

Supporting children, teens and families through major life transitions—your go-to hub for resources and programs.

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A Message From Your Program Director

As 2012 draws to a close and our focus turns to the hustle and bustle of the season, I would like to extend to all of you – on behalf of everyone here at Starfish– my best wishes for the holidays. We thank you all for your dedication to families coping with challenging and often painful transitions.

We are delighted to report over 1100 children and 100 adults participated in RAINBOWS programs at some 50 Sites during the 2011/2012 school year.

We wish to extend a warm welcome to two new RAINBOWS Sites this fall, Fort Saskatchewan Elementary School, and Bowden FCSS. The Bowden Community not only sponsored the training of 7 Facilitators for their new Site, but also hosted our yearly Central Alberta RAINBOWS workshop.

The Fort Saskatchewan Elementary School Rainbows Site was the second one recently established by their new principal Sandra Sorochan; she had also set up the program at her previous posting, James Mowat Elementary School, also located in the Fort.

Grateful for their contributions, we said goodbye to some Board members in 2012; at the same time, we are delighted to welcome our newest Directors this fall, Mary-Lou Leins and Alex Ragan. Our marketing committee is working hard on plans to increase awareness about both Starfish and RAINBOWS.

Finally, as always, we ask you to share your stories, ideas and favourite activities from your tool-kit with our RAINBOWS family. Your diverse knowledge will add to our collective wisdom!

Our Starfish Board members and I wish you a Happy and healthy 2013

Victor Dorian



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Quick Tips ~ For Parents

- * If you are plagued by divorce guilt, shame or remorse, let it go. We are all human and we all make mistakes . It's not one single action but an intricate dance that no longer worked that led to the end.
- * Your children do not come from a "broken" home. Nothing is broken, only remodeled. Things will seem strange for a while but not only can you adjust to Change, you Can grow through this experience and become stronger.
- * You did not let down your family or friends. Your decision to end things can guide you to restoring your integrity and connecting with your inner wisdom.





Are Your Emotions Controlling The Way You Parent

Barb Hepperle

Feelings of guilt, shame or remorse about your divorce are not unusual but they can really hit hard when you have children. You may feel like a failure or a quitter; that maybe you could have done things differently. You feel guilty your children now come from a "broken" home; for yelling at them more because you're overwhelmed; for all the pain you cause. You feel regret when the outcome is worse than you imagined it would be.

The mixed bag of painful emotions is bound to surface to some extent as you navigate through the divorce process. Not only will these emotions impact how effectively you are able to negotiate your divorce, they can negatively influence your parenting.

It's easy to fall into the "Disneyland Parent" trap in an attempt to make up for not seeing your kids often enough. Their all too short time with you is jam-packed into a non-stop entertainment extravaganza to

ensure your child's love and affection so that they will look forward to your time together.

But kids are smart and they start to wonder whether you are trying to bribe them or buy their love.

Being the "fun" parent does not provide the structure; the boundaries and rules that children need to feel safe. And secure. What they need and will remember is the day-to-day living stuff of tucking them into bed at night, showing up for school activities, reassuring them when they feel hurt or upset.

Parenting by guilt is not healthy for you or your children. They need your reliability, your love and support.

Set aside your own needs and painful emotions. Try to see things through your child's eyes. If you place your child in the position of feeling pulled between you, it will backfire down the road and turn into resentment.

And when you stop and think about it, there are some advantages to single parenthood. Children benefit from the quality time spent with a parent who previously seemed too busy or was seldom around. And many parents I have spoken with indicate that they actually feel closer to their children.

Not having the children 100% of the time and sharing the parenting responsibilities gives single parents much needed downtime to replenish their own emotion, spiritual and physical resources.

Barb is a Divorce Coach who helps parents and individuals navigate through emotional divorce. She can be contacted at CoachBarb@shaw.ca 780.436.9541



Did you know?

Did you know that how children adapt to change depends to a large extent on both their age and their temperament? Temperament is hard-wired into each of us from birth and determines how we think, feel and act in response to different situations. It plays a significant role in our natural resiliency. Temperament traits fall into 3 general categories of "flexible, fearful or feisty".

How well do you know your child? Is your child **active**, always moving or keeping busy? Is your child **regular** or unpredictable? Does your child **approach** or move away from new situations and people? Is your child **adaptable** or resist changes in routine? What is your child's **intensity** level in response to new situations? Is your child's **mood** easy going or more fussy? Does your child show **persistence** when a problem arises or get frustrated easily? Is your child easily distracted or **focused**? What is your child's **sensitivity** to physical sensations?

Understanding your child's 9 temperament traits will help you to better meet their needs during time of stress and major life change.



Lillian Osborne High School

Edmonton



It takes special efforts to establish the teen Spectrum program, however once it becomes part of a school's culture, the benefits are tremendous. Our thanks goes to the commitment of the amazing staff at Lillian Osborne High School to provide support for students who have experienced grief and loss.

