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# WEST KOOTENAY INFANT

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Summer/Fall 09

Volume 11 Issue 2

***Hello ALL, 'Tis the season...Flu season that is.***

*By The Gaudreau Family*

*I am writing about a very important matter: Preventing the spread of Flu. For those of you who plan to visit families with very young children over the next few months, and even if you are not, please take a few minutes to read this.*

*We would like to share an important topic that we recently discussed with our babies' peditrition. If you are not aware of RSV, respiratory syncytial virus, you are among the majority. For full-term babies, this type of flu is typically not any worse than a common cold, but for premature babies, the virus can be quite different. Babies born earlier than 36 weeks are at the highest risk for serious complications like pneumonia, bronchiolitis, and other sometimes fatal complications.*

*Our babies were born premature at 34 weeks, are multiples, and had low birth weights; these are among the highest risk factors for contracting RSV and developing serious complications.*

*Preventing the spread of RSV is very difficult. Thus, we must be vigilant about keeping our children safe during flu season (October through April). The virus is spread through physical contact, in the air via a cough or sneeze, or by touching an infected object, and it spreads very easily, especially from child to child.*

*You may ask, "Can't they fight it off and build up their immune system?"*

*"Kids need to get sick, right?" The simple answer is NO. Since our babies were pre-term, they did not acquire the necessary immunities to fight off infection. If they contract RSV, they could be hospitalized and develop serious complications.*

*We'll be asking visitors to help prevent the vulnerable babies from contracting the flu or any other illness.*

Continued on page 11

## **INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

- 1,11 'Tis the Season...**
- 2 Editor's notes, Letters to the Editor**
- 3 Newsletter Start: Kids Have Stress Too**
- 4-6 Understanding Health Information at Your Doctor Visits 8 -**
- 9 Ongoing and Upcoming Events**
- 9,14 Protecting Children from Sexual Abuse**
- 10-11 Television and the Family Meal**
- 12-13 Games to Help Preschool Children Relax**



## EDITOR'S NOTES

*THE WEST KOOTENAY INFANT IS PRESENTED BY PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS WHO ARE INVOLVED WITH ENCOURAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN. THE NEWSLETTER FOCUSES ON ISSUES RELATED TO THE FIRST 3 YEARS OF LIFE. THE ARTICLES REPRESENT THE OPINIONS OF THE CONTRIBUTORS AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THOSE OF THEIR RESPECTIVE AGENCIES. IF YOU WISH TO TALK WITH ANY OF THE INDIVIDUALS, THEY MAY BE REACHED AS LISTED BELOW.*

**CONCERNS RELATED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR CHILD:** Jerri Schmidt, Infant Development Consultant (Castlegar, Slocan to Nakusp area), Julia Stockhausen (Trail, Fruitvale, Rossland) or Linda Hunter Manager, (Nelson, Salmo, Kaslo area) (250) 365-5616 or 1-888-644-5616 or email at [idp.kfp@telus.net](mailto:idp.kfp@telus.net).

**INFORMATION ON ABORIGINAL INFANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OR THE ABORIGINAL SUPPORTED CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM:** Susie Meyers, Brent Kenedy Learning Centre, South Slocan, 250-359-5011.

**INFORMATION ON SUPPORTED CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM:** Tashia Weeks, Manager or your local SCD Consultant, (250) 365-5616 or 1-888-644-5616 or email at [supcc@telus.net](mailto:supcc@telus.net).

**INFORMATION ON NUTRITION:**  
Tara



**Kootenay Family Place and the West Kootenay Infant Development Program are supported by United Way.**

Kootenay Family Place, Castlegar and the West Kootenay Infant Development Program are accredited by COA, the Council of Accreditation.

