Way back in 1958, Harry Harlow conducted an experiment with monkeys. The goal of the study was to see how baby monkeys responded to a life without a mother. The baby monkeys were removed from their mother at birth and put in a cage with two options for a new mother. One mother was totally made out of wire and a bottle was attached to feed the baby, while the other mother was made from sponge and soft cloth but did not have a bottle. Harlow found the monkeys spent more time with the cloth mother even though the wire mother provided food!

So what? Well the monkey study helped explain some things about human behaviour: having a person to connect with or attach to is important for babies to grow up to be physically and emotionally healthy. Although these studies were a long time ago, it’s now widely accepted that in order for children to develop appropriately in the areas of social and emotional health, they need an adult in their lives they can depend on to be consistently available to support them, especially in times of stress.

It’s little surprise that researchers agree that youth who have experienced abuse or neglect as kids, “are generally resilient and can lead productive and fulfilling lives”\(^1\) This means that even if you’ve gone through some pretty scary and intense stuff in your life you have the strength within you to do great and awesome things in your life. It also helps to have an adult or friend in your life that will encourage you. Look around you and find someone that will believe in you and help you dream big. “Humans by nature are resilient, for we are descendants of survivors. Even children exposed to great trauma can turn their lives around, if they can develop certain inner strengths and rely on supports from caring persons in their lives.”\(^2\)


The Child and Family Services Act (CFSA) includes as a guiding principle the idea that children have the right to “a continuous family environment in which they can flourish.” The best interests of the child is defined by The CFSA to include “the child’s opportunity to have a parent-child relationship as a wanted and needed member within a family structure.” This is similar to Article 9 in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which says that...

You have the right to live with your parents unless it is not in your best interest and you have the right to maintain contact with both parents if separated from one or both.

There are lots of reasons why parents may not be able to provide the care and protection their children need. And sometimes it’s really not safe for kids to live at home with their parents. If you can’t live at home with your parents you have the right to stay in contact with them. Keeping in contact will look different depending on your family’s situation. If you’re concerned that you haven’t been able to see your parents, talk to your social worker OR you can drop us a line at (204) 988-7440.

"I am taking control over my life, rather than allowing drugs and alcohol to control me.”

Quote from a youth in care

"...keep your head held high don’t be afraid to cry ..."

Excerpt from a poem by a youth in care

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international agreement between many countries around the world. The UNCRC has been in place since 1989, and gives children and youth all over the world more than 40 major human rights.

A tiny acorn carries coded instructions for becoming a mighty oak. All children are endowed with the seed for some unique genius.

What’s the genius hiding inside you?

Excerpt from a poem by a youth in care

Artwork by a youth in care