



Developmental Services

Office Locations:

Fort Frances Office (Main office)

240 First Street East, Suite 200
Fort Frances, Ontario P9A 1K5
Phone: (807) 274-7787
Fax: (807) 274-6646

Atikokan Office

214 Main Street
P.O. Box 2050
Atikokan, Ontario P0T 1C0
Phone: (807)597-2700
Fax: (807) 597-6920

TOLL FREE NUMBER
1-800-465-7764



"Make the Connection" Parenting Program for Parents with Babies 0-12 months

"Make the Connection" is a parenting program for parents and babies from birth to one year of age. It is an interactive parenting program that promotes secure infant attachment, two-way communication and infant led learning—the essential building blocks for healthy, happy futures. Based on current research and principles of adult learning, this enjoyable program combines parent-baby activities, parent discussion and personalized video feedback.

The next session starts September 12, 2008 at the Best Start Hub (115 Portage Avenue) at 10:00 a.m. This exciting program is a partnership between the Northwestern Health Unit, the Best Start Hub and the FACS Child Development Program. Register now! Limited space available. Call Brenda Witherspoon @ 274-7787 ext 243 or Miranda Sigurdson @ 274-9827 for more information. Snacks and child care will be provided if needed.

FASD AWARENESS DAY— SEPTEMBER 9

Every year on September 9th, International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Awareness Day is observed. Proclamations are issued all around the world. Bells are rung at 9:09 a.m. in every time zone from New Zealand to Alaska. People all around the world gather for events to raise awareness about the dangers of drinking during pregnancy and the plight of individuals and families who struggle with FASD. The first FASD Day was celebrated on 9/9/99. This day was chosen so that on the ninth day of the ninth month of the year, the world will remember that during the nine months of pregnancy a woman should abstain from alcohol.



Community Service & Quality Assurance

Live Life to the Fullest... Volunteer



Family and Children's Services (FACS) recognizes that volunteers play an integral role in the services we provide to children, youth, and families. This philosophy is well-backed by research. The Big Brothers Big Sisters organization report research findings that after 18 months of spending time with their mentors children/youth were:

- 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs.
- 27% less likely to begin using alcohol.
- 52% less likely to skip school.
- More confident of their performance in schoolwork.
- One third less likely to hit someone.
- Able to get along better with their families.

It's hard not to feel encouraged by statistics like these!

And it doesn't stop there! Volunteers benefit as well. Volunteers receive training and experience developing and refining skills that assist them in employment endeavours. They also have the chance to engage in fun activities that they enjoy.

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Tierney, J.P., Grossman, J.B., and Resch, N.L. (1995) Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sister. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

FACS has many exciting volunteer opportunities in the following areas:

- Special Friends who spend one-on-one fun time with a youngster.
- Tutors who help one-on-one with school work and academic assignments.
- Drivers who transport children to and from specific activities/programs.
- Child Care providers who assist with child care.

In addition to these ongoing opportunities FACS also recruits volunteers for various one time special events throughout the year; for example the Adopt-an-Angel Campaign and the Christmas Party.

Volunteers come from all walks of life and bring with them their own individual skill sets and experiences. Volunteers are a variety of ages and may or may not have children of their own. What they do have in common is a desire to help make a lasting difference in the life of a child!

Volunteers who are interested in any of these opportunities can contact the Volunteer Coordinator at 274-7787 ext. 270, or visit our website www.facsrr.ca for more information and an application.



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

Anxiety Disorders in Children and Adolescents

Anxiety is a normal part of child development with children showing anxiety in a number of different ways as they develop. Babies typically experience stranger anxiety at about 7-9 months of age and then again they may experience separation anxiety in their second year of life. During the pre-school years, anxiety or fears can become more specific such as a fear of dogs, however, as the child grows these fears usually subside. Teens may worry about social acceptance and academics.

Anxiety is defined as a feeling of worry or unease. When the level of anxiety is great enough to interfere with a child or young person's everyday activities, we call this an anxiety disorder. Roughly 6% of children and youth have an anxiety disorder that is serious enough to require treatment.

Anxiety disorders have multiple, complex origins. It is likely that genes play a role in causing anxiety. However, the home, the neighbourhood,

school and other settings can also contribute to anxiety.

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental, emotional and behavioral problems to occur during childhood and adolescence. About 13 out of every 100 children and adolescents ages 9-17 experience some kind of anxiety disorder. About half of that number also experience a second mental or behavioral disorder such as depression.

Some signs of anxiety are: poor concentration, poor memory, over sensitivity, restlessness, nervousness, withdrawal, aches and pains, bed-wetting, nausea, headaches, difficulty sleeping and tension.

If a parent or care giver begins to notice symptoms, they should speak to their health care provider who can then determine if the symptoms are caused by an anxiety disorder or by some other condition. A referral to a mental health care professional can also be provided.

Anxiety in children can be treated very effectively using a variety of interventions. Treatment approaches are often

comprehensive covering many areas such as physical, mental, interpersonal, emotional and behavioral. Parents and care givers can assist a child experiencing anxiety by increasing the amount of physical exercise each day, providing healthy food choices, developing healthy bedtime routines, consistency with discipline, and setting realistic and attainable goals for children.

If anxiety levels do not decrease or if they worsen, then pharmaceutical interventions may have to be considered by a health care provider.

For more information on anxiety disorders in children, contact the **Children's Mental Health Program at Family and Children's Services @ 274-7787.**



Patty Wirtanen, Children's Mental Health Therapist

We are on the Web!
www.facsrr.ca



My Brother is LOVE

The following is a poem written by Callahan Wiedenhoef for her brother Nicholas. Nicholas is a participant in the Family Relief Program at FACS.



He has sparkly blue eyes and hair that is short and brown —
Feet that feel so baby soft and his ears are ALWAYS listening.
He's adorable, special and really nice —
And he's always sitting in his chair.

He is happy almost everyday —
And he's never mean and gets a Timeout!

If he was in a Disney movie, he would be the Lion King —
Cause he's SO strong and really really brave!
I can always read him stories, and he NEVER interrupts me like my little brother!

Twinkle, twinkle little star is his favourite kind of song —
And when I sing to him I get his BIGGEST smile!

When he gets sick I help him to get better —
So when I grow up I can be his doctor!

Sometimes I pretend I am driving a race-car —
Going round and round all over the house,
pushing his wheelchair —

And it always makes him laugh when I go super fast!

When he stays in the hospital I feel sad and sometimes I don't understand why —
But then I remember God made him this way and that —
I love him and I know he loves me and he is VERY special to our world!

He is just a silly kid sometimes and likes me to put squishy toys in his hands!

But when it's time for sleep I sing his favourite lullabies —
And pretend I am his "little mamma" and cuddle in his bed.

I know he dreams at night and I am SURE it's about his family.

I really hope he is with me always and never goes away —
Because I would miss seeing his smiling face and be sad everyday.

But I believe that when you die, you grow wings and fly —
And in heaven he will be my own guardian angel!

I LOVE my brother and I know he LOVES me so that must mean that —
My Brother IS Love!!

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