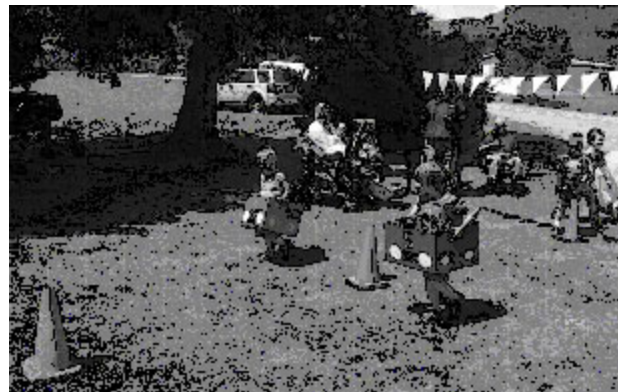
## Letters to the Editor:

**Cardboard Box Competition in Nelson May 2009:** May was Speech and Hearing month across Canada. Within Interior Health, Speech Language Pathologists encouraged parents to help feed their children's imaginations by spending more time playing with their kids and reaping the huge benefits. Engaging young children in pretend play, sharing books/stories, songs and rhymes are activities that build a child's early brain development and set the foundation for all later learning.

Playing with toys and other objects, including the ever-popular cardboard box, provides a way for children to learn to think creatively and put their ideas into practice.

In Nelson, local Speech Language Pathologists, Rosie Eberle and Deb Saville challenged West Kootenay parents to "make something from nothing" with their kids using recyclable materials. Parents were asked to find an empty cardboard box, turn it into a fun play idea, take a photo of it and submit it to Nelson Health Centre to be entered into a competition.

The winner of the competition was Aaron Postnikoff and his parents, who turned two boxes into racing cars – one for him and one for his brother.



Comments or relevant articles can be sent to Linda Hunter, Editor, West Kootenay Infant Development Program, Box 3144, V1N 3H4, Castlegar, British Columbia or email: [idp.kfp@telus.net](mailto:idp.kfp@telus.net). Newsletter can be viewed on line at <http://www.idpofbc.ca/regional>



*Newsletter Start is for adults who are improving their reading skills.*

## ***Kids Have Stress Too***

*Adults aren't the only ones who feel stressed. Kids do too. Some stress is normal. Too much stress is not good for children--or adults.*

***Kids say their stress comes from many different things:***

- ◇ *Change, such as, moving into a new house, child care centre or starting to go to day care.*
- ◇ *Having too much to do--kids need some quiet time.*
- ◇ *Feeling different from other kids.*
- ◇ *Being teased or bullied.*
- ◇ *Fighting or arguing among family members.*
- ◇ *Not getting along with brothers or sisters.*
- ◇ *Being yelled at by family, friends or teachers.*
- ◇ *Family break up*
- ◇ *If they feel lonely or unloved.*

***You can help your child when they feel stressed.***

*Spending time with your child is the most important thing you can do. Listen to him when he talk to you. Try to understand how he feel. Show your child that you love him, with words, hugs and kisses. Do things together as a family. It will help him feel that he belong. Exercise is a great way to burn off stress--go for a walk, play with balls, do things together.*

***Building a less stressful home:***

- ☆ *Have fun together, a good laugh helps fight stress*
- ☆ *Learn to manage your own stress*
- ☆ *Healthy foods help the body cope with stress*
- ☆ *Sleep is important. Tired children are stressed easier.*
- ☆ *Bedtime routines help kids relax at the end of the day*
- ☆ *Make sure your child gets exercise and time to play.*

# How to Get the Most out of Your Doctor Visits

## Understanding Health Information at Your Doctor Visits

By Kristina Duda, R.N.<sup>1</sup>, C L Hunter WKIDP

It is important to understand medical information at doctor visits.

Have you ever left the doctor's office and wondered "What in the world did he or she just say?" If so, you aren't alone. Even if you felt like you understood what your doctor was telling you at your doctor's visit, it may not make sense by the time you get home.



According to several recent studies, a majority of adults feel like they do not understand the information they receive at doctor's visits, whether it is related to an illness, a new piece of equipment or medications. Researchers call this health literacy. This is a problem regardless of education, income, age or ethnicity.

