

## **Making good choices to be a good parent**

Being young, having FASD and wanting to parent makes for a challenging combination. Jane was sixteen and flagged at the hospital as unable to parent. Both Jane and her partner had FASD. Children's Services asked Connections to work with Jane to see if she could parent successfully.

Jane appeared to be both withdrawn and closed off. But this is a common experience for Connections. After all, this is a new mom who has already had government agencies intervene in her life, coming to her home and evaluating her deficits.

But when a Connections' Team member sat down with Jane and asked her what Jane's goals were, the interaction changed. Jane immediately listed the goals other people told her she needed to have. Connections' Team member said, 'No. I'm not asking about other people's goals.' Jane admitted she'd never been asked about her goals before.

**Jane was adamant: she wanted to be a good parent to her daughter and she began to open up and work with Connections to develop her skills.**

But there was a difficult decision ahead. Children's Services insisted that keeping her daughter depended on Jane ending the relationship with her partner.

For many of the parents Connections works with, this is a difficult point. The pull of a romantic relationship is a strong one and since most parents we support have lived with past abuse, they can be especially vulnerable to unhealthy relationships.

A credit to Jane's character and dedication to parenting, she made her decision. She found a place to live for herself and her daughter.

Children's Services has closed the intervention file and Jane has been reunited with her daughter. Important for Jane and her daughter's future, Jane understands the value of having supports and knows how to ask for help when she needs it. Jane is parenting independently but maintains a relationship with Connections by attending group and family events. With this link to supports, Jane can reach out when needed.

Jane's resilience was further strengthened at a Connections Calgary Zoo outing when Jane made friends with another Connections mom. Now both families have added to their family routines and support