training sessions need to be offered more than once. Sessions should be offered several times throughout the year to give foster parents the opportunity to attend.

15. Foster parents and social workers have voiced a preference to have training occur in their own community. The next option would be in their region.

16. Creativity in the methodology of training is required when working in a geographical area that is vast. With new technology there are various methods of training available such as video and audio tapes, conference calls, interactive CDROM, in the larger centers they have the capability for video conferencing and tele-health. These different means of training affords foster parents and social workers the opportunity and flexibility to enhance their learning.

17. A majority of foster parents and social workers expressed that training should not occur during summer and seasonal holidays. This is a time when foster families have their children at home all day and their schedules are full. They would be less able to accommodate training during this period.

18. A majority of foster parents and social workers expressed the desire to be trained in a group setting using experiential methods of learning such as, discussions, videos, lectures, case studies, role-playing and other interactional experiences.

19. There needs to be a centralized information system to track foster parent training information. What training has been offered, when has it been offered, who attended, what was the feedback and what were the associated costs?

20. Foster family training requires an evaluation component. It should address increased learning and consumer satisfaction (foster parents, social workers and children in care.)

The decisions about improving or developing a new foster training program must be approved at the Departmental level. My role as the assessor is to be an advisor to the decision makers regarding the information pertaining to the report.

It is hoped that the implementation of the recommendations will be an inclusive process, comprising of foster families, front line social workers, foster family coordinators at the authority level, and the DHSS. A collaborative effort will most likely lead to support and buy in by the stakeholders involved in foster care in the N.W.T.

Evaluation of the NA

As part of the post assessment phase an evaluating of the NA is required. The evaluation will determine if I met the stated goals outlined in the purpose of the NA. Secondly, I want feedback on the process of participating in the NA. This feedback will allow me to continue to learn and hone my assessment skills as well as make appropriate changes for the next NA I may endeavor. Lastly I utilized a formative evaluation in doing the practicum. This allowed me to monitor the project and ensure the tasks were being completed in a timely manner and to take corrective actions if problems arose.

The objectives of the NA were twofold. The first objective was to collect data on foster family training through archival data reviews, interviews with stakeholders, foster parents, social workers, supervisors and the DHSS. The information collected was comprehensive due to the willingness of the

participants to engage openly about foster family training. The second objective was to provide the DHSS with recommendations that will be responsive in planning and designing a standardized foster training program. The objectives outlined in the purpose of the NA were accomplished.

I sought participant feedback on the process of being involved in the NA. The feedback was requested in a follow up telephone interview that occurred approximately two weeks after the assessment interview. I experienced more difficulty contacting the participants for a follow up interview compared to the initial contact. I was able to speak with seven participants, which is significantly less than anticipated. It is a 38 per cent response rate. I spoke with two members from the oversight committee and my advisor regarding the low follow up response rate. I obtained some insight to possible reasons for the limited response.

My advisor's view was that the follow up contact might be meeting my needs and not those of the participants. During the initial contact and the interview participants could see the value of their input. In the follow up interview the value and benefit would be that of the assessors. The feedback would be a critique of the process that would assist and improve the assessor in future work on NA. The feedback and outcome of the follow up interview was meeting the needs of the assessor not necessarily the participants.

Members of the oversight committee thought the time of year was not conducive for the research and the follow up. Summer is when foster parents

have children at home all day so their days are full. Making time for a follow up interview may not have been a priority. Foster parents' have confirmed this by their response to the interview question asking, "When they thought training should occur?" They were very clear that training should not occur during holiday seasons or when the children are out of school. It is possible that I selected a time that was not convenient for the participants.

One member of the oversight committee thought it possible that participants had nothing further to discuss so they did not feel the need to call back. I tend to agree with this member of the oversight committee. I believe the low response rate was due to the fact that participants said what they had to and did not feel it necessary to follow-up.

The response I did receive from the seven participants did give me insight and feedback for improvement. One participant thought it would have been beneficial to do the interviews in a focus group format in all of the regions in the Territory. This way I could accommodate more participants and get more feedback on foster family training territorially. Another participant found some of the terminology I used was not familiar. Especially the adult education questions regarding, " how do you learn best and what teaching methods have helped you learn?" They did not understand my question until I re-phrased it. Lastly, all of the participants articulated the importance of the research and were very pleased to have input into the possible direction that foster family training was headed in the territory. Everyone who participated

in the interview process has requested a final copy of the recommendations that will be forwarded to the DHSS.

In assessing and evaluating the process of three- phase assessment I am critical of some of the unrealistic timelines that I outlined in my management plan. This is apparent in the post-assessment phase. My lack of experience in completing data analysis and writing up findings were demonstrated. Even though I was continually analyzing data throughout the NA process I still did not realize how time consuming the process would be. In the timeline I had given myself a one- week period in which to do this work! One of my committee members was quite skeptical of my timeline but I was insistent that I could get the work done. I learned a valuable lesson. It took me a month to do this section. The corrective action I had to take on this under estimation is to contact the DHSS and the YFFA to inform them that the recommendation/ final report would be delayed.

I have come to realize the importance of being objective and neutral throughout the interview process. Not taking comments personally even when people are being critical of your profession and the staff you supervise. Interviewees need to feel they can discuss and share openly their thoughts and opinions. In the end the results are true reflections of the people interviewed.

Contrary to what the literature states regarding phase two of the formal assessment being the most time consuming and difficult phase in the NA process, this is not reflective of my experience. This may have been true had

I not hired a professional transcriber or had extensive experience and skills in interviewing. I found the assessment phase to be the most invigorating and enjoyable phase of the whole assessment. The post assessment phase was the most time consuming and difficult phase in the NA for me.

In September of 2002 as part of the post assessment phase I presented some preliminary findings to the Directors of Health and Social Services Programs and the Director of Child and Family Services in the Territory. In October of 2002 I wrote an article on my preliminary findings for the Territorial Foster Family Newsletter in celebration of National Foster Family week. Lastly, I will distribute a report that will include final recommendations that will help the DHSS in the planning of a foster family training program. This report will also be forwarded to all foster families, social workers, supervisors, managers of the DHSS, and the oversight committee who participated in the NA.

