

**DECEMBER
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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 in full colour!
Visit www.facsrr.ca and click on developmental newsletter

How to Help a Family In Need this Christmas

Take time this year to remember what the holiday season is all about.

Help a family less fortunate than yours and discover the joy that comes from giving.

- ✎ Check with your church, temple or local civic groups like the Knights of Columbus, Elks or Lions Club to find families in need.
- ✎ Prepare a gift basket with traditional foods, such as turkey, ham, stuffing, canned vegetables and soup so a family can have a holiday meal.
- ✎ Donate canned goods and other foods to an organization that is collecting items from the community to give to families.
- ✎ Buy gifts for the children who otherwise might not receive any. Remember not to give used toys as a holiday gift, since all children like to open something new.
- ✎ Check with civic groups to find a holiday exchange program, in which you invite a family to come to your home and participate in your holiday festivities.
- ✎ Collect warm blankets, coats, boots and other clothing that a family may need.
- ✎ Buy necessities such as diapers, soap, cereal, shampoo and other things to offer to the family.
- ✎ Contribute money to pay the electricity or heating bills for a month.
- ✎ Buy a Christmas tree and ornaments for the family to help make their home more festive.
- ✎ Visit an elderly neighbour who may be alone at Christmas. Take your children along to brighten their day.

THINGS YOU'LL NEED:

- Christmas Gifts
- Coats and Blankets
- Christmas Tree Ornaments
- Christmas Trees
- Blankets
- Canned Vegetables
- Turkey



Raising Thankful Children

Submitted by Brenda Witherspoon-Bedard



Being appreciative and thankful for what one has and for what others do for us—values most parents want their children to develop as they grow. But during those visits to the toy store, when your child is begging (or maybe even demanding or screaming) for the latest and greatest gadget she must have, you may wonder how (and when) children develop gratitude.

The fact is it may take a few years yet for you to receive the thank you that you really deserve. So while children may not show outward appreciation or thankfulness much before age 3, like other values you want to instill in your child, you can start nurturing the idea of gratitude even in your child's first year.

Keep gifts reasonable. As tempting as it is to shower or allow others to shower your child with gifts, there are two important reasons not to. First, as children grow, it can be challenging to teach gratitude if they receive everything they ask for. Secondly, a lot of gifts are overwhelming for small children. They can't focus on or appreciate any one gift if they get so many. Often, they don't even make it through opening all of them before they lose interest. Instead, you might suggest that family members choose 1 or 2 gifts for each child. You could ask the gift givers to provide book donations for a local literacy program or toys for disadvantaged children. This can be a good way to communicate the importance of giving and gratefulness.

Look for ways to be involved in community giving with your children. Between ages 2 and 3, you can begin to talk with your toddler about how he can help others who don't have as much as he does. Look for opportunities with a clear connection between your child's efforts and the recipients. A couple good choices are:



Collecting canned foods for a local food shelf: *We are helping people who need more food. They will eat the food we bring. Our food will help them feel strong and healthy.*

Collecting jackets, hats and mittens for a local children's program: *The jackets we bring will help other children, just like you, stay warm during the winter.*

Show thankfulness to your children. It's easy to forget, but important to do. *Thank you for cooperating at the doctor's office. Thank you for getting your jacket when I asked.*

Prompt children to use thankful words. Thankfulness is a complex idea. It will be a while yet before your child truly "gets" it. But reminding children to say "please" and "thank you" (beginning at about 18 months) is a good start. Because it will take some time for them to learn when to use these words, you'll probably be providing prompts for a while.

Read books about what it means to be thankful. Books help children make sense of new ideas. Keep in mind that your child’s understanding of a book at 14 months will be different than what she gets out of it at 35 months—another good reason to share these stories over time. As she grows, talk with her about the stories and pictures and explore what it means to be “thankful.” Some age-appropriate choices for children aged 12 to 36-month-old include:

- *Biscuit Is Thankful* by Alyssa Satin Capucilli and Pat Schories
- *Little Critter: Just So Thankful* by Mercer Mayer
- *Feeling Thankful* by Shelly Rotner
- *I’m Thankful Each Day* by P.K. Hallninan

All the Places to Love by Patricia MacLachlan

Involve children in writing thank-you notes. While you can’t sit your young child down with a pen and a stack of cards, you can involve her in showing thanks in age-appropriate ways. Ask your toddler to draw a picture for the gift-giver and, again, include with your note. Toddlers can also be involved in sticking a stamp on the envelope and putting the note in the mailbox. Starting early makes this important tradition of gratitude an everyday part of children’s lives.

Think about what it means to be thankful in your family and culture. Share stories about gratefulness that are drawn from your family history, community and culture. For example, one family tells their son a story about his grandmother who, during the Great Depression, once received only an orange for Christmas but “it was the sweetest orange she ever had and she was grateful.” Each year, along with his other gifts, the son receives an orange as well.

A gift children can make for their Parents Chocolate Mint Spoon

Instructions

- Melt 2 Hershey bars/no nuts.
- Dip spoons in melted chocolate
- Immediately dip choc. covered spoon in crushed peppermint.
- Tie a thin ribbon on spoon handle
- Attach the poem below through ribbon -

*“Try Chocolate-Mint coffee Mommy (or Daddy)
It’s tasty as can be
And while you drink it Mommy (or Daddy)
You can think of me. XOXOXO”*

Materials

- red plastic spoons
- 2 Hershey chocolate bars (no nuts)
- crushed peppermint
- gold ribbon



Butterfly Thoughts

"Somehow, not only for Christmas

But all the long year through,

The joy that you give to others

Is the joy that comes back to you.

"And the more you spend in blessing

the poor and lonely

and sad,

The more of your

heart's possessing

Returns to you glad."

- John Greenleaf Whittier



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 physical or developmental disability 6 years – 18 years and up to 21 years as long as they are in school. 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 physical and/or 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@facsr.ca

