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Parents and caregivers please  
feel free to share this newsletter  
with your workers.

# Family and Children's Services Children's Developmental Services

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[www.facsrr.ca](http://www.facsrr.ca) and click on developmental newsletter



## Playtime Becomes Empowering for Special Needs Kids

### How to Help Your Special Needs Child Thrive Socially

A child being diagnosed as having special needs is difficult for any parent. Once the baby stage is passed parents of a disabled child face a new, often daunting challenge. No parents want their child to be shy and afraid to interact with other kids. However, parents may often find themselves concerned about how to accommodate the child's needs without excessively limiting the child. According to the article "Socializing Your Disabled Children" on [bizymoms.com](http://bizymoms.com), keeping a child home to protect him or her does a disservice to the child. The mothers who are a part of the bizymoms website say that socializing is as vital to a special needs kid's self esteem as it is to a child without special challenges. These moms say that interacting with peers helps the child to thrive.

### What Parents of Special Needs Kids Can Do

If possible encourage the challenged child to become involved in extra curricular activities such as sports. If the child does not show a particular interest in sporting events try another activity. Encourage a child to explore his interests. Doing so will help him become confident and with that confidence comes important skills such as being able to work and play with others in an appropriate manner. Also parents of disabled children can help their children learn to become comfortable around others by practicing at home.

Teach special children how to greet someone and introduce themselves. Give them suggestions of questions that are considered appropriate to ask a new person. Show them how to start a conversation with another person.

Most importantly, remember these skills may take time to develop. Praise the efforts made whether they have mastered the concepts yet or not. Also, encourage the disabled child to play with his siblings or invite his peers home so that he can put to use these new found social skills in an environment that he feels secure in.

### Helping Your Child Thrive

Now that parents have some idea of how to help a child with special needs, they should also remember to trust their instincts. Most importantly, parents can help the child by keeping a positive attitude, which in turn helps the child to do so as well.



## Young Babies and Play: What's Fun for Your Little One?

Submitted by Brenda Witherspoon-Bedard

Playing . . . with a tiny baby?! How do you do that with a baby as young as two months old? Actually as babies enter the second month of life, they become noticeably more interested in the world around them. While they don't "play" in the way that we often think of, pushing trains around a track or feeding a baby doll, they are eager to explore the objects and interact with the people they see every day. At this age, play is not just about toys, it's about back-and-forth interactions – anything from singing a song to your baby as you change his diaper, to cooing and smiling back and forth with him. Loving and playful experiences like these help your baby learn.

Here are some fun ways to interact with your baby in the early months:

- Offer interesting objects for your baby to look at. You will see that as you move an interesting object slowly from side to side, your baby will follow it with his eyes. This is called tracking and is one of the first ways that young babies explore the world while building their visual skills.



- Offer interesting objects to touch. You can bring the objects close so your baby can touch them and begin to learn about how different objects feel. This helps him learn through his senses. Exploring objects with eyes, and later hands and mouth also helps babies discover how different objects work and what they do. This makes your baby a good thinker and problem-solver.
- Place your baby so that she can kick or hit at a mobile or rattle. Over the next couple of weeks, she will connect the act of kicking with the sounds the mobile makes when struck. This helps her understand cause-and-effect.
- Make routines playful. For example, you can add a massage for your baby after baths or before bedtime, which helps her feel bonded to you and also helps her understand that her body belongs to her – body awareness.
- Share books together, either by reading them to your baby or just letting her gaze at the pictures. When your baby gets a little older, she will probably take the lead – grabbing the book and gumming it-while you ask her how it tastes!



## Even babies need a break

Parents may find themselves confused about their babies' responses as they play. It's not uncommon to wonder: We were having so much fun a minute ago and now he is crying. What happened? It maybe that your baby reached his limit for stimulation and was telling you he needed a break.

Some common "I need a break" signals include:

- Turning his head away
- Arching his back
- Closing his eyes or falling asleep
- Crying
- Fussing or making "fussy" sounds
- Hiccupping



When you see those signals, try giving your baby a rest for a little bit. Put aside his toys and perhaps rock and sing quietly to him. If that's still too much, just hold him, and keep in mind that eye contact can be very stimulating for young babies, so just snuggling him against your chest may feel best. It's all about trial and error. The idea is to reduce the amount of stimulation –sights, sounds, touches, and movements that he is experiencing. This gives him time to calm down, "re-group", and pull himself together.



You'll know your baby is ready to play again when his expression is calm and clear-eyed, when he meets your gaze, moves his arms or legs, or makes sounds. Watching your baby to see how she reacts to, manages, and responds to stimulation gives very useful information. You can begin to understand what and how much play your baby enjoys, how to recognize when she needs a break, and how to comfort her when she is distressed. Don't worry if you don't get it right immediately. Learning about your baby's individual's needs and temperament takes time. Eventually the two of you will get more "in sync."

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

♥ **Kids Thoughts on Love**

*Funny Quotes About Love & Relationships From Children*



**What do people do on a first date?**

- ♥ "On the first date, they just tell each other lies, and that usually gets them interested enough to go for a second date." (Mike, 9)

**Kids' thoughts on love and why it happens between two particular people:**

- ♥ "No one is sure why it happens, but I heard it has something to do with how you smell. That's why perfume and deodorant are so popular." (Jan, 9)
- ♥ "I think you're supposed to get shot with an arrow or something, but the rest of it isn't supposed to be so painful." (Harlen, 8)

**Kids' thoughts on love and ways to make someone fall in love with you**

- ♥ "Tell them that you own a whole bunch of candy stores." (Del, 6)
- ♥ "Don't do things like have smelly, green sneakers. You might get attention, but attention ain't the same thing as love." (Alonzo, 9)
- ♥ "One way is to take the girl out to eat. Make sure it's something she likes to eat. French fries usually work for me." (Bart, 9)

**What are most people thinking when they say, "I love you"?**

- ♥ "The person is thinking, Yeah, I really do love him. But I hope he showers at least once a day." (Michelle, 9)

**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)