Chapter Eight

Practicum Objectives and Evaluation of My Learning Goals

Achievement of the Practicum Objectives

In the beginning of the practicum process I established five learning objectives: 1) To learn the process to obtain a Scientific Research License from the Aurora Institute in the N.W.T. and Human Ethics Approval from the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board University of Manitoba. 2) To develop new skills in writing interview questions and in data collection. 3) To enhance my interview skills; become more proficient in public speaking/doing presentations, and becoming more adept in networking. 4) The opportunity to apply research findings to program training and development in the N.W.T. 5) Gain experience in data analysis, which will be formulated into recommendations to the DHSS for planning and designing a standardized foster family training program.

Throughout the process of the practicum I continually referred back to the learning objectives to ensure I focused my attention on what I set out originally to do. I believe that I have achieved my practicum objectives and have learned extensively throughout the process.

One of my learning objectives was to learn the process of obtaining a Scientific Research License from the ARI in the N.W.T. and Human Ethics Approval from the JFREB at the University of Manitoba. I believe I have learned the process of obtaining a research license and ethics approval along with being aware of what content is required in the applications.

As discussed previously obtaining a research license in the N.W.T. is an arduous process and can be a deterrent for students doing research in the Territory. A minimal three- month period to get a license is too long and cumbersome for a student. There should be a separate process for students applying to do research in the N.W.T. and corporations.

I worked hard on my submission to the JFREB and still had to provide the committee with secondary information. What I learned from this process is that whenever you are going to do interviews as part of your research, you must submit a script of the initial contact that will be made with participants. The JFREB policy discourages researchers from contacting possible subjects to request their involvement in the research study. So a script must be developed in order that an alternate person can make the initial contact. Also all researchers must outline their ethical obligation if informed of abuse while conducting interviews.

Overall, what I learned in getting a research license and ethics approval is that you must anticipate delays. I was naive in believing that everything would run smoothly and I would be ready to conduct my interviews by the beginning of May. In reality I was not able to begin the process of interviewing until June 10, 2002. I found the delay was disappointing and discouraging.

The second learning objective was to develop new skills in writing interview questions and in data collection. As part of my learning in this realm I did extensive research in qualitative interviews looking at the different

methods of data collection. I had initially struggled with the choice of employing individual in person interviews versus focus groups. After considering the pros and cons of each method of data collection and in discussions with my committee members I decided to do individual interviews. The time factors, cost, and distance were major factors in selecting individual interviews. Once this decision was made I was able to start to think about interview questions.

The formulation of interview questions was more difficult than I anticipated. This was partially due to the fact that I had four different groups to interview and their functions were different. I sought telephone consultation from my advisor and my practicum supervisor, which helped clarify and delineate what information I wanted to seek from each group. The information sought from foster parents and social workers were similar and focused on program content, audience, delivery mode, trainers and scheduling of the training. The information gathered from supervisors and management relate to the contextual analysis of the Authorities and the DHSS.

I developed open-ended questions with probes in case I failed to engage the participants. An important lesson I learned in the development of questionnaires is the importance of piloting them. I was confident that I had done a satisfactory job of developing questions and probes. When I piloted my questionnaires the feedback I received indicated that I needed to make changes to two out of four of my questionnaires. The biggest change was to

the questionnaire with foster families. I made the appropriate changes and re-piloted the questionnaire. The second time around I received positive feedback on the questionnaire. If I had not taken the time to pilot the questions I believe the outcome of the research would have been questionable and not necessarily reflective of the participants' views.

I believe that I have learned a considerable amount regarding the different methods of data collection, the strength and weaknesses of them and when to use them appropriately. I have also learned the importance of writing interview questions that are easy to understand. If I were going to do qualitative research again I believe I would seek input and feedback from my committee on developing the interview questions. I believe that I am still at an entry-level stage and need more practice and experience before I would feel confident in my abilities.

My third learning objective focused on enhancing my interview skills and becoming more proficient in public speaking and doing presentations. Having all of the interviews taped allowed me to critique my interview skills and work on improving them. When comparing my first three taped interviews to my middle and end interviews you could see a progressive improvement. Over time I had more practice with the interview questions and became more proficient and comfortable with them. When interviewing I did make a conscious effort to speak slowly since I have a tendency to speak quickly. My quick speech was evident in early tapes and you could notice a marked

difference in later tapes. It was also noted that when I spoke more slowly there were fewer times that participants had to ask me to repeat questions.

I have had the opportunity to present some of my preliminary research findings to the Directors of Health and Social Services Programs and the Director of Child and Family Services. As part of my learning I used a multi-media format called power point, with which I became familiar and able to use. This tool helped me to focus on key points and be more concise in my presentation. It also allowed me to be creative in presenting my information. A positive criticism I received on this presentation was giving too much information on each power point slide instead of using them as a point of reference. I have since revised the presentation to reflect the input from my supervisor and have had the opportunity to present the information a second time. I feel I have improved the presentation both visually and orally.

I believe I have met my fourth and fifth learning objectives. These two learning objectives had the most significant outcome and impact for me. I have demonstrated that I have the skills and ability to analyze data and to apply the research findings to program training and development in the N.W.T. As stated previously the process of analyzing data took longer than anticipated, but this was partially due to the large sample size and my inexperience. Several times throughout the process of analyzing the data I wondered why I was so ambitious but I kept reminding myself that a larger sample size sometimes improves the validity of findings. The end results were worth the effort. The research has substantiated the training needs of

foster families in the N.W.T. and will allow me to make recommendation to the DHSS that will be instrumental in the planning and designing of a standardized structured training program. The research findings on what foster families in the Territory believe their training needs are and what they would like to see in a training program do not differ from their counter parts nationally and internationally. This is confirmed through information obtained in the literature review and the outcome of the NA. (Table 6, pp.114) This fact is reassuring since often the N.W.T. is viewed as having different needs based on their demographic and geographic make up. The real challenge will be how the DHSS plans and designs a foster training program that will be offered regularly.

