

Resource Room News

We Wish You A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



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Volume 6 Issue 2

A Publication of
The Family Resource Room at
Kinsmen Children's Centre
(306) 655-6871

Partners with Families Helping

Special points of interest:

1. Toy Safety
2. COPEing with Toddler Behavior
3. Parenting and Marriage: Survival Tips Through Tough Times
4. Bug of the Month
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Choosing safe toys for your children...

What toys are best for your child? It seems like an easy enough question, but you don't want to buy your child a toy that isn't safe or that he or she isn't going to play with.

In addition to considering your child's interests and asking what he would like, one of the most important things to keep in mind is the age recommendations for the toy. For example, for younger children, it will help you avoid toys with small parts and those that pose choking hazards. But it can also help you avoid buying a toy that won't hold your child's attention and get him easily frustrated.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission offers these toy safety shopping tips:

Under 3 Years Old

- Children under 3 tend to put everything in their mouths. Avoid buying toys intended for older children which may have **small parts** that **pose a choking danger**.
- Never let children of any age play with uninflated or broken **balloons** because of the choking danger.
- Avoid **marbles, balls**, and games with balls that have balls with a diameter of 1.75 inches or less. These products also pose a choking hazard to young children.
- Avoid toys with small magnets,

magnetic pieces, or loose magnets, as they can be swallowed. Unfortunately, if two magnets connect together after they are swallowed, they can cause an intestinal blockage or more serious problems.

Children at this age pull, prod and twist toys. Look for toys that are well-made with tightly secured eyes, noses and other parts.

Ages 3 Through 5

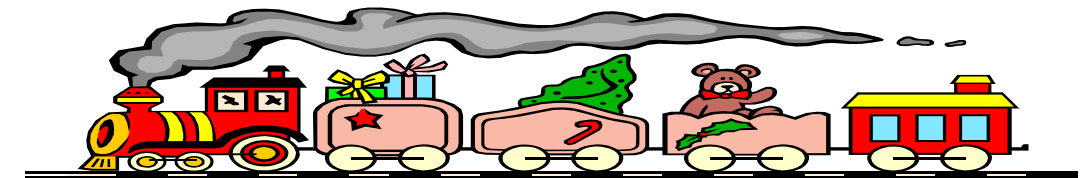
- Avoid toys that have **sharp edges and points**.
- Avoid toys that are constructed with thin, brittle plastic that might easily break into small pieces or leave jagged edges.
- Look for household art materials including crayons and paint sets, marked with the designation "ASTM D-4236." This means the product has been reviewed by a toxicologist and, if necessary, labelled with cautionary information.

You should also avoid toys with magnets at this age.

Ages 6 Through 12

- **Teach older children to keep their toys away from their younger brothers and sisters.**
- If buying a toy gun, be sure the barrel or the entire gun is brightly colored so that it's not mistaken for a real gun.

(continued on page 2...)





Choosing safe toys for your children...

For children of all ages:

- check toys regularly for small parts, breakage and potential hazards, including chipped or peeling paint. Damaged or dangerous toys should be repaired or thrown away.
- watch for toy [recalls](#)¹ and quickly remove recalled toys
- encourage your kids to not put their toys in their mouth (although it is harder for infants and younger toddlers)
- if you buy a bicycle, scooter, skates, or other sporting goods, buy a [helmet](#)² and appropriate pads too, and make sure the child wears them.

Also keep in mind that the **American Academy of Pediatrics:**

- recommends against the home use of **trampolines**
- recommends that children under 16 shouldn't ride on 4 wheel **All Terrain Vehicles** and advises a ban on the sale of all 3-wheeled ATVs
- advises that children are at big risk of getting hurt from **non-powder guns**, like BB guns, pellet guns, air rifles, and paintball guns.

Hearing Loss and Loud Toys

It is easy to spot some unsafe toys, like those with sharp edges or small parts, but loud toys are an under-recognized hazard to children. Remember that some toys, even those recommended for young children, can produce noise at a level that could damage your child's hearing.

