



Feature

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Gillons' Insurance Brokers and the Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario Provides Security Blankets to Family and Children's Services



Gillons' staff presenting blankets to staff at FACS.

Staff at Family and Children's Services have teamed up with Gillons' Insurance Brokers and the Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario in providing fleece blankets for children and youth in need. Board member Trevor Fitzgerald made this announcement at the monthly FACS Board meeting April 16th. The presentation was made May 1st at the Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce's Home and Leisure Show.

FACS Executive Director, Vik Nowak, was extremely appreciative of the donation. "These blankets could be used by children and youth from any one of our programs," citing examples of a youth in a mental health crisis could benefit from the security as well as a child coming into kinship or foster care.

Some programs, such as the Supervised Access Program, give out teddy bears during child orientation to the program. "Having blankets on hand to give to children is the perfect compliment and will help put the children at ease," states Community Services Manager, Betty-Anne MacKintosh.

The Children's Services team also provides items to children in need such as backpacks, clothing, toys and personal effects. "Having the blankets to add will be a very useful resource to all programs," adds MacKintosh. "This includes children and youth involved in Developmental Services Programs, including the Infant and Child Development, Community Integration and Family Relief Programs."

Developmental Services

Developmental Services Atikokan office has moved.



Family and Children's Services new office building in Atikokan.

The Developmental Services office of FACS has moved to a new location in Atikokan!! I am now located at 211 Main Street and I'm excited about the ability to offer services to clients in a much more up to date and functional facility. The move was planned and organized very well, but still took time away from my clients, and I

apologize if this caused any inconvenience.

I will continue to offer the same services with regard to:

- Advocacy.
- Video-conferencing with Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto.
- Meeting rooms.
- Referrals.
- Developmental assessments and screenings.
- Support and assistance in managing your child's disability.
- Linkage with health, financial, educational, and other support services in the community.
- Transitioning to adult services.
- Parenting programs on a group or individual basis.

Our new building will also allow me to offer more recreational and life skills

programming. I will continue to be available for home visits with flexible hours.

The Multi-Sensory Room is now fully functional and can be booked by calling Lorna at reception (ext.0) or Lorraine (ext.34). If you haven't used the room before there is a short questionnaire and orientation that has to be completed previous to use. With a simple call we can arrange to meet to complete those requirements at the client's convenience.

There is a grand opening planned for sometime in September to showcase our new facility. Watch your local paper for more details.

Lorraine Gauthier-Stromberg
Developmental Service Worker

Child Protection Services

Educating Our Children on Railroad Safety



The CN's "Little Obie" train

Fort Frances is a unique community divided from North to South by the CN railway. Although CN police patrol the area regularly, unfortunately, there are still a number of people who cross the railroad track illegally. Although this may save time, and may seem to be more convenient, it is also extremely dangerous. Accord-

ing to the Transportation Safety Board of Canada, Ontario has the highest number of deaths than any other province caused by pedestrians crossing train tracks illegally or trespassing on CN property.

The following are a few tips for railroad safety:

- Always cross at a designated Railway crossing. There are usually gates or signs in place. Walking or playing on railroad tracks is dangerous and illegal.
- Always stop and look both ways.
- Do not count on hearing a whistle to warn you that a train is coming.
- If a train is going by, stand at least 5 metres back.
- Never try to cross the tracks if a

train is coming—because of their size, trains are actually a lot closer than they look!

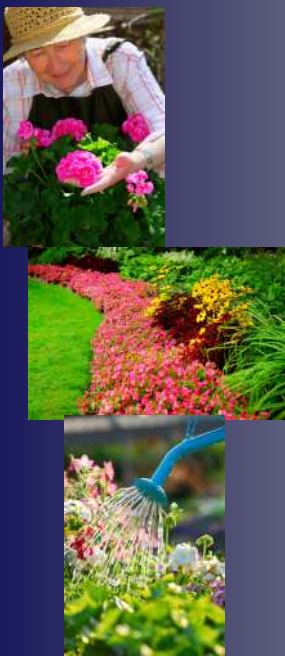
- Once a train has gone by, look both ways to make sure that another train is not coming on the opposite track.
- Always walk your bike across the tracks to make sure your tires don't get caught.

For more safety tips, check out www.safekidscanada.ca or www.cn.ca.

Until the town of Fort Frances decides to either fence off part of the railway, or create additional pedestrian crossings, stay on the right side of the tracks kids!