Many people also turn to the internet when they do not feel they are getting the information they need from their doctors about their health issues. This can be a good thing, but you have to know what to look for and what to trust. Remember, just because it is on the internet (or on TV, in the newspaper...) does not make it accurate.

So, what can you do about it? Believe it or not, there are things you can and should do. Ultimately, your health is your responsibility and not understanding what is happening to you should not be an option.

## How to Communicate With Your Doctor

### 1. Write a list of questions and concerns before your doctor's visit.

Many people get into the office and forget what they wanted to ask their doctor. Don't be afraid to pull out your list in front of the doctor and the nurse.

- o Good communication is a two-way street. You can aid communication by letting the doctor know that you trust him or her to care for your child.
- o You should also be as prepared as possible with details during your doctor visits.
- o When asked how your child is doing, be ready to share any concerns or ask any questions. It's best to be specific. Be sure to tell the doctor details about symptoms. This helps the doctor assess your child's condition more readily and accurately than if you just say that "my child is sick."
- o If you're worried about symptoms your child is having, mention them to the doctor even if he or she doesn't ask.

*continued on page 5*

**2. Write down instructions and information your doctor gives you before you leave the office.**

*If there is a new diagnosis, write it down and get the correct spelling. Also ask what further tests or treatments there will be and write those down too. You can then look them up again later when you have had time to absorb the information.*

- o **Be informed, but don't overwhelm.** *The Internet is a tremendous tool that can help you learn more about your child's health and development, but it's unrealistic to expect your child's doctor to evaluate every health resource or breakthrough you find on the Web or see on TV. If you have a particular article that you'd like the doctor to review or comment on, mail, email, fax, or drop off the article well in advance of the office visit, giving the doctor plenty of time to review and do any necessary research.*

**3. Repeat the instructions back or practice what your doctor showed you in front of him.**

*Repetition will help both of you know if you understand the instructions for taking medications or using new equipment.*

- o **Be focused during the visit.** *Avoid distractions so you can focus your full attention on answering the doctor's questions. Turn off your cell phone and leave other kids with a spouse, babysitter, or relative, if possible.*
- o **Try to stick to the reason for the visit** — *for example, don't use a sick visit to discuss behavior problems that may require an in-depth evaluation. Instead, schedule a separate visit and let the office staff know the nature of your child's problem so that a longer appointment time can be allotted.*

**4. Ask for written materials about your diagnosis, medication or condition.**

*Most doctors' offices have written information on common diagnoses. If the doctor doesn't have it readily available, chances are she or he can print it up fairly quickly. That way you are sure to get information that the doctor believes is accurate and reliable.*

**5. If the doctor has explained something to you but you don't understand, ask him for clarification.**

*It is easy for medical professionals to forget how to explain things to patients. To them, it is easier to explain it in medical terminology, which to many people, may as well be a foreign language.*



*continued on page 6*

**6. If your doctor's explanation just isn't making sense to you, try asking the nurse.**

Just hearing a different person explain it in a slightly different way may help it make sense. The nurse should be giving you the same information, but it may be easier to understand. But be sure you are actually talking to a nurse and not the receptionist or other office personnel.

**7. If you have questions after you get home, call your doctor back.**

You should be able to get an answer from either the doctor or the nurse within 24 hours. They are there to be sure you are comfortable, no question is too small.

**8. If your doctor is in a hurry, but you don't feel comfortable with what he or she has told you, tell the doctor you do not understand.**

The doctor should either sit down and talk with you or schedule a time (within the next day or two) that he or she can sit down with you. If the doctor is not willing to do this, find a new doctor.

- o And don't be afraid to give the doctor feedback about your office visit experience, such as whether you felt rushed during the appointment or needed more information about a prescription or procedure. A good doctor

will  
want

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**Community Living** is pleased to announce the opening of a new resource **"A Respite Home"**. It is available to families and caregivers who have children with extra needs in the West Kootenay Region. The Respite Home is located in Nelson, near Lakeside Park and is central to shopping and recreational facilities.

