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Family and Children's Services

Children's Developmental Services

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Managing Social Anxiety In Children With Autism

PRACTICAL ADVICE TO HELP AUTISTIC CHILDREN WITH SOCIAL ANXIETY.

By: Rachel Evans

As a parent with an autistic child, you want to do everything you can to protect your child. We don't want to place our children in circumstances that scare them, however, setting your child up in a program or providing them with social activities can help them to learn how to manage their social anxieties.

First of all, when your child is diagnosed with autism, research the symptoms that are associated with this developmental disorder. The more information you have, the better you will be qualified to deal with certain situations. It will also help to join a support group for parents with autistic children. You'll find other parents will be willing to share their sources of information with you.

When you find a program for your child, you'll want to make sure it is appropriately qualified to deal with your child's social anxiety. Every autistic child is different so you'll want to make sure you are honest and up-front about the symptoms your child displays. It's also important to remember that the sooner you can get your child enrolled in a program, the more significant difference it can make in alleviating their social anxiety.

Your child's program should include playtime where they will be able to learn to make friends and how to interact with others. This play activity is very important to getting over their social anxiety. The activities should include something fun. For example, having children play an appropriate aged-level board game. This can help your child to learn how to interact with others.

Many children with autism have difficulty when it comes to understanding how another individual feels. This influences how they are able to interact with others. One way to help them with this is to use picture cards of characters with different facial expressions and posture. Once they understand how others may possibly feel by facial expressions and body language, they will more easily interact with others.

There are many things you can work on with your child to help them manage the social anxieties they face. Most children with autism simply lack the ability to react to change in a calm manner. Your child, if given the opportunity to become social, may simply wander off to be by themselves.

To be successful in helping your child, the most important thing you can do is to be patient with them. Do not force social activities on them, however, make sure they are available. Whether it is sitting down to dinner with the family or going over to a friends house to play, you'll want to do what you can to make sure your child is as comfortable as possible. Talk to them and explain to them what is going to happen and where they are going. Try not to shove surprises on them, as you'll need to prepare them for activities.

Your child with autism can learn, with time and patience, how to handle different social interactions with others. As their parent, your job is to assist them with managing their anxieties by providing them with plenty of opportunities in which to adjust to a variety of situations.

Source: childrensdisabilites.info



EARLY LEARNING - Everyday ways to support your baby or toddler

Submitted by Brenda Witherspoon-Bedard



Your baby is learning about you, himself and the world around him from the moment he enters the world. The chart below gives you some ideas of the many ways you can support your child's early learning through everyday

What's Going on With Your Baby or Toddler	What you Can Do
<p>Language and Communication</p> <p>Babies express their needs and feelings through sounds and cries, body movements, and facial expressions. Your baby will begin using words sometime around 1 year. By the time she is 3, she will be speaking in short (3-5 word) sentences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch and listen to see how your baby communicates what she is thinking and feeling. • Repeat the sounds and words your child uses and have back-and-forth conversations. • Read, sing, and tell stories. These are fun ways to help your child understand the meaning of new words and ideas. • Talk about what you do together—as you play, do errands, or visit friends and family.
<p>Thinking Skills</p> <p>Your child is learning how the world works by playing and exploring. Through play, babies and toddlers learn about how things work and how to be good problem-solvers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage your child to explore toys in different ways—by touching, banging, stacking, shaking. • Turn everyday routines into playful learning moments. For example bath time is a chance to learn about ideas like <i>sinking/floating</i> and <i>wet/dry</i>. • Follow your child's interests. Children learn best through activities that excite them. • Ask your child questions that get him thinking as he nears age 3. For example, when reading a book together, ask <i>Why do you think the girl is laughing?</i>
<p>Self-Control</p> <p>Over the first 3 years, your child is beginning to develop self-control—the ability to manage his feelings and actions in acceptable ways. He is also learning to wait, share, and work out problems with his friends.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use words to help your child understand his feelings. <i>You are really mad because we have to leave the park.</i> • Give choices to older toddlers. <i>Would you like to read books before or after we brush teeth?</i> • Stay calm when your child is upset. This helps him feel safe and get back in control.
<p>Self-Confidence</p> <p>Your child is learning that she is a very special person; that she is loved, smart, fun, and capable. When children feel good about themselves, they are more confident and willing to take on new challenges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment on what your child does well. <i>You found the button that makes the bear pop up!</i> • Help your child be a good problem-solver. Give her the support she needs to be successful without completely solving the problem for her. • Give your child the chance to do things for herself like pouring milk from a small plastic pitcher. • Encourage your child to keep trying. <i>You are working so hard to get the ball in the basket. Sometimes it takes lots of tries!</i>