These types of toys include cap guns, musical toys, toy phones, horns, sirens, and even squeaky rubber toys, which can produce noise as high as 90 to 120 decibels. According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, "When held directly to the ear, as children often do, a noisy toy actually exposes the ear to as much as 120 dB of sound, a damaging dose -- the equivalent of a jet plane taking off. Noise at this level is painful and can result in permanent hearing loss." Although you likely should avoid toys that sound loud, if your child gets any toys that make noise, be sure that he doesn't put them up to his ear, which can cause even more damage to his hearing.

Video Game Ratings

In addition to following age recommendations on toys, you should observe the ratings on any video games that your child wants. Remember that games rated **T -Teen** have content that is unsuitable for children under age 13. It is better to stick with games that are rated either **EC - Early Childhood** or **E - Everyone**, although even games rated **E - Everyone** can have some violence, comic mischief and/or mild language. Checking the ratings is important or you might get fooled into buying your child a game that isn't age appropriate. For example, the original Jax and Dexter game was rated **E - Everyone**, but the sequel, Jax II, is rated **T -Teen**. (By [Vincent Iannelli, M.D.](#), About.com)

Websites for more information on toy recalls and bike helmets:

- 1) <http://pediatrics.about.com/cs/recalls/1/bllatestrecalls.htm>
- 2) http://pediatrics.about.com/library/polls/blpoll_bike_helmets.htm

The Prevention Institute and Family Resource Room at Kinsmen Children Centre also have pamphlets and information on proper helmet fitting and bicycle safety.





Public Health Services

COPEing with Toddler Behaviour

Every Thursday Afternoon from
January 29th to March 19th, 2009

1:00pm to 3:00 pm

Cosmo Civic Centre
3130 Laurier Drive
Saskatoon

COPEing with Toddler Behaviour is an 8-session course for parents of 12- to 36-month olds. Parents have an opportunity to learn about parenting approaches and strategies, and have an opportunity to discuss these with the leaders and other parents.

Please call 655-4700 to register.

This course is FREE.





Parenting and Marriage Survival Tips: “Sticking Together Through The Toughest of Times”

Having a baby with a life threatening illness or life altering disability takes its toll on any relationship. Trying to balance the demands of long hospital stays, follow up appointments, paying bills, and caring for the other kids while trying to hold down the fort at home can be overwhelming. Often one parent may have no idea nor appreciation for what the other is going through. Unspoken guilt and resentment can build very quickly. Combine this with job stress and no time to be together and you’ve got a recipe for relationship breakdown often sadly ending up in divorce for too many couples.

However, it does not have to be that way. Through much patience, perseverance, communication and mutual support you can weather the storm and grow stronger together instead of falling apart. Find the courage to reach out for help and reconnect with that spark, that love that brought you together in the first place.

Parent Talk is a regular feature of BLOOM magazine produced by Bloorview Kids Rehab in Toronto, Ontario. A copy of Bloom is available in the Family Resource Room at Kinsmen Children’s Centre. The following is an excerpt from their Winter 2008 edition.

Survival Strategies: a family learns to cope facing the life threatening illness of their son...

Survival Strategies:

- **Ask family and friends for help.** When you have a child with a life-threatening illness, you can’t do it alone. People want to help and for the sake of your marriage, you have to let go of any pride and ask for help. Friends and relatives might take care of your other kids at home, drive grandma to the hospital, or visit with your sick child so that you and your partner can take a much needed break.
- **Seek financial assistance.** Your social worker can help you access sources and fill out forms. In Ontario, we use Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities to help cover the costs of accommodation, travel and food. We stay in subsidized family accommodations at the hospital or at nearby Ronald McDonald Houses. We are lucky that our community has also held several fundraisers to help with the costs of Joseph’s hospitalizations.
- **Put family before careers.** When Joseph has a serious surgery planned, Neil’s doctor puts him on stress leave so that he can receive 55 per cent of his pay for 16 weeks. Neil has lost jobs in the past because employers find it hard to accommodate time away. We know it’s not the end of the world because jobs come and go, but family is our long-term responsibility.
- **Try to be together to hear important information from specialists.** It’s challenging if one parent is always put in the role of conveying distressing or complicated information to the other.
- **Involve your other children as much as possible.** During a recent stay at Bloorview, four of our other five children stayed with us. They need the stability of

being with both parents and we don’t want Joseph singled out from the family because of his illness. Our other children need to understand what Joseph is going through and can be a great source of distraction and motivation.

