



BC CHILD & YOUTH IN CARE WEEK

Celebration Guidelines

Fifteen youth in and from care from communities across BC created these ideas and guidelines in consultation with more than 50 Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks youth members. They hope their ideas and accompanying BCCYICW Promo Kit will support every community in BC to host a fun, child and youth-friendly event. **Overwhelmingly, young people reported that not having a celebration to go to in their community was very discouraging and that even a very simple celebration would be awesome!** Youth in care first advocated for the week so their peers could feel celebrated for their diversity and accomplishments, connect with others from care and allies to build their community, raise awareness about the challenges they face, and fight the stigma that comes with being a “foster kid.”

Learn more about the week on the new BCCYICW website: www.bccchildandouthincareweek.com where you will find:

- BCCYICW history
- The BCCYICW Promo Kit (containing customizable posters, flyers to print, or order a full kit from BCCYICW organizers!)
- The nomination package for the BCCYICW Child & Youth Awards
- The youth-made BCCYICW “Youth in Care Are Awesome” video
- How to connect and promote the week on social media

Once you’ve planned your event, send us the details so we can share and promote it to children, youth and their families and allies: TMatovich@Trustee.bc.ca

Guidelines & Ideas!


1. Do something! Start Small! It can be intimidating to think about hosting an amazing event—but start small! A memorable event can happen in a park with a BBQ or potluck and cake and face painting, games or a talent show. You can aim for the stars next year.

2. Child & Youth Engagement: Having children and youth be part of brainstorming, planning and promoting local and provincial events will ensure:

- Young people are invested in the activities and will be more likely to attend and bring their community to events
- Events are accessible, meaningful, respectful and fun for young people

3. Venue:

- Somewhere familiar, where youth and families with children in care can get to easily with transit (if applicable in your town) and free parking like a park or community centre

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- A fun, casual, celebratory vibe that's not stuffy
 - Green space to play outside if possible since it's in June
 - Host events in afternoon and evening so there's a range of time that people can go to balance with school, work and bedtime schedules (between 3 and 6)
 - A venue that can be flexible on numbers (like outdoor spaces) so children and youth can bring their friends and important people, and community members can come as allies who "stand with children and youth in care"

4. Food: Emphasis here on fun, healthy, casual, hand-held and familiar food, including:

- For smaller events, a casual family feel: BBQs, picnics and potlucks. Youth have mentioned how sometimes they get tired of sandwich platters and pizza. Home-cooked food is less common for them, but anything is a start!
- For larger gatherings: hand-held food like mini pizzas, roll-ups, sandwiches, hummus, cheese/meat plates, guacamole/salsa and chips, bannock and hot dogs, fruit kabobs and vegetable kabobs, chocolate fountain, cakes, cupcakes, chips, veggies and dip, sunday bar, a candy bar. Youth appreciate a mix of healthy and comfort foods that are portable
- Many companies will consider donating food, especially if they're acknowledged as a sponsor—just ask!

5. Activities: Getting young people involved on this is key. Ideas include:

- Present BCCYICW Child & Youth Awards to any recipients in your community (find out more: www.bcchildandyouthincareweek.com)
- Limit adult talking and speech-length!
- Structured and unstructured time
- Hosting or co-hosting/emceeing by young people
- Performances by children and youth in care, including bands or individual performers
- A talent show featuring children and youth in care (with singing, rapping or instrumental performances, poetry, beat poetry, magic, comedy, etc.)—this has gone over really well at other celebrations
- A youth DJ
- A portable or permanent mural (on a white sheet or wall) for everyone to share what BCCYICW means to them and update each year
- Welcome and opening prayer from a local Elder
- Indigenous musicians and performers like dancers, musicians, drummers,
- Speeches from youth in and from care, or adults from care, who share their success stories (again, less talking from adult allies)
- Interactive booths from local community organizations
- Flash mobs
- Physical activities like bowling, frisbee, piñata, softball, soccer, swimming, dancing, roller-skating, etc. Youth love playing against their foster parents and workers!

- Games and energizers
- Face paint
- Crafts and other activities for kids in a special area (you can use the BCCYICW colouring sheets in the promo kit) or for all ages like traditional beading
- A photo booth (with posters and signs with hashtags on the wall) that people can take selfies with—even better if you have funny props and costumes
- Outdoor space
- Prizes—many companies will consider donating prizes especially if they're acknowledged as a sponsor. Just ask!

6. Promotion: Effective, youth/family-friendly promotion of events should be both locally and provincially promoted, and should also be promoted using social media as that's where to best reach young people. In addition to promoting in your community, all event listings should be listed in one place. The BCCYICW planning committee (representatives from MCFD and partner agencies) host a BCCYICW website and Facebook page and will post all events there—send your events to Tracey Matovich at TMatovich@Trustee.bc.ca. Promo ideas include:

- Share your event with the provincial planners: TMatovich@Trustee.bc.ca
- Small, easily photocopied and distributed flyers and posters. Find them ready to go in the Promo Kit—you just need to write in the details of your event and photocopy! Hand them out to youth, children, foster parents, and allies; post them on community boards and distribute to partner agencies and schools.
- Order a Promo Kit of 2 posters and 25 stickers, bracelets and buttons: stephanie.thompson@fbcyicn.ca –while quantities last! For larger orders, use the templates provided in the promo kit for stickers and posters!
- Place local and provincial event listings (online and print, like in your community paper)
- Local radio and TV and print ads. Media outlets will sponsor an ad, especially if they're acknowledged as a sponsor!
- Put a blurb about it in your e-news (if you work at an organization that has one) or forward info out using your email contacts lists
- Mass texting to youth and allies to remind people
- Use hashtags on all social media: #BCCYICW #youthincareareawesome #standwithyouthincare #jointhevillage
- Using your own Facebook and Twitter profile to promote the week (status updates, tweets, changing your profile or cover photo to the BCCYICW badges from the promo kit, sharing photos and events)
- See suggested posts and tweets below!

7. Suggested Tweets & Facebook Statuses: BCCYICW was proclaimed June 3-9 this year; however, the committee has extended the week to June 1-9 in order for more celebrations to take place and to give more young people additional opportunities to attend events near them!

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- Proud to #standwithyouthincare this week and every week! #youthincareareawesome #BCCYICW
 - Find BC Child and Youth in Care Week events, promo kit, awards, tips, videos, social media action and more: www.bcchildandyouthincareweek.com #BCCYICW
 - It takes a village to raise our young people so #jointhevillage! #StandWithYouthInCare June 3-9 for #BCCYICW, and every week, too.
 - Celebrate BC's amazing, diverse, resilient kids & youth in care June 1-9 for #BCCYICW and every week #youthincareareawesome #notyourstereotype
 - #BCCYICW Video: Some of the many ways #youthincareareawesome: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xe1bEEsrHng> #standwithyouthincare #notyourstereotype
 - I challenge you to #jointhevillage & #standwithyouthincare Celebrate BC Child & Youth in Care Week June 1-9! #BCCYICW #youthincareareawesome

Big thanks to the community partners supporting the week and planning like maniacs: the Representative for Children and Youth, the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Public Guardian and Trustee, First Call, and the Federation of Community Social Services of BC!