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A Word from the Executive Director

UNSAFE SLEEPING ENVIRONMENTS AND BED SHARING

I recently had an opportunity to attend a Plenary Presentation at a Conference that provided information on **Child Deaths in Ontario**. Although all of the information presented was interesting, what struck me most was the fact that many of **these deaths were preventable**. In particular, I was quite concerned by the increasing number of infants dying as a result of **"unsafe sleeping environments" and "bed sharing"**.

Unsafe sleeping environments include surfaces not designed for infant sleep such as adult beds, couches, armchairs and infant swings. In addition, any sleep surface that is cluttered with pillows, blankets, toys, duvets and other objects is deemed to be an unsafe sleeping environment.

Bed sharing refers to situations where an infant shares the same

sleep surface with someone else. Although there is no way of knowing how many parents share a sleeping space with their infants regularly or on occasion, and how many people place children on couches and in cribs cluttered with baby items from time to time, the incidents of death resulting from the actions of well meaning parents is a genuine public safety concern.

Here are some **preventative suggestions provided by the Office of the Chief Coroner** for all parents of infants:

- * Place infants down for **sleep only on their back** until they are one year of age.
- * Put infants on a **firm mattress in a crib**.
- * Don't use pillows, crib bumper pads, blankets, afghans, duvets or quilts (especially adult bedcovers), over or under an infant.
- * Don't use sleeping surfaces not designed or approved for infant sleep.



- * Don't let babies share a sleep surface with another child or with an adult.
- * Don't put babies in an adult bed or on a sofa to sleep.
- * Keep the baby's room **temperature cool** (under 65 degrees) while he or she is sleeping.
- * **Tell other caregivers** of the baby (aunts, uncles, grandparents, babysitters etc.) to **follow these simple rules**.

Vik Nowak



Community Services & Quality Assurance



The Community Services team would like to introduce **Becky McClain as the new Supervised Access Coordinator**.

Becky has been with the Agency for close to eight years and brings a wealth of experience from her other positions. Becky started out in Atikokan, spending one year there as a Family Service Worker. She then moved to Fort Frances to work with youth in the Independence Planning Program. Becky then spent six years working with children in care. Becky is excited about her new position, and about the opportunity to **conduct a district-wide**

needs assessment for the Supervised Access Program.

This will advise the Agency regarding the needs of the clients and how we can **enhance or change the current service delivery model**.

The goal of the program is to provide separating or divorcing parents a **neutral and safe place to exchange or visit with their children**.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Becky at 274-0381.

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### Farewell to Amanda Jourdain:

I have been on placement at Family and Children's Services on the Community Services Team since September as part of the **Native Child and Family Service Worker program I am taking at Confederation College**.



During my placement everybody has been so friendly and helpful, and has gone out of their way to ensure my placement was as successful and knowledgeable as they could make it. As my placement comes to a close, I want to take a minute to say a big **Thank You** to all the staff at FACS; I have enjoyed being part of your wonderful team. Thank You for sharing your special gifts.

Amanda Jourdain

**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](mailto:Information@facsrr.ca)**



**Christmas Lunch and Gift Exchange:** The week before Christmas the staff at FACS shared a tasty "turkey and all the trimmings" Christmas luncheon, and exchanged "Secret Santa" gifts. A big thank you to our Social Committee for facilitating the event!



## Developmental Services

### Celebrate Family Literacy Day - January 27, 2009

On January 27, 2009, the **11th annual Family Literacy Day (FLD)** will be celebrated **across Canada**. FLD is an annual initiative that encourages families to read together to become lifelong learners.

Family Literacy Day was developed by ABC CANADA Literacy Foundation and Honda Canada in 1999 to **encourage families to read and learn together on a daily basis**. "A few minutes of family reading a day helps a parent and a child in a very big way. It prepares children for

challenges ahead, encourages a lifetime of reading enjoyment, and sharpens an adult's literacy skills" said Margaret Eaton, President, ABC CANADA Literacy Foundation. It also strengthens the relationship between the parent and child.

Every year on January 27, families and communities across Canada celebrate this special day at literacy-themed events. "Reading, language development and literacy are the basic building blocks for thinking, learning and almost every skill that we use in our day-to-day lives," says Dr. Nick Whitehead, CEO, Oxford Learning.



To mark Family Literacy Day, **gather your family together for a "Story Telling Pajama Party"** in the living room and have everyone **come in their PJ's and bring along their sleeping bag and their favorite bedtime story** to share.

Brenda Witherspoon-Bedard  
Infant and Child Development Worker

**We are on the Web!**  
[www.facsrr.ca](http://www.facsrr.ca)

Please post me on bulletin board!

## Children's Mental Health Services

### Stress Management for Kids

Stress can affect children of all ages. Often, some of the signs of **stress can be confused with other children's mental health disorders**, thus, it is important for parents and caregivers to recognize and to be aware of the symptoms of stress in children.

Very **small children** may have **symptoms of headaches and stomachaches**. Other symptoms may include, bedwetting, clinginess, hyperactivity, aggressive behavior, shyness and anxiety. It is important to remember that **symptoms of stress are not as obvious in children as in adults**. Adults will often be heard saying they are "stressed out". Children will

complain more often of physical symptoms.

Stress can be either positive or negative, depending on how the child reacts and handles the situation. Children will **react differently**; this could mean one child experiencing a stressful situation as a **challenge** and another child **becoming anxious or upset** over the same stressful situation.

Some strategies to manage children with stress are:

- \* Eat healthy.
- \* Promote exercise. Spending time playing with your child is great for getting them to open up. Offer more unscheduled time for play.



- \* Be clear and consistent with rules and expectations.
- \* Learn to listen to your child. Encourage them with statements like, "How did you feel about that" or "what happened next".
- \* Teach kids that everyone makes mistakes, and admit to your own mistakes.

Irene Mason  
Child and Family Therapist



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](http://www.facsrr.ca)



### Thank You!

## Family and Children's Services of the District of Rainy River would like to thank everyone who contributed to our 6th Annual Adopt-An-Angel Program

We would like to thank the management and staff of Wal-mart and Tompkins Hardware LTD for hosting our angel trees. We would also like to thank those businesses, organizations, and individuals who have made generous donations and who purchased a gift for our angels.

Thanks to your generosity Christmas will be brighter for many of the children we serve!

*We are dedicated to ensuring the safety of children and youth and promoting optimal development within families and communities.*