

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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or email dbruyere@facsrr.ca



**JANUARY
FEBRUARY
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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

All our newsletters are available for viewing on our website.
Visit www.facsrr.ca and click on developmental newsletter

New Years Blues and Winter Doldrums

The first weeks of a new year can be difficult for families of children with special needs, chronic health conditions or developmental disabilities. The post-holiday blues can strike families unexpectedly and should not be underestimated or ignored.

Difficult interactions with family, overspending on gifts or unexpected winter emergencies, a shortage of daylight or sleep, travel delays or misfortunes, and other challenges that mainstream parents also experience can trigger new year blues or winter doldrums. Families may have struggled with the loss of loved ones who are missed especially at family get-togethers during the holidays.

During winter we may be more aware of how busy our lives have become, how much time we spend away from home, or how little time we spend together. Trying to make every deadline and appointment, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by the inconvenience of cleaning up spills, doing chores or spending time on enforced unscheduled breaks for emergencies or meltdowns.

Some of the additional stresses that may complicate the lives of families raising a child with a disability may be due to the added vulnerability of children to illness during the winter months; the impact of the holidays on free time, meals, exercise, drama in our extended families; a change in focus for school programs after the winter break; interruptions in respite care, parent support meetings or visiting with supportive friends, due to travel or weather; and the challenges our children struggle with when others can't deal with the flexibility or small accommodations required for us all to get along ok.

It's important to honor the feelings we have as we work our way through the middle of winter and into the new year. It may seem as though everyone else we know has wonderful stories and enjoyed every minute of the holidays, but most people have had moments of self doubt, loneliness, frustration and even despair.

Most people need extra support and encouragement in the new year and throughout the winter months. It can be as easy as starting up an exercise program, especially if it's possible to take regular walks with someone else, or enrolling in a yoga class or having someone over while watching a yoga DVD. Many moms, whether a child has special needs or not, find it difficult to take time for themselves to get together, but it is important for all of us to make time for ourselves.

Anyone who is struggling with sleeplessness, depression, exhaustion, or having difficulty getting through each day, deserves to find relief within a few weeks. This means that we need to take action within the first week, to make an appointment with a doctor for a check up, to see a counsellor, or to call a good friend and explain that it's just too much for us to make those efforts ourselves.

Sometimes it seems as though Spring is around a very distant corner, and winter will hang on longer than we can stand. But winter has its own beauty, and can be a quiet time for thinking about where we want to direct our lives for the rest of the year. Taking better care of ourselves will help us enjoy and celebrate our daily accomplishments, and show our children how we keep moving forward to the next better day. Sometimes taking better care of ourselves means getting help from other people - and every one of us deserves a little help from time to time.



Become a Child Again!

I am hereby officially tendering my resignation as an adult. I have decided I would like to accept the responsibilities of an 8 year-old again.

I want to go to McDonald's and think that it's a four-star restaurant. I want to sail sticks across a fresh mud puddle and make a sidewalk with rocks.

I want to think M&M's are better than money because you can eat them. I want to lie under a big oak tree and run a lemonade stand with my friends on a hot summer's day.

I want to return to a time when life was simple.

When all you knew were colors, multiplication tables, and nursery rhymes, but that didn't bother you, because you didn't know what you didn't know and you didn't care. All you knew was to be happy because you were blissfully unaware of all the things that should make you worried or upset. I want to think the world is fair. That everyone is honest and good. I want to believe that anything is possible. I want to be oblivious to the complexities of life and be overly excited by the little things again.

I want to live simple again. I don't want my day to consist of computer crashes, mountains of paperwork, depressing news, how to survive more days in the month than there is money in the bank, doctor bills, gossip, illness, and loss of loved ones. I want to believe in the power of smiles, hugs, a kind word, truth, justice, peace, dreams, the imagination, mankind, and making angels in the snow.

So . . . here's my checkbook and my car-keys, & my credit card bills. I am officially resigning from adulthood. And if you want to discuss this further, you'll have to catch me first, 'cause... "Tag! You're it."

Pass this to someone and brighten their day by helping them remember the simple things of life!

Author Unknown
A wisp of wisdom:
"It is never too late to be a happy child"



ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES



Learning disabilities are no obstacle to a successful future -- even Albert Einstein was a late bloomer when it came to reading. Conditions like dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia can make school tough, though. Assignments that are simple for some kids can take much longer and require one-on-one special attention for a child with a learning disability. We've got a few activities that should make reading, writing and solving math problems a little more fun.

