

Decision reversal unlikely

Must be solid reason to move child: CCAS

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"There are so many people who think this is wrong," said Ms Fergus.

"Someone has to be able to tell these people they've made a mistake."

But solid reasons are behind any decision to move a child, said Ms McConville.

"I'm not saying a decision has never been reversed. That would be silly," she said.

"But it's unlikely a decision would be reversed unless some compelling reason could be presented."

But if neither Ms Fergus nor the birth mother have seen the child since she was removed, it's not for lack of trying.

"I love her. I care for her. I just want to see that she's okay so I can carry on here," said the birth mother.

"Finally after pleading with them and crying on the phone every day, they've let me have a visit with them in the home at the end of the year."

Visits supervised

But for the first time, CCAS has insisted that the visit be supervised, she said.

The particulars of the case determine if visits are to be supervised or not, said Ms McConville.

The Christmas wish of the birth mother is that her child be with Ms Fergus over the holidays.

"She knows Sharron as her family," she said.

"She needs to be there."

"I'm not saying a decision has never been reversed. That would be silly. But it's unlikely a decision would be reversed unless some compelling reason could be presented."

MARY MCCONVILLE

That is also the desire of Ms Fergus, who hasn't paused in her battle to get her foster child back.

Just recently, she contacted the Ministry of Community and Social Services, which has promised to look into the case.

"I hope you don't think that after eight-and-a-half years I'm just going to walk out and say 'Oh, well,'" she recalled telling the CCAS.

"There will be a hearing if I have to stand on their roof top."

Fergus insists

And that, she insisted, is in the best interests of the child.

"I can't fathom what she's going through now," said Ms Fergus.

"She didn't even like to sleep over at her older sister's house. She likes to be in her own bed."



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

A star is born

Safe and Sound Childrens' Centre's Edwina Doddington (left) presents a wooden Christmas tree to Hania Ornstein of the Milton District Hospital Foundation. The tree decorated with teddy bear angels recognizes every baby born at the hospital on Christmas Day tomorrow and for the next 10 years. Each bear will be monogrammed with the baby's name.

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