Table 6

Literature Review and NA's Findings Similarities

Reference	Literature Review	Research Findings
Downs et al. (1996) Pecora et al. (1992) Titterington (1990) U.S. General Accounting Office (1989)	Foster children have become more difficult to provide care for and foster parents require more supports and training to meet their needs.	Foster families believe that the more training they have the greater their confidence, skills and abilities to work with children placed in their home.
Scannapeico (1997) Everett (1995)	Kinship placements tend to be less effectively monitored, supported, and trained than is the case with regular foster homes.	In the N.W.T provisional and kinship homes are not consistently offered in-service and ongoing training. There are varying differences between Authorities.
CWLA (1995) National Commission on Children (1991) Kammerman & Kahn (1990) Chamberlain, Moreland, and Reid (1992)	Training plays a large role in providing knowledge and skills and there is agreement there is the need for training.	There is unanimous agreement from foster parents and social workers that they require in-service and ongoing training in foster care.
Pasztor & Wynn (1995) James Bell & Associates (1993)	In both Canada and the U.S. foster parent training is not universally available to foster families.	Foster family orientation training occurs sporadically in the N.W.T. One foster parent has fostered for seven years without training.
Carbino (1980)	A period of training is expected to become orientated to a new work environment. It is unacceptable that there is not the same expectation regarding foster parent training.	Of the ten foster families who participated in the research project only two received training prior to having a child placed in their home.
Pecora (2000)	Adults are relevancy orientated. They want to be able to relate content to specific contexts in their lives. This is why input must be sought so that learners can identify objectives that are relevant and of value	It is essential that people who are actually going to be receiving the training be involved in some measure of determining what kind of training, where the training should occur, the scheduling, and the duration.
Zemke & Zemke (1984)	Adult learners are diverse, bringing a wealth of life experience and knowledge to learning situations. Adults can learn from sharing and speaking with respected peers.	Experienced foster parents could co-facilitate training because they have the experience in how to deal with difficult children, separation and loss, identity issues, and special needs. They would have creditability.

Evaluation of My Learning Goals

I did not set up a formal evaluation to measure the achievement of my learning objectives but I received ongoing feedback from a number of stakeholders who were actively involved in my practicum. Even though my advisor was at a distance, I received continual feedback, suggestions, encouragement, and direction on my work via e-mail and telephone contact. My practicum supervisor was situated in the same city as me for a portion of my practicum and we met regularly and he gave direction and support. Especially in light of the fact that the DHSS (my practicum placement) was going through a major organization restructure and my practicum research was of little significance to them.

The oversight committee was instrumental in providing me with feedback, constructive criticism, and direction as it pertains to foster care issues in the N.W.T. This committee was a great source of information and was beneficial in helping me network with other foster care resources.

Acting on the suggestion of my advisor I begrudgingly kept a journal of my practicum research process. In the journal I documented my thoughts, insights, progress, feelings, and experiences. I wrote in this journal regularly and it was a good tool to gauge your progress and growth. Each time I wrote in my journal I would go back and re-read my previous notations. I found this process to be encouraging. It was like a report card that demonstrated your progression or procrastination.

The beginning of my practicum was discouraging. My approval by the JFREB was delayed three weeks due to the fact that I needed to provide the committee with secondary information. The DHSS was going through re-structuring so there was very little stability or support for my practicum. In retrospect the hills and valleys are very much a part of the practicum process and journaling helped to keep everything in perspective for me. I have to admit when my advisor suggested I keep a journal I did so because I did not feel I had a choice. In retrospect I am thankful I followed his direction since obviously he knew how much I would gain through this process.

Overall, I feel that I have met all of my learning objectives. Personally my greatest learning has been in the realm of analyzing data and applying the research findings to program training and development. I do hope that the recommendations to the DHSS are used to plan, design and develop a standardized foster family training program.

Concluding Remarks

My research practicum has allowed me to begin to develop skills in doing qualitative research. I have taken qualitative research courses as part of my under graduate and graduate course work but I never had the opportunity to apply the learning. By doing a NA I was able to apply the learning and gain a tremendous amount of knowledge and skills. Through the process of evaluating my learning I have come to the realization that I have areas to improve such as: in the timing of the research, writing interview questions, analyzing data and evaluating outcomes. If I continue to do research I know

that I will improve in these areas and become more competent and confident in my skills and abilities.

I am excited by the outcome of the NA. I believe the recommendations forwarded to the DHSS are reflective of the training needs of foster families in the Territory. The fact that foster families in the N.W.T. have similar training needs and views on training curriculum content as their southern counterparts is encouraging. This may mean that geographic and demographic variables may not affect what foster parents want in a training program. Further research would have to be done before you can draw this conclusion.

I selected my research practicum topic based on a prescribed need. When I return to the N.W.T. it is my hope that the recommendations outlined in this practicum paper will be utilized by the DHSS for improved quality service to children, families, and communities we serve.

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Appendix A

Timelines and Measurable Objectives and Resources Required

Completion Date of Phases with Measurable Objectives and Resources Required:

Pre-Assessment Phase:

Objectives	Date of Completion	Resources Needed	Budget
Design a management plan that outlines obligations of all parties	June 14, 2002	Support and input from the oversight committee	0
Preliminary investigation of what is known about foster parent training via stakeholders and archival data.	June 17, 2002	Telephone, archival research via Department of H&SS files, and support and commitment from stakeholders	Long distance telephone charges $75.00
Do a preliminary plan for phases 2 & 3 taking into account timelines and budget costs	June14, 2002	Support and input from the oversight committee.	0
Get commitment from the Department of H&SS that they will take into consideration the recommendation prior to committing to a training program.	June 20,2002	Support and commitment from the Department of Health and Social Services.	0
Identify the purpose and scope of the needs assessment.	June 14, 2002	Support and input from the oversight committee	0
Determine research questions, methods, and participants	June 20, 2002	My advisor and practicum supervisor will assist if requested with procedures, questions, and instruments.	0
			Total cost $75.00

Completion Date of Phases with Measurable Objectives and Resources Required:

Formal Assessment Phase:

Objectives	Date of Completion	Resources Needed	Budget
Begin data collection	August 30,2002	Telephone, travel expenses, tapes, tape-recorder, trancriptionist,	On going costs. Total tabulated at the end.
North Slave Region data collection	July 19,2002	Transportation, accommodation, and per diem costs	$385.00
Inuvik Region data collection	August 30, 2002	Transportation, accommodation, and per diem costs	$2765.00
Have interviews taped for accuracy of data.	August 30, 2002	Tape recorder, batteries, and tapes	$32.00
Have interviews transcribed for accurate data collection.	September 15,2002	Transcriber	$1440.00
Follow-up telephone interviews.	August 30, 2002	Telephone and long distance charges	$300.00
			Total costs $4922.00