- **Take it up a notch:** With some learning disabilities, reading and writing are extremely difficult to master. But if you can bring in the child's other senses instead of just staring at a book or a blank piece of paper, you're on the right track. Get imaginative -- practice writing in the air with big, dramatic gestures or make letters with Play-Doh that smells good. Have the child draw what you're reading about -- there's a reason picture books are so popular! Whenever you can, remember not to focus just on the visuals. Bring in scent, taste, movement and auditory elements. When the child reads, he or she can also say what's being read, draw the story and even act it out. The same thing goes for math problems -- using concrete objects, acting out a word problem and drawing what the equation is talking about can really help.
- **Make writing fun:** Having a learning disability that affects language might make writing seem like a chore. Why not make it fun again? The Learning Disabilities Association of America suggests making a bunch of postcards with the child and decorating them. Then he or she can write a few sentences to friends or relatives and send them off (with the added bonus that kids love getting mail back). Reading of any type is good, so you could also break out a cookbook and make kooky kid recipes and then have a child write a sentence or two about how it turned out -- flipping open that book a year later and seeing a comment that the macaroni was just the right shade of orange should make you smile.
- **Go in another direction:** It's not uncommon for a child with learning disabilities to feel like he or she isn't as smart as his or her classmates. It's important to make clear that learning disabilities have nothing to do with intelligence, but it will also be a self-esteem boost to find the kid another activity to excel in that's also a respite from the stuff that's hard. Sports promote teamwork and cooperation, while the arts allow for creative expression. You may have the world's best archer, sculptor or fisherman on your hands and not even know it because you spend so much of the school year with tutors!

For more information see the website: <http://tlc.howstuffworks.com>

Fun for the Under 3 Set

Submitted by Brenda Witherspoon-Bedard

Here are some activities for your little one:

Birth to 12 Months:

Playing With "Snow"—Squeeze some shaving cream into a sealable plastic bag and seal the bag. Put the bag on your baby's high chair tray or other play-space and let him touch and smush the shaving cream through the bag. This type of activity lets your child use his sense of touch and also builds his fine motor skills as he explores using his hands and fingers.

12 to 24 Months:

Playing with "Snow"—Squeeze some shaving cream onto your baby's high chair tray or other play-space and let her smush and touch to her heart's content. As your child plays, you can describe what she is doing: "You are touching the foam. It feels fluffy! It is fun to squeeze." This helps build your toddler's growing language skills. You will need to stay close by during this activity to supervise your child and be sure that she does not put her hands in her mouth. When you are done, wash your child's hands and the tray.



24 to 36 Months:

"Snow" Art—Squeeze some shaving cream onto a piece of construction paper and let your toddler spread it all around the paper. Use language to describe your child's movements: "You are moving your hand in a circle. You are spreading the shaving cream out all over the paper!" Talking with your child about what he is doing builds his language skills. When the picture is dry, hang it where your child can see his work. Remember, you will need to stay close by during this activity to supervise your child and be sure that he does not put his hands in his mouth. When you are done, wash your child's hands and the work surface.

Sweetheart Chocolate Lollipops

- 4 squares *Baker's* Unsweetened Chocolate
- 4 squares *Baker's* White Chocolate
- 2 cups sugar
- 3/4 cup butter
- 3 Eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 2 cups flour
- Assorted Valentine sprinkles



PREHEAT oven to 350°F. Microwave unsweetened chocolate and butter in large microwaveable bowl on HIGH 2 min. or until butter is melted. Stir until chocolate is completely melted and mixture is well blended. Add sugar; mix well. Blend in eggs and vanilla. Add flour; mix well. Cover. Refrigerate 1 hour or until dough is stiff.

SHAPE dough into 2-inch balls; insert lollipop stick into top of each ball. Place, 2 inches apart, on greased baking sheets.

BAKE 8 min. or just until set. (Do not overbake.) Let stand on baking sheet 1 min.; transfer to wire racks. Cool completely. Melt white chocolate as directed on package. Drizzle over lollipops; decorate with sprinkles. Let stand until chocolate coating is firm.

Great recipe for young kids to help make!