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Parents and caregivers please  
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with your workers.

# Family and Children's Services

## Children's Developmental Services

All our newsletters are available for viewing on our website. Visit  
[www.facsrr.ca](http://www.facsrr.ca) and click on developmental newsletter

## Auditory Processing

Hearing problems include a number of disorders that involve the outer, middle, and inner ear and the neural pathway to the brain. When a child has difficulty understanding the signals that his ears send to his brain, this difficulty is called an auditory processing disorder. This disorder is sometimes misdiagnosed as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Although these disorders share the symptoms of a short attention span, auditory processing disorders don't respond to the medications that often help a child with ADHD. Children suffering from auditory processing disorders are frequently described as "not listening," "unable to follow direction," or "unable to learn from information they hear."

Symptoms include the following:

- Frequently asks a speaker to repeat what's been said.
- Has trouble understanding requests, especially if there's background noise.
- Has difficulty with longer directions involving several steps.
- May understand the words he's heard, but mixes up the order and gets the information confused.
- Seems to have selective hearing, or listens only to topics that interest him.
- Seems to understand the last part of a verbal message, but doesn't remember the first part.
- Frequently fails to respond to someone's comments, or provides a peculiar response.
- Has difficulty repeating the words or numbers in a sequence.
- Frequently repeats what he's been told, but doesn't seem to comprehend the message.
- Has problems with sound awareness and reading.

If your child shows one or more of these symptoms, talk to your doctor about scheduling a screening to rule out a hearing problem. If hearing isn't the problem, get a referral to a speech-language pathologist to determine if your child has an auditory processing problem (as opposed to a different type of learning disorder.) An auditory processing problem can be serious. It may require a team of professionals to make an accurate assessment and determine an appropriate treatment.

In the meantime, here are a few things you can do to ease your child's frustration and help improve communication.

- Get your child's full attention before speaking to him.
- Limit background noise when talking to your child.
- Talk to your child only when he's in the same room.
- Make eye contact when talking to your child.
- Talk slowly and keep your sentences short.
- Ask your child to repeat your instructions to make sure he's understood them.
- Encourage your child to ask for clarification if he's confused about something you've said.
- Praise your child for being a good listener.



# Fun for the Under 3

Submitted by  
Brenda Witherspoon-Bedard



Here are some activities for your little one:

Birth to 12 Months:

**Making Memory Blocks** – Cover the top and bottom of a small box with photos or pictures cut from magazines. You can also use different types and colors of fabrics or papers. Show your baby each side of the box that you have decorated: “Look, there is a picture of you and Nana. And on this side there is shiny foil.” Let your baby explore the box in whatever ways she likes. Change the pictures every once in a while to keep this toy “fresh” and interesting for her.

12 to 24 Months:

**Open and Shut Case** – Find a small box (shoebox sized) and let your child decorate it with pictures cut from magazines and color it with crayons. Give your child items such as cotton balls, unmatched socks, or clothespins, and have him fill the box. Then let him dump them out and start over. Young toddlers love to collect items and then fill-and-dump. As your child puts items in the box, count out loud—over time, this helps your toddler learn about numbers and counting.



24 to 36 Months:

**Building Boxes** – Collect 5–10 empty cereal boxes, oatmeal canisters, shoeboxes, and other cardboard containers. Tape them shut and let your toddler stack them up to make big towers and other creations. Sit down on the floor with your child as she builds and talk with her about what she is doing. What is she making? Does she want your help? Does she need some assistance figuring out how to get her tower to stand up? Use this time as a chance to get to know how your child is growing, thinking, and learning in new ways.



# Sensory Integration Disorder and Social Skills



## HOW CAN PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH SENSORY INTEGRATION DISORDER HELP THEIR CHILDREN WITH SOCIAL SKILLS?

The first thing a parent can do for a child with sensory integration disorder and social skills issues is to acquire sensory smarts. Life is a sensory event, and there will often be times when the sensory input we take for granted will greatly affect their child's social skills and social behavior. Respect your child's sensory integration needs and teach him how he can meet his sensory needs in a acceptable, safe manner in social settings.

The second most important thing a parent can do is teach your child sensory smarts. Kids need to know that they have to be a little creative and find ways to meet their sensory integration needs without breaking the important rules of social interaction. A child with a strong sense of self can much better navigate social settings.

