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MEDIA RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(April 25, 2012 - St. John's) The Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association is commending the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador for their ongoing commitment to enhancing the foster care program in the province.

Recent budget announcements included a commitment to a new long-term continuum of care strategy, which will include more funding for kinship arrangements and foster homes, more support and training for foster parents, streamlined processes that will ease the administrative burden foster parents face, and a new framework for staffed residential facilities that will eliminate the need for the current alternative living arrangements for children and youth. With an initial budget this year of \$4.1 million rising to \$14.3 million next year, this is a significant step in addressing some of the current gaps in service for children and youth.

Executive Director, Diane Molloy, indicates "This is a good news story for the foster care program and an excellent example of what can be achieved when stakeholders work together in the best interests of children and families. She adds, "The need for additional supports and services has long been identified by our foster families and it is so good to see that their voices have been heard and a response has been received." In addition to the Continuum of Care Strategy, the Association is also pleased to see the investment of \$2.4 million this year to hire an additional 29 frontline staff.

Ruby Ellsworth, Chair of the Provincial Association says, "The creation of the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services in 2009 laid the foundation for the building of a more effective foster care program. We will continue to work in partnership with the Department as this new strategy unfolds." She further adds, "We recognize that it will take time for everything to fall into place, but we are very glad to hear this great news."

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The Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association has a mandate:

To speak as a collective voice for foster families

To advance and promote the professional role of foster parents

To advance and promote collaborative partnerships that strengthen policies, programs and services which enhance the care and support provided to children in care and their families in a manner that is sensitive to their diversity and individual needs.