



Family and Children's Services

Children's Developmental Services

Helping Children Develop Friendships

Parents and professionals often struggle with helping children learn to be good friends or to understand the complexities of social interactions. Below are a number of strategies that can help children develop friendships.

1. Get Involved – Participate in community sports teams, art programs, and special events. These are wonderful opportunities for children to engage in structured activities with peers. For children with special needs, communities increasingly are offering camps and activities geared towards their specific needs. Ask professionals and support groups for information on these programs or check your community newspapers, centers, and websites. Another great activity, for children who benefit from very direct instruction, is social skills groups. These groups, which are offered in many communities, are a great way for children to develop their social skills in a fun yet structured environment.



2. Leverage the Child's Interests – If the goal of enrolling a child in a program is to provide opportunities for making friends, look for activities the child enjoys. Some children like the arts while others enjoy sports. If a child is particularly shy, look for activities that initially have less direct contact. Tumbling and swimming are examples of individual sports while soccer and basketball involve more contact with peers. If children start in activities they enjoy, they are more likely to join other programs.

3. Role Play Difficult Skills – Practicing social skills is a way to work on specific aspects of social interactions. For example, if you notice your child stands too close to peers or repeatedly asks the same questions, help them learn about personal space or conversational skills through role play. By practicing these skills in the home, children can learn to improve their social skills and apply them outside the home.

4. Provide Examples – While reading books or watching television, explain social situations to children. Point out how helping others, using kind words, and listening when friends talk are ways to be a good friend. When characters are being hurtful or invading someone's personal space, point these actions out and ask the child what the character could do differently to be a better friend.

5. Model Being Good to Others – Part of being well liked and being a good friend is being kind. Demonstrate kindness by saying nice things about and to others whether they are the grocery store employee or your neighbor. Point out when a co-worker does something thoughtful and how this makes you feel about them. If your child is sympathetic or says something complimentary, tell them their actions made you happy.

6. Do Not Force Friendships – Just like adults, children get along better with some peers than others. Teaching children to be kind and to include everyone in activities is important, but they do not have to be best friends with everyone.



Good-bye Hawaii - Life with Attention Deficit

A humorous look at life with a child with attention deficit hyperactivity.

By **Pat Linkhorn**

I save everything. I think saving too much is a disorder in its own right, but I don't know what the technical term is. However, even dedicated pack rats like me have to throw some things out occasionally.

I just watched the garbage man drive away with enough broken parts to pay for a ten day, all expenses paid, fun-in-the-sun vacation in Hawaii for two. Those of you who live with children who are hyperactive or who have attention deficit disorder will have no problem understanding what I'm trying to say here. You probably have your own lost vacation.

My oldest, who has a diagnosis of high functioning autistic, has also been diagnosed at one time or the other as attention deficit - hyperactive. She's eight years old now, so we've accumulated quite an impressive "collection" over the years. There are at least three pairs of cracked, scratched or broken contact lenses, thirteen tangled or broken necklaces, eight or ten containers with eye shadow that had been used as water colors and one broken figurine of a Doberman that my sister paid a bundle for. There are also four or five pairs of panty hose that were transformed into puppets before ever being worn, eighteen single socks, twenty-seven mutilated earrings, six boxes of broken crayons and fourteen unwound audio cassettes. Not to mention the 35 millimeter camera that she washed, or the brand new box of computer disks with the pancake syrup on them. Let's not forget the baby doll parts, the broken vases, the torn sheets or the cut up books either.

If I had thrown all this stuff out as it was destroyed, it wouldn't seem such an enormous amount, but I always meant to fix it or find alternate uses for the "halves". But somehow, I never got around to doing those things.

Even as I watch the garbage truck drive away, I catch a glimpse of my daughter swinging from the clothes line in my backyard. Hawaii would be nice, but she is worth it all. I haven't had to repaint any rooms for the last year. (Probably because all the magic markers have been destroyed.) The sound of breaking glass is heard less often and the progress she has made is remarkable. Maybe I should encourage the artwork. She may grow up to be a famous artist and she may send me to Hawaii one day.

