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feel free to share this newsletter
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 and click on developmental newsletter

Christmas Holidays & Your Children

Having a disabled child with siblings can have special issues at Christmastime. It is worth taking a bit of time to think through some of the things that may arise when the children are together, probably indoors a lot, and at a time of year that can be stressful for many families.



Think about:

1. Siblings feeling jealous about the disabled or sick child getting more Christmas presents. Ask family and friends to be fair. Explain that fairness makes your life a lot easier and helps the children get on better with each other.
2. Does your disabled child have a special diet? What can you do to make sure that a sibling can get to eat nice things they would like over Christmas, so that they don't have to miss out on something because of their brother or sister's diet. This will help to reduce feelings of resentment.
3. Is your sibling child likely to get bored during the holidays (and your disabled child too). Plan in some structure to each day with things you do as a family, things the children do together and things that they do with a friend or relative. Getting siblings out of the house each for something energetic like swimming or football will help them feel in a better mood and more receptive to spending time with their brother or sister if some of their own needs are met.
4. If you sibling child is prone to being moody remember to make sure they eat healthy food, and even though it is Christmas keep a limit on the amount of sweets and junk he or she consumes.
5. If your disabled child only comes home during the holidays, a sibling will need time to adjust and to learn to be with their brother or sister again. Talk this through before their brother or sister comes home so that they are prepared for how things will change. Talk about the things that will be really good and the things that may be difficult.
6. Allow siblings to have some time to themselves during the holidays when they can unwind. If they do care tasks for their brother or sister, try to book these in for a certain time of day, rather than expecting the sibling to help their brother or sister when they are in the middle of a game, reading a book, or talking to a friend. Having set times for things will help siblings feel more in control of life and will help them feel more positive.
7. What can you do to give your sibling child some time just with you over the holidays? Maybe some Christmas shopping, cooking together or going out to do an activity.
8. Help your disabled or sick child to 'give' a gift to the sibling, so that giving is not just a one way thing.
9. Think back to the last school holidays. How did things go then and what would have made things better? Is there anything you can do this holiday to make things more enjoyable for everyone?
10. What can you do to make sure you look after yourself in the holidays? Plan in some time when you get help from other people so you can get some rest, have a treat, or spend time with a partner or friend.

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.

In this interview, Lindsey Biel and Nancy Peske discuss social skills you can teach your child with sensory integration disorder. Lindsey Biel and Nancy Peske's book, [Raising a Sensory Smart Child](#) provide practical solutions for everyday social problems as well as sensory diet activities that will help your child with sensory issues

Fun for the Under Three Year Olds

Submitted by Brenda Witherspoon-Bedard

Here are some fun playtime ideas just right for our favorite young people.

Birth to 12 Months:

Wrap It Up. Make a Ribbon Book. Take 5-10 index cards (4x6 is a good size) and glue a piece of brightly colored ribbon (or a square of wrapping paper) to each one. Punch a hole in the corner of each card and tie with a length of ribbon or yarn. Show your baby each page and let her touch the ribbons. Which pages and textures does she seem to prefer? Which ones don't seem hold her interest?



12 to 24 Months:

That's a Wrap! Give your toddler pieces of a magazine or wrapping paper to play with. What does she do? Scrunch it? Rip it? Throw it? Follow your child's lead and watch how she discovers what these pieces of paper can do in her own hands. As your child explores, talk about what is happening: Do you hear the sound the paper makes when you shake it in your hands? It crinkles and crackles!



24 to 36 Months:

Tie a Yellow Ribbon... Cut lengths of ribbons and lay out used bows from the last birthday party. Let your toddler make his very own piece of art work. Squirt some washable glue onto a paper plate and show your child how he can dip the ribbon and bows in and stick them on a piece of sturdy cardboard. Then let him at it! P.S.: As he works, you can name the different colors (red, green, etc.) and compare the lengths of ribbon (longer, shorter) and the sizes of the bows (bigger, smaller).



Adopt an Angel

Family and Children's Services is proud to announce the launch of the annual Adopt An Angel program in the Rainy River District. This program was developed with the intention of helping children and families involved with Family and Children's Services who could use extra support at Christmas time. Each child involved with the program is given a pseudo name that is placed on an angel ornament, along with their age and a gift suggestion. The pseudo name is given in order to protect each child's confidentiality. This year the angels will be placed on Christmas trees at Wal-Mart and at Tompkins Hardware in Emo. The idea is that citizens and community members can select the angels from the trees and purchase Christmas gifts for the children.

Thank you to those who help and support this program and to those who purchase gifts. When you see the management and staff at Wal-Mart, and Tompkins Hardware, please thank them for their continued dedication to the program and their assistance.

Merry Christmas everyone and

**Thank You
for Adopting
Our Angels!**



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

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**

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