The addition of this new resource will provide families and caregivers with another option when it comes to meeting their respite needs. There is no cost associated with the use of the Respite Home itself. For more information, or to reserve your stay at the Respite Home, please contact:

Debbie Postmus ~ Home Services Co-ordinator  
PO Box 1234, Fruitvale, BC V0G 1L0  
Phone: (250) 231-4863, Email: [debbie@commconn.ca](mailto:debbie@commconn.ca)



Continues to sponsor *Stars for Success* which is for families (total gross income of less than \$38,000/year) that need financial help to enroll their children in a program. It is for children under 6 to help them go to a recreational program (music, sports, etc). Information and Application forms: Colleen, 352-6786 in Nelson or 1-866-551-5437 for elsewhere in the region or website: [www.sucessby6wk.com](http://www.sucessby6wk.com). Dorothy Kaytor and Val Mayes are the new Sucess by 6 coordinators--Welcome Dorothy and Val, and a big thank you and good bye to Kim Adamson.

## ONGOING AND UPCOMING EVENTS

### **CASTLEGAR and area:**

Blueberry Creek Community School: Susan 365-7201, free activities:

Strong Start Center – 9-12 M,W,Th,Fr 12-3 Tu

Kootenay Family Place-Castlegar Neighborhood House: Megan 365-3662.

Beautiful Beginnings (for pregnant women and parents with children birth to 6 months), Tu 11-2

Community Action Program for Children drop in 10-12 Wed (birth to 6)

Family Drop in 10-12 Thu (birth to 6)

Family Fun Night 2nd Thu of the month 5:30-7 includes dinner

Castlegar Primary School, call 365-5744.

Kindergym, Fri 9:15-10:45 Mother Goose 2-5 years Tues 9-10

Caslegar Library: 365-6611

Preschool story time: Tu & Th 10-11 3-5 year olds

Story time: Sat 11:30-12:00 18m-3 years

Mother Goose Wed 10-11 0-12 months

Robson Community School, Laurie 365-5922

Taste of Two mon 9-10:30

StrongStart - Tu,We,Fr 8:30-11:30 Th 12:30-3:30

### **FAUQUIER/EDGEWOOD/BURTON:** Jody,269-7209.

StrongStart – alternates Fauquier Community Centre (FCC), Edgewood, and Burton, am and pm times.

Little Explorers FCC We 9:15

Story Time FCC Tu 4:30

Parent-tot Drop In FCC Th 10

### **KASLO:** Sarah Evans, 353-7691.

Kaslo Strong Start Family Centre, at JV Humphries School, 500 6th St.

Nobody's Perfect, Guest Speakers, drop in Mon and Wed in am.

POP/CAPC, Barb, 353-7691, drop in 1st and 3rd Tuesdays.

Parent-Child Mother Goose--contact Barb for next session.

Parent Support Circle: Laura Watt, 353-7691, Thur. 10-11:30, child care provided.

Kaslo Library: Storytime (3-5 yrs), Annie, 353-2942.

### **MEADOW CREEK:** Sarah 353-7691.

North Lake Strong Start Family Centre, Jewett School, 132 Meadow Creek Rd, Drop in Tue and Thur am.

Lardeau Valley Com. Hall, Sherri, 366-4113.

Pooh's Corner (Mom and Kids Group)

Leap, Learn & Play, Preschool (4-5 yrs) . Drop-in Monday and Friday, 9-11.

### **NAKUSP:** Nancy 250-265-4666

Lucerne Elementary School StrongStart – M, We, Fr, 9-12 Tu, Th 12:30-3:30

Nakusp Library Story Time: Thurs 11:15

### **NEW DENVER:** Charlene 250-358-7768

StrongStart – M,Tu 9-12 We,Th 2-5 Fri 11:30-2:30

*Continue on page 8*

## ONGOING AND UPCOMING EVENTS

### **NELSON and area:**

Harrop Hall, Kootenay Lake Family Network, parent-child group, Leslie,  
kootenaylakefamilynetwork@shaw.ca.