## WHY ARE SOCIAL SKILLS IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN WITH SENSORY INTEGRATION DISORDER?

Social skills rules are an important subject to discuss with your child, as they will face many sensory integration challenges in social settings. For example in a social setting, if he needs to stimulate his mouth before eating, is it okay for him to stuff paper napkins in it? Is it okay when he's four, but not when he's eight? Is it okay at home, but not at someone else's house, or in a restaurant? What are the social consequences of his behaviors? If his friends are going to ridicule him, are they friends he wants to be around? Are there other, more socially acceptable ways to get his needs met?

## WHAT SOCIAL SKILLS CAN YOU TEACH YOUR CHILD WITH SENSORY INTEGRATION DISORDER?

Social skills you can teach your child with sensory integration disorder include:

- Teach children to respect their needs, but also the needs of others.
- Encourage them to be creative in finding ways to make social settings more comfortable for themselves without making them less comfortable for others.
- Encourage them to talk to you, and to other important people, about their choices. Maybe your child can explain to grandma why he chose to wear black sweatpants and a nice shirt to a holiday gathering instead of scratchy khakis with seams.
- Help your child feel good about herself by pointing out her wonderful qualities, and explaining that sensory integration issues are simply a physiological challenge she has to deal with.

Use your sensory smarts to encourage your child to engage in sensory diet activities he finds calming and focusing. Doing shuffle races, marching in place, doing chair pushups or pushups against the wall, and carrying heavy objects are all activities that stimulate the joints, providing proprioceptive input that many kids find calming. Let your child wear comfortable clothing, and use earplugs, fidgets, and other devices to help them get calm and focused.

**Are you aware that Family and Children's services offer a variety of voluntary services within the Rainy River District? These services include:**

### The Ten Commandments for Parents of Disabled Children

1. Take one day at a time, and take that day positively. You don't have control over the future, but you do have control over today.
2. Never underestimate your child's potential. Allow him, encourage him, expect him to develop to the best of his abilities.
3. Find and allow positive mentors: parents and professionals who can share with you their experience, advice, and support.
4. Provide and be involved with the most appropriate educational and learning environments for your child from infancy on.
5. Keep in mind the feelings and needs of your spouse and your other children. Remind them that this child does not get more of your love just because he gets more of your time.
6. Answer only to your conscience: then you'll be able to answer to your child. You need not justify your actions to your friends or the public.
7. Be honest with your feelings. You can't be a super-parent 24 hours a day. Allow yourself jealousy, anger, pity, frustration, and depression in small amounts whenever necessary.
8. Be kind to yourself. Don't focus continually on what needs to be done. Remember to look at what you have accomplished.
9. Stop and smell the roses. Take advantage of the fact that you have gained a special appreciation for the little miracles in life that others take for granted.
10. Keep and use a sense of humor. Cracking up with laughter can keep you from cracking up from stress.

Author Unknown



### Children's Mental Health Services

Assisting children, adolescence and their families who may be experiencing emotional, social, and/or psychological problems in their school, family, and/or community life. Services are provided free of charge, for a wide range of difficulties from mild adjustment reactions to severe psychiatric problems in children ranging in age from birth up to 18 years.

### Infant & Child Development

Servicing children 0 – 6 years of age who are at risk for a delay, or children with a diagnosed physical, developmental or sensory disability. Some of the services provided include early intervention programs, developmental screening and assessments, assistance with transition to school for special needs children, and parenting programs on a group or individual basis.

### Community Integration

servicing children with a developmental disability 6 years – 18 years. The primary focus of this program is to facilitate integration into the community. Some of the services provided include developmental assessments, advocacy in relation to other agencies, linkages to health, financial, and educational resources in the community.

### Family Relief

– a program that provides families a respite period from the responsibility of the daily care of an individual with a developmental disability. The three options to services include In-home respite – provided in the family home, Out-of-home respite – provided in the approved worker's home, and community participation – The individual is accompanied by their Family Relief Worker into the community to participate in community events or activities.

### For more information about the above voluntary services please contact Family and Children's Services

For Fort Frances call (807) 274-7787 or 1-800-465-7764 (Toll Free), for Atikokan call (807) 597-2700, and for Rainy River call (807) 483-1357.

### To make a referral for service, please call Integrated

Services Northwest, The Integrated Services for Northern Children Program for Single Point of access. For Fort Frances, Rainy River and area call 274-7787, for Atikokan area call 807-597-4528

### Do you have something to Share? Please phone

**Debra Bruyere at 274-7787 ext. 229 or email [dbruyere@facsrr.ca](mailto:dbruyere@facsrr.ca)**