Teens with Disabilities - Transition to Adulthood

Transition planning for teens with disabilities can be written into IEPs, and may include vocational opportunities, college experiences, and training programs. Families of children with special needs often look ahead to their children's future with uncertainty while seeking the best support and opportunities as they grow up.

Fortunately, parents and other advocates for teens and young adults have discovered that while children with special needs often have the same transition issues, instincts and preferences as their mainstream peers, they also benefit from programs that address their individual needs.

Guidelines and personal stories give us clues for what to expect toward the end of childhood and how diverse our children will be as adults. You may feel as many moments of panic, pride and wonder in these transition years as when your child was a toddler! Remember to enjoy yourself, and take snapshots to remind your son or daughter how interesting their lives were during the transition years - although it may be that nothing is as hilarious to them as their grandparents' snapshots of you at those ages.

If they have special health needs, are vulnerable to predators, get lost easily, or become too confused in novel situations, there should be a support plan in place that addresses those individual needs. With appropriate planning, young adults can explore various options for independence without being subjected to excessive risk. Funding and other support should not be tied to trendy attitudes, what was good for the previous person with that disability, or rules that are made up on the spot.

If your son or daughter has multiple goals, help them write up a plan that addresses each goal so that they can see when and how they are taking steps to reach each one. For instance, two nights a week they may be enrolled in drama or music classes with the goal of "Fame" leading to being an actor and/or pop star.

"Jobs in the Community" would have different activities and goals, so at those times they could focus on work counseling, training, job sampling, interview skills, or steps to local entry level positions. Other parts of the plan could be "College," "Travel," "Talk Show," and "Romance." It's much easier to think about less interesting goals when our greatest hopes and dreams are treated with respect.

If your son or daughter faces challenges that make you feel their options are limited and the future is bleak, you should make a special effort to write up a plan for them. Whatever is important to them now should be included. We may not know how much our loved ones think about the future, or how to give them a sense of security during transition, but framing possibilities can lead to a plan we might not imagine otherwise.

I'm guessing it does help relieve our stress a bit to hear actual plans discussed aloud, even if it is in our own voices at home, far away from professionals and support people. Brothers and sisters may need to be reminded that everyone's future is being considered, and we are as interested in a richness of experience as the standard quality of life considerations. Amazing options may be created just by talking about what the young person with the disability enjoys about life right now.

We should not be limited by practicalities; imagination makes room for inventions and supports that change the face of the world for people with disabilities. Think of what the world would be for those of us who have what we consider simple vision impairments if eyeglasses and then contact lenses were not available. We can change the future for the better by putting our focus on what are sons and daughters can do now, if they have the opportunities, small supports and accommodations they need to show us where they can take themselves.

Creed of Babies with Down Syndrome

My face may be different
But my feelings the same
I laugh and I cry
And I take pride in my gains
I was sent here among you
To teach you to love
As God in the heavens
Looks down from above
To Him I'm no different
His love knows no bounds
It's those here among you
In cities and towns
That judge me by standards
That man has imparted
But this family I've chosen
Will help me get started
For I'm one of the children
So special and few
That came here to learn
The same lessons as you
That love is acceptance
It must come from the heart
We all have the same purpose
Though not the same start
The Lord gave me life
To live and embrace
And I'll do it as you do
But at my own pace

-author unknown



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?
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