Balfour: Balfour Covenant Church, Child Mother Goose for Dads and/or Moms with children under 2.5 years. Wednesdays, January 21-March 11th. 10:00-11:30. *Childcare for older siblings and snacks provided. Limited space. Registration required: Contact Barb Cyr: 353-7691 or barbcyr@nklcss.org. Offered by CBAL (Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy.*

Nelson Kootenay Kids, Rebecca, 352-6678

*Various activities for young child and their parent/caregiver (Play groups, Fertility Awareness, Dad's group, Little Robes), 312 Silica Street, Nelson. Some events happening in Blewett and Rosemont. www.kootenaykids.ca.*

Parent Support Circle Cathy 354-6676, ex 2288 or Paula 354-7800.

Breast Feeding Support, LeLeche Meeting, 3rd Monday each month.

Mother Goose Programs, Joanne Harris, for next session call 352-9630.

Mother Goose Rhyme Time (birth to 2 years). Reading Time-Family Time (2-4 years)

**SPEAK-Supportive Parents Educate and Advocate for Kids**, monthly-for parents of children with extra needs, birth-18 years, Linda Hunter, 352-5546, Tracy 352-5052.

Nelson & District Community Complex, 354-4386.

Infant, Toddler and Preschool Programs,

Nelson Community Services, Liz, 352-3504. Power to Parent Parenting Program, Resource, Support, call for next session.

**SALMO** Salmo Community Services, CAPC, Hazel, 357-2277.

Play with me drop in Wed 10-11:30. Nobody's Perfect Tuesdays 4:30-7, starting Oct 17.

POP, Maureen Bert, Parent-Tot Drop in, Thur, child minding.

Love to Learn (Early Literacy), Laurie McDonald, 357-2320

**SLOCAN VALLEY:** Brent Kennedy Learning Center

Love To Learn Sat 10:30-12:00,

StrongStart Fri 1-4:30

Slocan Park Hall Tots' Playtime Plus Tues 10-12 noon

Winlaw School StrongStart Lindsay 226-7841 Tu Thur 3-6, W Fr Sat 9-12 noon

**TRAIL / ROSSLAND / FRUITVALE / MONTROSE / WARFIELD**

**Kootenay Boundary Autism Society** (special needs issues), Sue Henke, 367-6373,

www.kbas.ca- will meet in Castlegar if interest.

Mother Goose, at Glenmerry Elementary, Webster Elementary and Beaver Valley Library.  
Call Desneiges Profili, 364-1275 for times.

Building Beautiful Babies Thur, at Trail Middle School building 364-2326

CCRR Playgroup: call 365-2980 for hours.

Rossland Library, Story Times: 362-7611, both 3-5 yrs, under 3yrs programs, call for times.

Beaver Valley: 364-7114, preschool story time, call for times.

Love2Learn for preschoolers at Glenmerry Elementary School, Trail Middle School, Webster Elementary School, call Desneiges at 364-1275 for times.

Trail Middle School, Call 364-1275 to pre-register. English as a Second Language for Families parents and children, come and explore fun activities while practicing English skills. Fridays

Fruitvale Elementary School Strong Start Centre, call CCRR for times 364-2980

MacLean Elementary School Strong Start Centre, call CBAL for times 364-1275



## Protecting Children from Sexual Abuse

by Jerri Schmidt, BScN, WKIDP

This is a summary of information presented by **Little Warriors** who are Canadian partners for the Stewards of Children Program developed by Darkness to Light. Visit their website at [littlewarriors.ca](http://littlewarriors.ca).

1. Learn the facts and understand the risks – reality, not trust, should influence your decisions about your child

- 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before their 18th birthday
- 20% of victims are under the age of 8
- Most children never report the abuse
- 60% of abusers are people the family trust
- Abused people are more likely to use drugs and alcohol excessively, attempt suicide, have an eating disorder and engage in prostitution
- 40% of abusers were abused as children
- 70% of sexual offenders of children have between 1 and 9 victims; 20-25% have 10 to 40 victims



2. Minimize opportunity – if you don't allow your child to be in one adult/one child situations you'll dramatically lower the risk of sexual abuse

- More than 80% of sexual abuse cases happen in 1 adult/1 child situations
- Abusers often become friendly with potential victims and their families, earning trust and gaining time alone with children
- Choose group situations for your child when possible
- Set an example by personally avoiding 1 adult/1 child situations with other children
- Monitor internet use. Offenders use the internet to lure children into physical contact.