Lindsay Kavalench
Family Service Worker

If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically; or to provide feedback about the newsletter, please notify us by sending an e-mail to: Information@facsrr.ca



Children's Mental Health Services

Depression in Teenagers



Occasional feelings of sadness, bad moods, and feeling down are a normal part of adolescence. However, it is important for a parent of a teenager to be able to recognize when their child's bad mood is actually a major depression. Teenagers who suffer from depression experience a persistent sad mood, are angry, have feelings of hopelessness, and they lose the ability to feel interest and pleasure in activities they previously enjoyed. Depression in teenagers can be difficult to recognize as many of the signs and symptoms are typical feelings and behaviours for adolescents. The difference is in the

severity of symptoms with the mood disturbance lasting most of the time, during most days, and lasting for several weeks.

Some of the symptoms include:

- Withdrawal from friends and family.
- Anger, rage, anxiety, irritability.
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits (eating and sleeping too much or too little).
- Indecision, lack of concentration, forgetfulness.
- Lack of motivation.
- Overreaction of criticism.
- Skipping school or a drop in school grades.
- Thoughts of death or suicide.
- Drug or alcohol use.

Many factors can trigger a depressive episode during adolescence. Some factors include early traumatic events, hormonal changes, stress, genetic factors, and personal tragedies. Depression can lead to many

behavioural and emotional disturbances. Teens may turn to alcohol or drugs as a way to cope with their feelings. They may suffer from low self-esteem. They may self-injure or act out. Often the scariest aspect of depression for parents is that teens may also have thoughts of suicide.

Depression in adolescence is treatable and it is important for a parent of a teenager to seek help if they suspect their teen is depressed. Treatment can consist of 'talk therapy', cognitive-behavioural therapy, anti-depressant medication, or a combination of therapy and medication. To obtain help for your teenager speak with your family doctor and make a referral to a mental health care professional.

Janice Gagne
Children's Mental Health
Therapist/Psychometrist

The Children's Mental Health Team held family barbeques at their offices in Atikokan and Fort Frances to celebrate Children's Mental Health Week May 4-8. Thanks to everyone who came out to show their support. We had a great time and hope to see more people join us next year.



Atikokan and Fort Frances BBQ participants.

Community Services & Quality

Father's in Families

"Fatherhood is not just a role—provider, disciplinarian, friend—it's also a relationship, one that transforms us as much as our kids."
Samuel Osherson, The Passions of Fatherhood. 1995

Today more children are growing up without their biological father in the home than at any other point in history. Divorce, remarriage, as well as more children being born outside of marriage, result in the diminishing role of fathers in the daily lives of their children.

What does that mean for the quality of life of our children? How are positive outcomes for children and families being impacted and how is the child welfare system that supports them being affected? Recent statistics reveal that children living apart from their fathers are at an increased risk of suffering negative outcomes.

A good father is critical to the optimal development and well-being of a child. Fathers' roles in children's lives affect their healthy child development, gender identity, sexuality, emotional and social commitment, and financial security.

Parents need to be partners in raising their children, even when they don't share a household. Fathers often have difficulty staying emotionally connected to their children. Father involvement is closely connected to the relationship the father has with the mother. It is important for mothers, as well as grandparents and extended family, to participate in a family system that works to keep fathers involved.

One of the most important things a father can do is "be there" for their children. Being present for your child will look different based on your life circumstances and your child's age, but at minimum it means doing everything you can to connect with your child in a manner that helps them to thrive.

Another way we can involve fathers while protecting children is through Family Centred Conferencing; this energizes individuals by giving them a unique and vital opportunity to voice opinions and gain control of situations that matter to them.

Families are encouraged to tap their own existing resources to rebuild and strengthen social supports. Family Centred Conferences can incorporate the knowledge and skills to work with



Celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Father's Day!

intergenerational dynamics and to help fathers gain and maintain access to their children.

Family Centred Conferences can focus on maintaining family relationships and connections and consider the options for the child. It helps Dads become a presence in their children's lives and remain a positive, nurturing, and guiding parent. The ultimate goal is to improve the well-being of children.

Tina Arnold, Family Centred Conferencing Coordinator

We are on the Web!
www.facsrr.ca

Please post on your bulletin board!



Call your local office of Family & Children's Services
24 Hours a day,
7 Days a week
Or visit us on the web www.facsrr.ca