Completion Date of Phases with Measurable Objectives and Resources Required:

Post-Assessment Phase:

Objectives	Date of Completion	Resources Needed	Budget
Analyze data from interviews. This is an on going process.	September 23, 2002	Support from my advisory committee	0
Develop recommendations	September 30,2002	Support from my advisory committee.	0
Disseminate and present recommendations to the Department of Health and Social Services and mail out the final report to stakeholders	October 07, 2002	Stamps and envelopes to mail out findings to stakeholders, travel expenses to present findings to the Department, photo-copy expenses	Travel expenses to Yellowknife $1800, stamps and envelopes $75.00, photocopy expenses $50.00
Evaluation of the NA process	October 18,2002		0
			Total $1925.00 **Total all 3 phases $6922.00**

Appendix B

Memorandum of Agreement for the NA

Memorandum of Agreement
Foster Family Needs Assessment

Purpose:

I will be doing a foster parent training needs assessment (NA) in the North

Slave and Inuvik regions of the Northwest Territories. Currently the Territory

lacks a standardized, consistent, and structured framework for foster parent

training which impacts on the quality of service provided to children in care.

A study done by the Child Welfare League of Canada (CWLC) confirms the need

to develop foster parent training in the Northwest Territories. The CWLC was

hired by the Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Health and

Social Services in November of 1999 to do an assessment and review of the

child welfare services in the Territory and the linkages with its service partners.

The objective of the review was to receive detailed practical recommendations

that could be implemented and would strengthen the Child and Family Services

system. In May 2000 the CWLC released their findings in a report called, " It

Takes A Community." This report recommended the foster care system requires

attention and resources in the realm of recruitment, screening, assessment, and

training. This capacity should be developed with input from foster parents and

social workers.

Research has demonstrated that children entering the Child and Family

Services system today are more difficult to work with than those in the past due

to more complex problems and needs. Foster parents today are dealing with

children who have increased emotional and psychological needs. These high

needs children with multiple problems make foster parents realize the service they are providing is far from "normal" parenting. As a result foster parent training is a critical factor in preparing foster parents with the required skills and knowledge that goes beyond "traditional basic" parenting.

The purpose of this NA is to collect data on foster parent training through interviews with foster parents, social workers, supervisors, and the Department of Health and Social Services. This data will provide the Department with information that will be responsive in planning and designing a standardized and structured training program that has immediate usefulness to all stakeholders.

Directions and Limits of the NA:

This NA is focusing on the training needs of foster parents as it pertains to program content, format, audience, delivery mode, trainers and scheduling of the training sessions. Due to the vast distance, time, and fiscal constraints I cannot realistically include the whole territory in my research. I have selected the North Slave and Inuvik region to concentrate my research efforts on. The North Slave Region consists of the Dogrib Community Service Board, Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority, and Stanton Territorial Health Authority. The Inuvik Region has the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Authority.

The sample size for data collection will be 20 people, who will consist of 10 foster parents, five social workers, three supervisors, and two senior people from the Department of Health and Social Services. In order to participate in this research project foster parents have to be approved to provide care in the Northwest

Territories. Social workers have to have their statutory training appointment, and supervisors have to have a level five designation.

The data collection for this research will occur from June to August of this year and recommendations forwarded to the Department of Health and Social Services by October. The final report on this needs assessment will be complete by the end of the year.

Roles and Duties of the Need Assessor, Oversight Committee, the Department of Health and Social Services and the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Board:

Roles and Duties of the Need Assessor:

- Prior to doing the NA I must seek ethics approval from the University of Manitoba Office of Research Services.

- Prior to conducting research in the Northwest Territories a research license from the Aurora Research Institute must be obtained.

- To ensure all participants in the research project understand and sign an informed consent form prior to participating in the project.

- As the principal investigator of this project I need to ensure that the transcriber as well as myself adhere to the confidentiality guidelines outlined in the consent form.

- It is my responsibility to keep the oversight committee and the Department of Health and Social Services informed and updated on my progress.

- To submit progress report on each phase of the assessment.

- It is my duty to communicate my findings to the participants, the Department of Health and Social Services, and the oversight committee.

- To keep the projected timelines at the forefront so that the research will be completed in a timely manner.

- Submit a travel plan to the Department of Health and Social Services so they can make travel arrangements for the assessor to interview participants.

- As a social worker I am ethically obligated to report to the proper authorities any issues that may arise in this research project related to child abuse.

- To submit a final report to the Aurora Research Institute in the Northwest Territories and to the University of Manitoba Office of Research Services.

Roles and Duties of the Oversight Committee

- The oversight committee will provide support and general direction on the needs assessment

- This committee will work with the assessor in assisting with design procedures and instruments if requested.

- The members of this committee will assist with insight and understanding of the Northwest Territories political and social environment.

- This committee will be the prime source of support for action plans to meet high priority needs.

- The committee will give the assessor constructive feedback on progress reports

Roles and Duties of the Department of Health and Social Services:

- To provide travel expenses including hotel costs and per diems associated with interviewing participants for the needs assessment.

- The Department will provide a worksite and computer for the assessors use while stationed in Yellowknife.

- They will disseminate the recommendations of the needs assessment to all Boards for their information.

- They will provide travel expenses for the assessor to present the recommendation of the needs assessment to the Director of Child and Family Services.

- They will permit access to archival files and information for the pre-assessment phase of the research.

- Commitment of management to support needs assessment and to follow through will the use of the findings.

- They will permit the assessor use of the telephone and facsimile for local and long distance purposes if related to the research project. This is especially pertinent in relation to follow-up telephone interviews.

- Will provide use of office supplies and equipment.

Appendix C

Map of Territorial Health and Social Services Authorities

Roles and Duties of the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Authorities:

- Will provide room and board to the assessor while doing research in the Inuvik region.

- The Board will provide a worksite and computer for the assessor's use while stationed in Inuvik.

- Will permit the assessor use of the telephone for local and long distance purposes if related to the research project. This is especially pertinent in relation to follow-up interviews.

- Will provide use of office supplies and equipment while in the region.

- Will provide a quiet space in which to conduct the interviews.