3. Talk about it – children often keep abuse a secret, but barriers can be broken down by talking openly about it.

- Understand why children are afraid to “tell”; abusers shame children, they use threats, children fear disappointing their parents, young children are talked into believing it is a game.
- Know how children communicate; children more often “tell” a trusted adult, they may tell parts of what happened or pretend it happened to someone else, they will shut down if response is emotional or negative
- Teach children about their bodies, what sexual abuse is. Give them words that help them talk about their bodies and sex comfortably with you.

4. Stay alert. Don't expect obvious signs – they are often there but you have to spot them.

- Physical signs are not common but include redness, rashes or swelling in the genital area, urinary tract infections, and anxiety symptoms such as chronic stomach pain or headaches.

*continued on page 14*

## *Television and the Family Meal*

*By: Tara Stark, RD, Community Nutritionist, Population Health, Interior Health, Nelson,*

At the end of a long day it's natural to crave the escape that comes from watching a favorite television program. A lot can happen with the TV on. With kids' attention diverted to the screen, parents can find themselves enjoying some quiet time or tuning in with their kids. But what if your family's favorite program happens to coincide with dinner time? More and more families are finding themselves eating in front of the TV. In fact, two out of three families routinely have the television on during dinner.

Sitting down and eating meals together as a family does take effort, and it's about more than putting food on the table. Family meals require energy doled out in making conversation, in connecting with one another and in setting boundaries for kids. But it is these challenges that deliver the true benefits that come with the act of eating together and the benefits aren't realized when the family is staring at the screen.

It is a good idea to establish traditions in your home around food and meals from when your kids are very young. Eating together gets harder as kids get older and engage in more activities. If you set up expectations around eating together when kids are young; including turning off the TV, the computer, and cell phones, it is easier to carry through as they get older.

With the TV turned off and other distractions limited, the family meal becomes an activity that fosters healthy child development. Young children ages 3-5 who eat with their families regularly enjoy a greater vocabulary than their peers. They are also more likely to have better verbal skills throughout their elementary school years. Research shows that upper elementary students and high school students who eat dinner with their families four or more times a week score higher on achievement tests and have higher GPAs than students who don't routinely eat with their families. Teens who eat with their families are also less likely to smoke, use drugs, or drink alcohol.

Maximize the benefits of family mealtime by keeping meals pleasant. Save difficult conversations until later and respect children's hunger, fullness and food preferences. Parents are responsible for providing nutritious foods and children are responsible for choosing which of the foods provided they will eat and whether or not to eat. Keeping mealtimes pleasant and not pressuring kids to eat sets up a nice eating environment where young children feel safe to experiment with foods and learn to enjoy the act of eating. If you have a picky eater, take advantage of family mealtime to model healthy eating. Young children sometimes need up to 20 exposures to a new food before they will try it. They are more likely to try a new food if they have seen their parents and siblings eating it.

*Continued on page 11*

Both kids and adults who eat together as a family eat more nutritious foods and get more important nutrients. Research shows that 9-14 year olds who regularly eat dinner with their family eat more fruits and vegetables and dairy foods and get more fiber, calcium, folate, iron, vitamins B6, B12, C and E, less saturated fat and less trans fat. These nutritional benefits aren't realized when families routinely eat in front of the television.



Next time you are tempted to turn on the tube during dinner, remember that TV is not a member of your family. Whether you are eating a home cooked meal or Chinese take out, there is value in sitting down together and connecting for this short time each day.