Pat Linkhorn is the Editor of Special Education at About.com and a professional advocate for families with children who have special needs. She is also an experienced parent and has two girls with special needs - autism and blindness due to prematurity. <http://thelinkto.com/linkhome>

Campfire Doughnuts

Ingredients:

- 2 cups packages biscuit mix
- About 2/3 cup of milk

Directions:

1. Prepare biscuit mix by adding just enough milk to make a stiff dough.
2. Divide into 12 lumps of dough.
3. Mold the dough around a skewer or a peeled green willow twig.
4. Hold the stick over glowing coals, turning to brown all sides evenly.
5. When the biscuit is cooked it slips off the skewer on stick easily so take care to hold your stick up, not down, over the coals.
6. You can make the dough at home and wrap the pieces in aluminum foil to take on a picnic trip. Water can be used for mixing.



Sensory Solutions

Rediscover Play!

Submitted by Brenda Witherspoon

Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood, for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child's soul.

-Frederick Froebel



In our super-hygienic, academic focused pre-K and kindergarten worlds we have removed the sensory and motor components from the important sensorimotor stage of development? Be a role model for our kids. Let them know it's okay to get messy. Show them how to dress for the mess. Explore new tactile experiences! Inspire art experiences that are about the process rather than the end product. Use cooking and baking for learning and sensory experiences. Designate "messy zones" so that kids know where and when it is okay to be messy. Go outdoors . . . clean-up is a garden hose away. Self-directed discovery, experimentation, and problem solving are just a few of the cognitive skills that messy play fosters. YES! IT'S OKAY TO GET MESSY!

8 Playful Ways to Get Messy!

- ☺ Declare "Puddle Stompin' Day" and get dressed well to enjoy
- ☺ Build pantry sculptures using cans of spray cheese, pretzel rods, crackers, cheese balls, etc.
- ☺ Goopy-Goo. Experiment with cornstarch, water and food colouring-goopastic!
- ☺ Cook spaghetti al dente', add a few drops of oil and mound it on the table top.
- ☺ Do a "Feelie Walk." Be brave, have the kids choose what to put in the buckets.



- ☺ Paint a table top with whip cream. Don't forget chocolate sauce and cherries.
- ☺ Create a shaving cream Slip & Slide on a hot day. It's spring cleaning for ALL the mats, too!
- ☺ Slurp Picnic. A plastic table cloth, beans and franks, cake and ice cream for dessert-no hands . . . **HILARIOUS!**

Butterfly Thoughts

Imagine ... By Jayne

No family picnics, parades, or weddings ...

No friends or playmates ...

No common sense ...

Imagine ...

A 12 year old who doesn't understand what will happen if he runs in front of a car or jumps into a pool ...

Imagine ...

A home looking like Fort Knox - just to keep your brother safe ...

Imagine ...

Being told your brother has a neurological brain disorder and may never be able to speak, function in society, live alone, marry or have children. Your heart sinks ...

Imagine ...

After waking your brother in the morning, if you don't do everything in the same order as the day before, at the precise moment, its enough to ruin his entire day ...

Imagine ...

Watching your brother on the first day of school stepping onto the handicapped bus ...

Imagine ...

Having your home invaded with teachers, social services, doctors, for hours of intense one-on-one therapy in hopes of a better life someday ...

Imagine ...

Watching the agony on your brothers face giving you the why are you letting them do this to me? look while doing numerous scans, blood work, x-rays and testing to figure out how to help him feel better ...

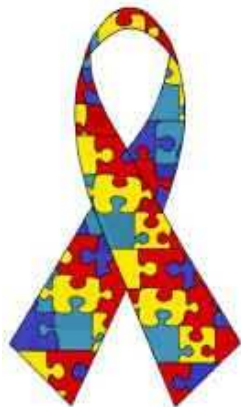
Imagine ...

Just how many "that kid is a brat" stares you get in public simply because your brother cannot handle social situations including a simple trip to the newspaper shop ...

Imagine ...

What autistic children, parents and families go through ...

On a daily basis.



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 597-2700, and for Rainy River call 852-3387.

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 274-9797, 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