Northwest Territories
Health and Social Services Authorities

ALASKA

NWT

CANADA

USA
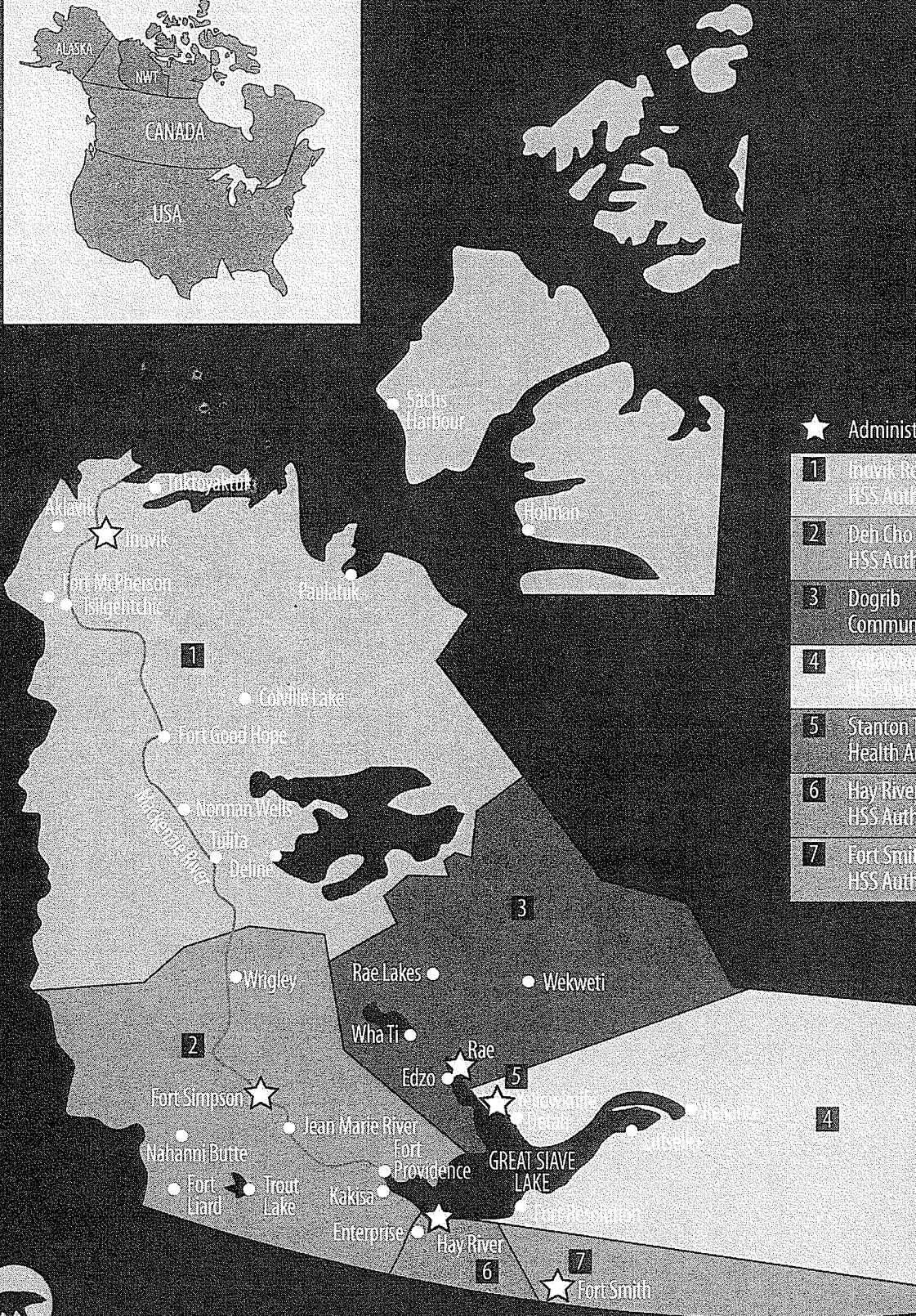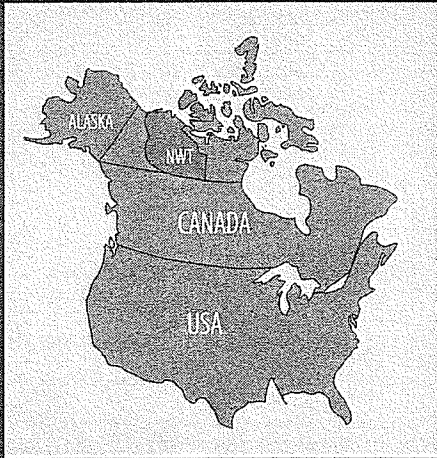
★ Administrative Centres

1	Inuvik Regional HSS Authority
2	Deh Cho HSS Authority
3	Dogrib Community Services Board
4	Yellowknife HSS Authority
5	Stanton Territorial Health Authority
6	Hay River HSS Authority
7	Fort Smith HSS Authority

Sachs Harbour

Tuktoyaktuk

Holman

Aklavik

★ Inuvik

Fort McPherson
Tsiigehtchic

Paulatuk

1

Colville Lake

Fort Good Hope

Mackenzie River

Norman Wells

Tulita

Deline

3

Wrigley

Rae Lakes

Wekweti

Wha Ti

Rae

2

★ Edzo

5

★ Fort Simpson

★ Yellowknife
Dettah

Reliance

4

Jean Marie River

Lutselk'e

Nahanni Butte

Fort Providence

GREAT SLAVE LAKE

Fort
Liard

Trout
Lake

Kakisa

Fort Resolution

Enterprise

★ Hay River

6

7

★ Fort Smith

Northwest Territories Health and Social Services
June 2002

Appendix D

Interview Questions

Interview Schedule for Management:

1. Has the Department of Health and Social Services defined the purpose and goal of foster parent-training program?

Follow up questions (FUQ). Who was involved in defining the purpose and goals of the training program and how recently was this done?

FUQ. How has the Department communicated this information to staff, foster parents, and regional Health and Social Services Authorities?

2. Research has demonstrated that when developing or enhancing a training program, it is imperative to seek input from the potential learners and stakeholders to ensure that a program can be designed that has immediate usefulness. How have foster parents and front line social workers been involved in determining training needs?

FUQ. Will there be consultation with the Foster Family Association of Yellowknife and the Health and Social Services Authorities in determining training needs? If there has been consultation what have they voiced as training needs?