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***If you have breast feeding questions or concerns, there may be a certified Lactation Consultant near you:***



*In Nelson: Nancy Harmon, 250-505-7200 or 250-353-8071, Fridays, 9:30-11:30 at the Public Health Unit, 2-333 Victoria Street, Nelson.*

*Contact your local Public Health Unit for a lactation consultant in your area.*

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## ***'Tis the Season...Flu Season continued from page 1.***

*This is what you can do:*

- 1. When you arrive, please wash your hands when coming into the home. As well, do not kiss the babies. (Italian family.....what can I say!)*
- 2. Please refrain from coming over if you are currently sick and have not been symptom-free for at least 5 days, if you live with someone who is sick, or have been in close contact with someone who is sick.*
- 3. If you are parents to a baby or toddler, please refrain from bringing them to our house during RSV season.*

*Please understand that this is not meant to offend anyone, just simply to provide an explanation. We hope you understand, and we appreciate your help keeping our babies safe.*

*Thank You.*

## Games to Help Preschool Children Relax

Linda Hunter, West Kootenay Infant Development Program

*Excerpts from the Article 'My Toes Feel Like Spaghetti: An exploration of Relaxation Strategies for Preschool Children, Leona Corniere and Sherri Armstrong, The Newsletter of Infant Mental Health Promotion (IMP) Vol. 52, Winter 2008-09, pp: 9-11.*

Preschool children are vulnerable to experiencing stress as a result of their busy lives and the busy lives of their family. Providing them with skills to cope with stress will improve their abilities to respond and adapt effectively to a variety of situations.

Relaxation games appear to help the child be calmer, quieter and to help the child be more focused on activities.

These strategies were used by preschool teachers in the classroom and the teachers found they observed a similar benefit for themselves. "One worker noted 'My voice level has gone down, it is not so high pitched and I am aware of my tone'".

*The teachers noted a few import factors when working with preschool children:*

- *Simple instructions and directions*
- *Repetition*
- *Concrete, tangible instructional aids*
- *Integration of imagery into instructions, songs, stories and activities*
- *Mellow voice and tone.*

Here are some Ideas:

**Feelings**—Young children experience feeling, but may not have the words to talk about them: Introduce 3-4 feelings (such as happy, mad, and sad) and then add more as they are ready.

- *Cut out feeling faces and tape to a ball or cardboard cube. The child rolls the ball and mimics the face that comes up.*
- *Velcro feeling faces (2X2 inches) onto a strip of cardboard or plastic board that can be portable. When a child is mad, for example, hand the 'mad face' to them and say "You are mad". Use this technique throughout the day with a variety of feelings.*
- *Model for the child by labeling your own feelings and talking about why you feel that way.*
- *Sing feeling songs such as 'When you're happy and you know it'. Use your whole body to express the feelings such as hopping with excitement, stomping feet for mad...*

**Deep Breathing**—when introducing deep breathing, emphasize breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth as well as moving their stomach. You can put a sticker on their stomach and let them watch it rise and fall.

- *Blowing out candles—the child holds up one hand and together with an adult counts the fingers pretending they are candles. Slowly blow each one out using a long 3 second breath. The adult can count with the fingers on her hand.*

*Continued on page 11*

*Games to Help Preschool Children Relax continued from page 10*

- *Blowing up a pretend balloon—the adult takes an imaginary balloon from an imaginary pocket and holds it up to their mouth (cupping hands to imitate a flat balloon). Taking a deep slow breath in, slowly fill up the balloon, the hands slowly expand. Repeat this a few times. The child can blow into the balloon while the adult uses their hands to make it big, then they child can squeeze all the air out of the balloon. The game can be repeated until done and then the imaginary balloon goes back into the imaginary pocket.*

**Relaxing Muscles**—this will help to teach child the difference between tense and relaxed muscles—you could use tense/relax songs and finger plays to help their understanding.