- **Develop a [CarePages website](#)** to stay connected to family and friends. Every night we write posts on Joseph’s progress.
- **Draw on your faith or belief system.** We believe that whatever happens, we can deal with it, and there’s no point getting upset over what we can’t control. We try to focus on how we can change a situation so we can deal with it better, or how we can change ourselves to better adapt.
- **Recognize that when you return home, it’s a big adjustment!** While in hospital, you have one focus: to help your child survive. You forget to eat, you don’t sleep, and you forget what it’s like to be married. During our first week home we try to have time alone as a family to regenerate. In addition to your child, you and your spouse have wounds that need special care and attention. It’s important to remember the small things — like holding hands, making a special dinner and communicating how you feel.

BLOOM covers issues faced by parents of kids with disabilities by combining first hand family insights with expert advice from Bloorview Kids Rehab and around the world. Families and professionals can request subscription information by emailing: lkinross@bloorview.ca or to view Bloom online go to: www.bloorview.ca/BLOOM



What is VRE?

VRE is a type of bacteria, enterococcus, that is resistant to an antibiotic known as Vancomycin.

Vancomycin is the antibiotic that is often used to treat enterococcus infections.

Resistance means that these germs are no longer killed by Vancomycin. This resistance is to antibiotics only, not to cleansers or disinfectants.

Enterococcus is a type of bacteria or germ that lives in the bowel or gut of 80-90% of people. Sometimes enterococcus can cause an infection in a wound, the bladder or the blood, but usually only in people who are already ill.

Colonization versus Infection

Colonization means that VRE is present on the skin of your rectal area and can live without causing illness or harm. **This does not require treatment.**

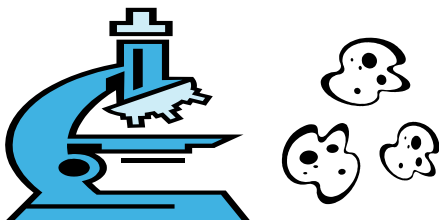
Infection means that VRE is making the person sick. A VRE infection can be treated successfully with the right antibiotic.

How did I get VRE?

Prolonged or inappropriate antibiotic use will put you more at risk for developing VRE. Being very ill or in the hospital for a long time also increases your chances of developing VRE. In hospitals and health care facilities, it is spread from one person to another, usually on the hands of caregivers or after contact with contaminated objects or surfaces.

Can my family and friends get VRE from me?

Healthy people are usually not at risk, but these germs are able to survive on surfaces for a long time. Hand washing, good personal hygiene and care when cleaning will reduce the spread of VRE to others at home and in the community.



What Special Precautions are required for VRE?

It is important that precautions are taken to stop VRE from spreading to other patients in the hospital or residents in long term care facilities. These include:

- Single room accommodation if possible (the door can remain open).
- Gloves and gown must be worn by everyone who cares for you.
- A sign outside your door to remind others who enter your room about the special precautions.
- Equipment used in your daily care will remain in the room.
- Everyone who leaves your room must clean their hands well.



- You must clean your hands before you leave the room.

What precautions should I take at home and in the community?

You are encouraged to participate in all recreational and social activities. If you have diarrhea, separate toilet facilities are preferred but are certainly not essential. The important thing to remember is that toilets and bathrooms should be kept clean.

- Hands must be washed after using the toilet and before preparing or eating food.
- You should bath regularly and should have your own bath towel. The bathtub should be cleaned and disinfected with a household cleaner.
- Dishes and cutlery should be washed with normal household dishwashing liquid.
- Clothes may be cleaned using the regular wash and dry cycles. Drying clothes in a hot dryer, rather than air-drying also helps kill germs in clothes. Heavily soiled linen should be washed separately from other household laundry.