3. What types of administrative support and resources have been allocated to support, develop and implement foster parent training?

FUQ. Is there a sustained plan developed for this program area? Can you share the details with me?

FUQ. In developing a new foster parent-training program has a budget plan been developed?

4. What is the political will for enhancing and developing this program area?

FUQ. Are there federal or territorial programs that can augment foster parent training?

5. What evaluation method are you going to use to determine your progress in developing and implementing the foster parent-training program?

FUQ. Will there be enough flexibility in developing the training program to make changes if the evaluation outcomes determine it?

6. How can foster parent training become an essential component in the Department's delivery of service?

FUQ. Have there been liability issues associated with limited or lack of foster parent services?

Interview Schedule for Supervisors:

1. Has your Authority defined the purpose and goals of its foster parent-training program?

FUQ. Who was involved in defining the purpose and goals and how recently was this task accomplished?

FUQ. Has your Authority shared the purpose and goals with foster parents, social workers, and the Department of Health and Social Services?

2. What is your Authority's long term plans for foster parent program?

FUQ. Who has been involved in the strategic planning of this program?

3. Research has demonstrated that when developing or enhancing a training program, it is imperative to seek input from the potential learners and stakeholders to ensure that a program can be designed that has immediate usefulness. How have foster parents and front line social workers been involved in determining training needs?

FUQ. How are decisions made regarding what training will be offered annually?

4. How familiar are you with the different foster care programs that are being utilized by other social services agencies both nationally and internationally?

FUQ. Do you have a preference for any particular program?

FUQ. What are the strengths and drawbacks of some of these programs?

5. What resources are allocated to training foster parents?

FUQ. Are the resources allocated adequate and does cross training occur?

FUQ. How often does training occur in your region and is this frequent enough?

FUQ. Who is responsible for documenting and ensuring all foster parents get on going training?

6. What are your views on social workers and foster parents receiving training together on foster care issues?

FUQ. Does multi-disciplinary training occur with your Authority? Are foster parents invited to attend multi-disciplinary training that occurs with your organization if it is applicable to the service they provide?

FUQ. Can you describe and give examples of how foster parents are a part of the service delivery team?

7. What are your thoughts on combining foster and adoptive parent pre-service training?

FUQ. What are the benefits and drawbacks of combining these training programs?

FUQ. Who currently provides this training for your Authority? How is the current foster parent training run?

FUQ. What are some of the strengths of the current training program and what areas require improvement?

8. What program content should be included in foster parent training?

FUQ. Out of the list of program content just shared with me what would be your top three priorities?

FUQ. Why have you selected these top three topics?

9. Who would be the most suitable persons, professions, or organization to provide foster parent training?

FUQ. What attributes would a social worker have as a trainer of foster parents?

FUQ. What would be the benefits or drawbacks of the College taking responsibility of training foster parents?

FUQ. If foster parents and social workers were to do the training jointly how do you envision this occurring?

10. What are your top 3 priorities with foster parent program?

FUQ. What are the timelines for these priorities and are they reflective of the Department, foster parents, and stakeholders?

11. Should foster parent payments be commensurate to training, education, and experience?

Interview Schedule for Social Workers:

1. As a frontline social worker that is familiar with children who are placed in foster care what knowledge and skills are required of foster parents?

FUQ. What resources are available to foster parents to obtain the knowledge and skills in the Northwest Territory?

FUQ. If training is obtained from other sources who pays for the associated costs?

2. What training have you had to prepare you to work with children in care and foster parents?

FUQ. When was the last time you have received training specifically related to children in foster care and their caregivers?

FUQ. What training would help you work more effectively in the foster care program?

3. What program content do you believe needs to be in foster parent training?

FUQ. Out of the list you just shared with me what would be the top three topics?

FUQ. Why do you consider these a priority?

4. Do you believe that you can combine foster and adoptive parent pre-training?

FUQ. What are the benefits and drawbacks of combining these training programs?

FUQ. Who currently provides this training for your Authority? How is the current foster parent-training program run?

FUQ. What are some of the strengths of the current program and what improvements can be made?

5. Who would be the most suitable person or organization to provide foster parent training?

FUQ. What would be the benefits and drawbacks of the college taking responsibility of training foster parents?

FUQ. If foster parents and social workers were to do the training jointly how do you envision this occurring?

6. What are your thoughts on social workers and foster parents receiving training together on foster care issues?

FUQ. Do you see foster parents as an integral part of the social services delivery team?

7. Should foster parent payments be commensurate to training, education, and experience?

FUQ. Should there be more in depth training for specialized foster homes or should all foster parents get the same training?

Interview Schedule for Foster Parents:

1. If a friend of yours asked about the foster parent training program currently offered, what would you tell that person?

FUQ. Have you had pre-service or orientation training? Have you had ongoing training?

FUQ. Can you tell me some of the positive benefits of the pre-service or orientation training and the areas that require improvement?

2. As a foster parent who is familiar with the needs of the children placed in your home what program content should be included in foster parent training sessions?

FUQ. If you were asked to give your top three training topics what would they be?

FUQ. How would these topics help you provide improved care to children?

FUQ. Have you done any reading on child and family issues this year?

3. Who would you consider the most suitable people or organization to provide foster parent training?

FUQ. What qualities and skills would a social worker provide as a trainer in this program area?

FUQ. What would the benefits be if the college took responsibility of training foster parents?

FUQ. If foster parents and social workers were to do the training jointly how do you envision this occurring?

4. When you think back to when you went to school or a recent learning experience what teaching method did you learn best from?

FUQ. Do you find that group learning and sharing contributes to your learning?

FUQ. Do you know how to use a computer? What programs are you familiar with and how accessible is a computer? What are your internet rates?

FUQ. Have you ever taken a distance education course? If so, how did you keep yourself motivated and on track? Would you be interested in learning by distance education? What would be the benefits and drawbacks in taking distance education courses?

5. What are your thoughts on social workers and foster parents receiving training together on foster care issues?

FUQ. How do the Department of Health and Social Services and the Authority make you feel like a part of the service delivery team?

6. When is the most convenient time for you to receive training? Where should the training occur?

FUQ. How long could you be away from home? What supports are available to your family in your absence?

FUQ. Should different cultural groups train together? What are the benefits and drawbacks of having different cultural groups train together?