What students said about Rainbows:

"A safe, confidential place to share your troubles with others who understand where you're coming from and can offer tremendous support and guidance."

"An outlet where I can seek or give out support or hope. It gives me a calming sense and also a chance to talk about anything that's bothering me. Without Rainbows, things would probably be a lot harder for me."

"A rainbow is a beautiful phenomenon that occurs after a storm. The rainbows group is a place to come after a hard time in your life., to be yourself, and to get it all off your chest and to relax. You don't have to worry and we are all a family through the good and the bad times."

"A secure place where I feel welcomed and loved., where

I can go to think and collect my emotions; where I feel no fear of judgment because the people in the group have been through what I have been through. This really helped me through my stages of grief. This group is my rock., my security., my family. Everyone is so compassionate and empathetic. We are all connecting with each other and creating relationships we emotionally benefit from."

Quotes from teachers:

"Our Rainbows group is a great venue for our students to express and work through difficult moments and experiences. Students feel safe and welcome and support one another. They appreciate that all that is shared is kept confidential."

"Sometimes I'm not sure who benefits more from the supportive, caring environment that Rainbows provides, the students or the teachers. In many ways we all come to the table as equals. We have all experienced grief or loss in some way or another and we are all able to share and relate to each other on a way that transcends a typical teacher-student relationship."

COMMUNITY RAINBOWS

Alberta Parenting for the Future, Stony Plain
tel 780-910-5845

YWCA Edmonton, 10350 124 St, tel 780-423-9922
Ext 222; 10 weeks, Monday evening sessions. Next session will tentatively start January 28, 2013.

MWFRC (Millwoods Family Resource Centre)
1733 Millwoods Road, tel 780-413-4521; 10 weeks
Tuesday evening sessions. Next session will start
January 22, 2013; registrations commence on Janu-
ary 7.

Kids on Track 15671 96 Ave, tel 780 481-2942; 7
weeks, Wednesday evening sessions, 1.5 hours each
– next one will start February 6, 2013.

North Pointe Community Church 14025 167
Ave, tel 780-452-5566; 13 weeks Tuesday evening
sessions. Next session will start in September
2013.

Leduc FCSS, Nisku and region
tel 780-955-6421

Boys & Girls Club, Fort Saskatchewan
tel 780-992-0103

Leduc Rainbows
tel 780-980-8429





SFR is a non-profit, registered charitable organization that is dedicated to helping children, adolescents and adults in understanding, accepting, healing and moving forward after a loss due to death, divorce, separation, abandonment or other painful family transition.

www.starfishfamilyresources.org



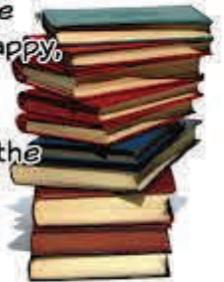
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Life is like a book. Some chapters sad, some happy, and some exciting.

But if you never turn the page, you will never know what the next chapter holds.



www.dailyinspirationalquotes.in

*If you would like to contribute to our Newsletter or offer a topic for discussion or have a suggestion for something you would like to see included, please contact Victor Dorian or Barb Hepperle. Barb can be reached at: CocahBarb@shaw.ca
www.edmontondivorcesolutions.com*



NOVEMBER TELE-CONFERENCE

We held another very rewarding teleconference for Rainbows Coordinators on November 19, allowing sharing of useful ideas about the successes and challenges we all face. Participants included our Central Alberta Rainbows Registered Director, Melody Knutson, as well as Coordinators from Fort Chipewyan, Hinton, Stettler and High Prairie.

Two special guests joined us: Marlen Walker, a Registered Psychologist with our YWCA Edmonton partner, and Nancy Newton, our RAINBOWS National Director from Barrie, Ontario.

Marlen talked about her agency's orientation/intake process for parents who have children in the RAINBOWS program while Nancy shared valuable resources and news with us.

There was unanimous agreement that the effectiveness of RAINBOWS increases considerably when parents are engaged as much as possible. This becomes particularly important for the school sites where it is not practicable or possible to provide Prism for the single parent.

Providing parents with an information package is an effective tool for encouraging parental engagement. This package can include a list of **Rainbows topics** (provided at Facilitator training) and reading material such as the **Compassionate Companion** (\$5 from Rainbows) and **"What Happens Next - Information for kids about separation and divorce"** Department of Justice, <http://canada.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/fcy-fea/lib-bib/pub/book-livre/index.html>

Other useful links given:

- **CareNotes for Kids** at www.onecaringplace.com
- **Families Change** Resources for children, teens and parents at www.familieschange.ca
- **The "What Happens Next" Calendar** for kids www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/fcy-fea/lib-bib/pub/cal/2013/index.html
- **"Because Life Goes On... Helping Children and Youth Live With Separation and Divorce"** www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/mh-sm/divorce/index-eng.php

A big thank you to all of our participants for sharing your wisdom, tips and strategies. You make a difference.