



BCPIC Society

Parenting is the most important and challenging job that most adults undertake. Few parents, even in the best circumstances, do not feel frustrated at times by the demands of raising children. But when parents are isolated, involved in difficult relationships, experiencing financial stress, or lacking information on child development and child-rearing techniques, they can lose control.

Informed, effective child rearing builds strong communities by producing young people who work hard to create positive lives for themselves and those around them. Uninformed, ineffective child rearing jeopardizes the well-being of whole communities.

BC Parents in Crisis is a non-profit, volunteer-based society and registered charity founded in 1974. Its mandate is preventing child abuse by promoting healthy parent-child relationships. Its method is providing support and information to parents. Its goal is building healthy communities, one family at a time.

BCPIC's programs include:

- **Parent Support Circles** This 25-year-old, province-wide network of 50 self-help groups provides parents with a safe environment in which to talk about their stress, receive support, and nurture parenting skills. (See Fact Sheet #2: Parent Support Circles.)
- **Aboriginal Parent Support Circles** This new and separate province-wide network will co-operate with the Aboriginal community to provide a safe, supportive environment for parents and children.
- **All Our Children** This three-hour community workshop, and condensed one-hour version for corporate/business employees, encourages and prepares participants to deal with child abuse in a supportive and informed manner when they see it in the community. (See Fact Sheet #3: All Our Children Primary Prevention Workshops.)

Over 25 years, BCPIC has learned that:

- parents do not want to hurt their children.
- behaviour change is a long-term process.
- many parents do not know that discipline and punishment are two different things.
- laws and governments, alone, do not protect children.

- more money is not a solution but not enough money is a problem.
- available services are often inaccessible to those who need them most.

As a volunteer-driven organization, BCPIC provides hundreds of people annually with:

- recognized volunteer experience to include in applications for education programs.
- reputable references for family service employment opportunities.
- opportunities for personal growth in their own roles as parents, spouses, and friends.

Volunteer opportunities include:

- provincial board of directors.
- local steering committees.
- facilitation of Parent Support Circles.

Funding for BCPIC:

- comes from the Ministry for Children and Families, eight United Ways, public gaming, memberships, foundation grants, and private donations.
- covers administrative costs, Circle expenses, professional training for volunteers, and transportation/child-care subsidies for participants.

Membership in BCPIC:

- costs \$20 for individuals, \$35 for agencies, and \$5 for active volunteers.
- includes a newsletter subscription, voting privileges at the AGM, and eligibility to nominate candidates for the annual Bill McFarland Award for community work in the area of child abuse prevention.

CONTACT BCPIC 201 1155 West Pender Street, Vancouver BC V6E 2P4

TEL (604) 669-1616 • **FAX** (604) 669-1636 • **TOLL-FREE** 1 800 665-6880 • **EMAIL** bcpic@portal.ca

BCPIC is a registered charity, #18818806RR0001. Membership fees and donations are tax-deductible. Receipts are issued for tax purposes.



Parent Support Circles



Anyone can become a parent, but positive parenting has to be learned.

The good news is that it can be learned and practiced by anyone, male or female, young or old, parents, aunts and uncles, friends and neighbours.

What is positive parenting? It's learning what distinguishes punishment from discipline; knowing that children's rights don't undermine parental rights; valuing children for what they are instead of what we think they should be; and raising children who are healthy in every sense.

Parent Support Circles help parents learn positive parenting by providing them with a safe atmosphere in which to vent their stress, learn new skills, and receive emotional support. They strengthen the first link in a chain that connects positive parenting with healthy children, and helps healthy families build strong communities.

Parent Support Circles:

- are anonymous, confidential, self-help groups for parents of children age 12 and younger.
- offer weekly, two-hour meetings, each facilitated by two trained volunteers.
- feature ongoing entry, no waiting lists, and between-meeting support from facilitators and co-participants.
- provide opportunities for parents to share concerns and support with each other, and learn parenting and life skills.
- connect participants with education and employment resources.
- serve over 900 families per year – 20,000 families in the past 25 years.
- have more than doubled in recent years with no comparable increase in funding.
- are inexpensive and effective – yet volunteers and staff report that the constant need to raise funds steals energy from the parent support work that is clearly needed in BC.

Parents join to:

- learn effective, non-abusive ways to discipline their children.
- understand themselves and their children better.
- build and learn to express positive feelings about themselves.
- improve their relationships with other people.
- handle stress, especially as it affects their parenting.
- learn Canadian laws that pertain to raising children.

- overcome feelings of isolation and loneliness in dealing with life in general and their children in particular. (This was especially important to single parents and parents new to BC or Canada.)

Surveys show that parents feel Circles enable them to:

- understand themselves and their children better.
- learn effective, non-abusive disciplinary techniques.
- improve their relationships with their children and others.
- handle stress, especially as it affects their parenting.

About PSC Participants:

- 88% are women, 60% are single parents, and 81% have children between six and 12 years old.
- 50% have some post-secondary education.
- 56% report contact with the Ministry of Children and Families and 25% say that one or more of their children has been in government care at some time.
- 68% receive some form of social assistance and 79% live in poverty.
- Up to 36% are members of visible minorities.
- Most attend circles three times monthly for an average of 18 months.

BC Parents in Crisis Society:

- runs about 50 Parent Support Circles in communities around BC, guided by 24 local Steering Committees comprised of professionals and concerned community members.
- offers separate Circles to serve Latino, Filipino, Chinese, Hindi/Punjabi, Aboriginal, and Young-Parent communities.
- recruits and trains more than 50 volunteers annually as Circle facilitators, and another 100 to serve on Steering Committees.
- utilizes more than 300 volunteers throughout BC, who give 23,000 hours annually to BCPIC.
- is launching a new network of Aboriginal Support Circles as well as a series of primary prevention workshops called All Our Children. (See Fact Sheet #1: BCPIC Society and Fact Sheet #3: All Our Children Primary Prevention Workshop.)

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