Appendix E

Community Consultation Letter, Research License Application
and Community Organization Review of Research
Application Form

Address of Community Contact   March 2002

Dear

My name is Deborah Tynes and I am enrolled at the University of Manitoba in the Master of
Social Work Program. I am currently on education leave from the Inuvik Regional Health and
Social Services Board where I am employed. I have worked in the Northwest Territories as a
social worker for over sixteen years and I am writing to request your support in regards to a
Research License Application to conduct: **A foster parent training needs assessment in the
Territory.**

Subject to the approval of the Aurora Research Institute and the University of Manitoba's Ethics
Board the objective of the project is to interview foster parents, social workers, supervisors,
management, the Yellowknife Foster Family Association, and the Department of Health and
Social Services to seek their input into what is required in a foster parent-training program. Once
input has been sought from all relevant stakeholders then recommendations can be made to the
Department of Health and Social Services so they can be more responsive in planning and
designing a standardized training program that has immediate usefulness to all parties.

You will find included in this request are:

1. One copy of the Community Organization Review of Research Application form to be
   completed by a representative of your organization and forwarded to the Aurora Research
   Institute.
2. One copy of the Research License Application, submitted to the Aurora Research
   Institute.

If you require more information, please do not hesitate to contact me ....
                          Your attention to this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Deborah Tynes

Aurora Research Institute
Aurora College

Research Licence Application

Date of Application:

Previous licence and file number (if applicable):

Principal Investigator:

Name: **Affiliation:**

Address: **Telephone:**

                                                   Fax Number:

Postal Code: **E-mail:**

Emergency contact telephone number:

Research supervisor's name (if applicable):

Affiliation: Telephone:

Sources of funding:

Other members of research team:

Title of research project:

Date(s) of data collection in the NWT this year:

May this be a multi-year project? ☐ Yes   ☐ No

(If yes, specify proposed duration)

Note:	Though this application is used for securing a licence under the NWT <u>Scientists Act</u>, it has been expanded to incorporate information required by the screening committee and review bodies formed pursuant to the **Inuvialuit Final Agreement** and the **Gwich'in Land Claim Settlement Act**. Please note that additional information may be required from either of these reviewing agencies.

Base camp location(s):

Location(s) of data collection in the NWT:

Include place names, latitude(s) and longitude(s) and names of nearest communities. We also request that you attach a small-scale map (e.g. 1/250,000) with your general site area(s) marked and a large-scale map (e.g. 1/50,000) with specific site(s) marked. Any maps submitted <u>must</u> display a title, a scale, a drafting date, a north arrow, elevations and, where applicable, bathymetric information. Latitude and longitude or grid reference points should be inserted in the margin. Symbols used on the map must be explained in a key or legend.

Consultation:

1. Have you entered into a dialogue with appropriate communities and agencies?

   ☐Yes ☐No If yes, attach copies of any correspondence.

2. Has this project been approved by an Ethical Review Committee?

   ☐Yes ☐No If yes, attach copy of proposal.

3. Have you applied for other regulatory approval/licences/permits in connection with this project?

   ☐Yes ☐No If yes, attach copies of any correspondence.

4. Has this project received any prior environmental impact screening procedures, reviews or assessments?

   ☐Yes ☐No

If "Yes" to any of the above questions, list below contacts/agencies (with addresses and provide details of current status. If "No", please provide reasons.

Project rationale:
(e.g. include objectives, importance of work, motivation behind work, reasons for the type of data being collected. For scientific licensing purposes less than 200 words are sufficient. For applications that involve land under Aboriginal land claim settlements, a more detailed description may be needed. See guide for more information. Attach additional page(s) if necessary).

Nontechnical summary of proposed NWT activities:
(include such things as transportation and equipment to be used to and on site, description of any new technology to be used, itinerary(s) of research team, method of data collection, sampling sizes and species. Attach additional page(s) if necessary).

Anticipated environmental impacts:
(include impacts of species, people and/or land; species/human vulnerability and numbers affected; camp operations; use of firearms; aircraft or collection equipment. Attach additional page(s) if necessary).

Mitigation on environmental impacts:
(include collection site and camp clean-up, reclamation and/or abandonment plans; storage of confidential information; species or artifact disposal; spill contingencies. Attach additional page(s) if necessary).

Emergency response capabilities:
(include level of training, skill, contingency plan and equipment related to first aid, search and rescue, bear deterrents and survival. Attach additional page(s) if necessary).

Possible opportunities for local involvement in and/or exposure to your work:
(include social, cultural, educational, employment and economic benefits. Attach any additional page(s) if necessary).

From which of the following Research Centres will you be requesting support:

Inuvik Research Centre: ☐Yes ☐No

South Slave Research Centre ☐Yes ☐No

(Note: you are responsible for contacting the Research Centre to discuss support requested.)

_____

Signature of principal investigator

Submit to:
Aurora Research Institute
P.O. Box 1450
Inuvik, NT
X0E 0T0
Phone: **(867) 777-4628**
Fax: **(867) 777-4264**
E-mail: Kathleen_lindhorst@gov.nt.ca

Community Organization
Review of Research Licence Application

To be completed by Researcher

(attach copy of licence application)   Date:_____

The _____
                              (Community organization name)

is requested to review the application of _____
                                                    (Applicants name)

to do the following study in the Northwest Territories:

_____
                              (Title of Project)

To be completed by Community Organization

Our Organization has recommended the following:

☐ Yes, we support the research application.