- *Sticky hands—pretend to apply glue to the palms of the hands, while saying “glue, glue, glue”. Now press them together, repeating “press, press, press”. Now open hands slowly and discover the ‘stickiness’. Repeat until done.*
- *Spaghetti arms—make a fist and bring up to chest, bring shoulders up to ears and make a squishy face and count to 5. Now relax saying “spaghetti arms”. Repeat a few times until done.*



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**Kootenay Boundary Autism Society** would like to share with you our “Work In Progress”. We have been very busy over the past year with a number of projects that we now would like to share with you.

*Kootenay Boundary Autism Society website: [www.kbas.ca](http://www.kbas.ca)*

*Autism Community Web casts: [http://www.kbas.ca/f/Kootenay\\_ACT\\_Online\\_Video\\_Info.pdf](http://www.kbas.ca/f/Kootenay_ACT_Online_Video_Info.pdf)*

*Respite Project: <http://www.kbas.ca/rp.html>*

*Resource Books: <http://www.kbas.ca/r12.html>*

*Social Meetings: <http://www.kbas.ca/socialmeeting2008.html>*

*A big thank you to all our parent volunteers who have worked hard and sacrificed their time to help with the above successes.*

*Please help us to spread the word!*

*Sue Henke KBAS ~ [info@kbas.ca](mailto:info@kbas.ca)*

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## **PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS FOR CHILDREN WITH EXTRA NEEDS**

*In Trail/Fruitvale/Castlegar--KOOTENAY BOUNDARY AUTISM SOCIETY, Provides education, resources and support to families, caregivers of individuals diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Sue Henke, 367-6373, [www.kbas.ca](http://www.kbas.ca).*

*In Nelson--SPEAK (SUPPORTIVE PARENTS EDUCATE AND ADVOCATE FOR KIDS)*

*For families/caregivers who have a child with extra needs under the age of 18 who would like to meet other parents. We meet monthly in Nelson. Linda 352-5546 or Tracy 352-5052.*

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## **Protecting Children from Sexual Abuse-continued from page9**

- Emotional signs are more common and include “too perfect” behavior, withdrawal and depression, unexplained anger and rebellion, nightmares and bed wetting in children who have previously outgrown it.
- Other signs include cruelty to animals, fire-setting, children who harm themselves or make degrading remarks about themselves, failing at school, sexual behavior and language that are not age-appropriate, use of alcohol and drugs at a young age.
- In some children there are no signs whatsoever.

5. *Make a plan. Learn where to go, whom to call and how to react. Disclosure of child sexual abuse disrupts lives – there is no way around it.*

- Don't overreact when a child discloses sexual abuse to you. If you react with anger or disbelief the child may: shut down, change the story, and feel even guiltier.
- Offer support. Listen, affirm the child's courage and goodness. Thank them for telling. Tell the child that it's not their fault. Encourage the child to talk by using open-ended questions (“tell me more”). Don't attempt to ‘investigate’ the detail of abuse.
- Call the Ministry of Children and Families to report the abuse. Professional guidance is critical to the child's healing and to any criminal prosecution.
- Our laws **REQUIRE** that adults report suspicions of sexual abuse against minors.



6. *Act on suspicions – the well-being of a child is at stake.*

- Intuition is often the first step in seeing clearly
- If you suspect abuse or suspect that someone is grooming a child for abuse, take action.
- Call the police, the Ministry of Children and Families in your community or Darkness to Light's helpline, 1-866-FOR-LIGHT if you need support or to report.

7. *Get Involved – volunteer, teach others, and financially support organizations that fight the tragedy of child sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse prevention and response is an adults' job*

- Use your voice and your vote to make your community a safer place for children.
- Ask that organizations and school in your community have child sexual abuse prevention policies. Help with their creation and ask other adults to do the same.
- Break the cycle of silence. If child sexual abuse is part of your history, do not keep silent. By breaking the cycle, you begin to restore your personal power and become part of the community of adults who honor and protect children.
- Tell children ‘secrets can be dangerous’. Don't keep secrets from your parents.
- Teach children that it is “against” the rules for adults to act in a sexual way with them and use examples. Be specific about what kind of touching is okay and what is not.
- Be sure to mention that abusers might be an adult friend, family member, older cousins or friends.