☐ No, we do not support the research application for the following reasons:

_____

_____

_____

Date:_____

_____   _____
(Name of Organization Official)   (Signature of Organization Official)

Community Organizations, please return completed form to:
Manager, Scientific Services
Aurora Research Institute
P.O. Box 1450
Inuvik, NT
X0E 0T0
Fax: (867) 777-4264

Appendix F

Scientific Research License

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH LICENCE
Licence # 13321N
File # 12 410 587

ISSUED BY: **Aurora Research Institute - Aurora College**
Inuvik, Northwest Territories

ISSUED TO: Ms. Deborah Tynes
University of Manitoba

ON: 16-Jun-02

TEAM MEMBERS: self

AFFILIATION: University of Manitoba

FUNDING: self

TITLE: Foster Parent Training Needs Assessment in the Northwest Territories

OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH:

Foster parents today are dealing with children who have greater emotional and psychological needs. Foster parent training is a critical factor in preparing foster parents with the required skills and knowledge that goes beyond the "traditional basic" parenting. Currently in the Northwest Territories (NWT) there is no standardized, consistent, and structured framework for foster parent training which impacts on the service provided to children in care. The focus of this research project will therefore be on foster parent training in the NWT. The objective of the need assessment on foster parent training is to get input from all relevant stakeholders on what is required in a foster parent training program so recommendations can be made to the Department of Health & Social Services so they can be responsive in planning and designing a standardized training program that has immediate usefulness to all parties. The goal of the project is to interview foster parents, social workers, supervisors, management, the Yellowknife Foster Parent Association and the Department of Health & Social Services to seek their input into what is required in a foster parent training program

DATA COLLECTION IN THE NWT:
DATE(S): June - September, 2002
LOCATION: communities in the North Slave and Inuvik Region (Inuvialuit, Gwich'in & Sahtu Settlement Regions)

Licence# 13321 expires on December 31, 2002.
Issued at the Town of Inuvik on Sunday, June 16, 2002

Valoree Walker, Ph.D.
Science Administration Officer

Appendix G

Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

Foster Parent Training Needs Assessment in the Northwest Territory

Principal Investigator:
Deborah Tynes
Graduate Student, University of Manitoba Faculty of Social Work

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Purpose:
The goal of the project is to interview foster parents, social workers, supervisors, management, the Yellowknife Foster Family Association, and the Department of Health and Social Services to seek their input into what is required in a foster parent-training program. Once input has been sought from all relevant stakeholders then recommendations can be made to the Department of Health and Social Services so they can be responsive in planning and designing a training program that has immediate usefulness to all parties.
This research will be used toward the completion of a major paper required for Deborah Tynes's graduation from the University of Manitoba Master of Social Work program.

Study Procedure:
You have been selected to contribute in this study due to your experience, understanding, and knowledge of the foster care system in the Northwest Territories. A pre-assessment interview will be done with key informants to understand the major needs and or issues pertaining to foster parent training. Then twenty participants consisting of foster parents, social workers, supervisors, management, and the Department of Health and Social Services will be involved in confidential in person tape-recorded sessions that will be approximately one and a half hours in duration. A voluntary follow-up telephone interview will occur one week later and will be approximately ten to twenty minutes long. This interview allows participants the opportunity to evaluate the process of the needs assessment and discuss any issues that may arise from the research process. Participants will have the option of receiving a copy of the final report if desired.

Confidentiality:
Any information resulting from this research study will be kept strictly confidential; however, the researcher is required to report to the proper authorities in the case of issues related to child abuse. An outsider transcriber will be used to transcribe the data. The transcriber will have access to the audiotapes solely for the purpose of typing the

interviews. Individual and community names will be changed to pseudonyms at the time of transcribing. In the final document or any reports of the completed study participants and their community will not be identified by name. All documents will be identified by code numbers and kept in a locked strong box. Any data kept on computer hard disk will be password protected. One year after the completion of the final report, shredding of paper, deleting of any computer files, and erasing all audiotapes will destroy all raw data. There may be a remote possibility that people may determine who you are due to the population size of the Territory and the small number of participants in the study.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at anytime, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Principal Researcher: Deborah Tynes
Advisor: Dr. Harvy Frankel at 1-204-474-8378 or email at Frankel@ms.umanitoba.ca.

The Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board has approved this research. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 1-204-474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

I have received a copy of the consent form for my own records.

I consent to participate in this study.

Signature of Participants   **Date**

Signature of Researcher   **Date**

Appendix H

Approval Certificate from the JRFEB

UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

OFFICE OF
RESEARCH SERVICES

APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

10 June 2002

TO: **Deborah Tynes**   (Advisor H. Frankel)
              Principal Investigator

FROM: **Wayne Taylor, Chair**
              Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB)

Re: **Protocol #J2002:057**
              "Foster Parent Training Needs Assessment in the Northwest
              Territory"

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol has received human ethics approval by the **Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board**, which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement. This approval is valid for one year only.

Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.

Appendix I

Script of Initial Telephone Contact

Script of Initial Telephone Contact

- Hello my name is _____. Do you have ten minutes that I can talk with you regarding some research that is being done in the Territory on foster parent training?

- I am contacting you to see if you are willing to participate in research that is being conducted by Deborah Tynes who is enrolled at the University of Manitoba in the Masters of Social Work Program.

- I am not sure if you know Deborah? She has worked in the Northwest Territories as a social worker for over sixteen years and is employed with the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Board as the Director of Health and Social Programs.

- As a (use applicable title; foster parent, social worker, supervisor, manager) you are aware that currently in the Territory we lack a standardized, consistent, and structured framework for foster parent training which impacts on the quality of service provided to children in care.

- Deborah is conducting a needs assessment with foster parents, social workers, supervisors, and management on what is required in a foster parent- training program. She will be seeking information regarding foster parent training content, format, delivery mode, trainers, and site and scheduling of training. She will be doing face-to-face interviews that will approximately one and half-hours in duration. With your permission she is hoping to audio tape the interviews.

- It would be too costly to ask the opinions of every stakeholder in the Northwest Territory, so Deborah is focusing her research on the North Slave and Inuvik regions. She has drawn the names of a small number of stakeholders at random from a Departmental list and your name was drawn.

- Deborah knows the importance of confidentiality and has taken several steps to ensure the information obtained in the research study will be kept strictly confidential.

- Deborah and an outside transcriber will be the only people to see your responses. The transcriber will have access to the audiotapes solely for the purpose of typing the interviews. Individual and community names will be changed to pseudonyms at the time of transcribing so your identity will be protected.

- She will also ensure that any data kept on her computer hard disk will be password protected. In the final document participants and their community will not be identified by name.

- The result of your responses and the responses of other who participate in this research study will be developed into recommendations that will be forwarded to the Department of Health and Social Services in October. This will help them be responsive in planning and designing a foster training program.

- If you decide to participate in this research study you have the option of receiving a copy of the final report if desired.

- Do you have any questions regarding the research? Are you interested in participating? If so, I will forward your name and phone number to Deborah Tynes who will contact you with further details regarding the study.

- If you require more time to consider the matter I could contact you again tomorrow at the same time?

- Thank you for taking the time to talk with me it is most appreciated.