- Garbage may be disposed with regular household garbage. Regular household cleaning practices effectively removes VRE from the environment.

Will I always have VRE?

Maybe. You will be treated if you have an infection and if you remain healthy, over time the VRE which your body is carrying may disappear. Talk to your physician about planning to do a follow up test to see if the VRE continues to be present.

How can I help?

If you go to any hospital, doctor or receive Home Care, report that you are on precautions for VRE. This will allow them to check your status and use precautions to make sure they do not carry the germ to other patients. **Remember hand washing is the first line of defence to prevent infection. Always wash your hands thoroughly as outlined below.**

Hand Cleansing with Water:

- Wet hands under warm running water.
- Apply soap and rub together for at least 15 seconds, washing well between the fingers and around nails.
- Rinse well with warm running water.
- Dry with hand towel or paper towel.
- Turn the tap off using paper towel or hand towel (remember...your hands were dirty when you turned on the tap).
- Throw the paper towel in the trash. If you are using a hand towel, do not share it with it with other people and wash it often.



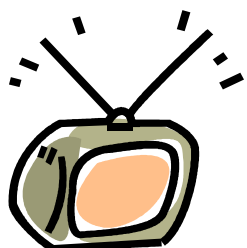
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Hand Cleansing with Hand Sanitizer:

- Apply approximately **1 tsp. of sanitizer** to your palm.
- Cover each area, rubbing vigorously and interlacing fingers.
- Rub for 10 - 15 seconds until hands are dry.
- Do not rinse off.



For a more information on this and other bugs visit the SHR website: www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca. Go to "Your Health" and click on: [Programs & Services](#), then click on [Infection Prevention & Control](#).



Augmentative and Alternative Communication Workshop Via Telehealth

January 16, 2009 is the date for Pati King-Debaun, a speech language pathologist, to present her work shop about Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). She is know for her hands on and practical work with children and the use of case studies and video examples in her instruction. Pati speaks/consults internationally on topics of interactive communication, augmentative communication, early literacy, and communication materials for children with disabilities. Pati is owner of the company called Creative Communicating. To find out more see her website at: <http://www.creativecommunicating.com/>

The workshop is **free via Telehealth at Kinsmen Children's Centre, 1319 Colony Street, Saskatoon in room 1068 from 10:00 am to 4:00pm**. The main focus of the workshop is on children with complex communication needs and the strategies that can impact a lifetime of learning. Call the Family Resource Room at 655-6871 for more information.

Great opportunities to enhance speech and language development!

Read Saskatoon invites you to celebrate and improve your literacy skills at he same time! You are encouraged to join in the world record attempt for "Most Children Reading With an Adult, Multiple Locations" any time between 1pm on January 23 and 1pm January 24, 2009. Books to read in order are by Robert Munsch and include:

- Pigs
- Mortimer
- Purple, Green and Yellow
- Murnel, Murnel, Murnel!
- Something good

To register your event contact ABC Canada at:

<http://abc-Canada.org/en/flworldrecord>
or call Read Saskatoon at: 652-5448.



January 27, 2009 is the actual **Family Literacy Day!** Here are some great ways to celebrate:

- Have your own karaoke night with your kids to improve rhythm, words and sounds
- Read in your spare time and be a reading role model for your kids
- Follow a recipe together to practice reading and math skills
- Start a family book club
- Make one night a family game night... for more ideas call: Read Saskatoon at: 652-5448

The Saskatoon Adlerian Society

is offering free programs for parents/caregivers and their children from birth to 3years of age. Rhymes, stories and songs are used to help parents have fun and bond with their children.

Pre-registration is required. There is also an infant program for those birth to 18 months of age running mid-January to mid-March mostly in the mornings.

For more information and to register please call Sharon at 242-6036

Autism Services Programs and Public Education Updates

All recreation and social programs are on a first come first serve basis. One in person registration night will be held Thursday January 8, 2009 at Autism Services, 609-25th Street East in Saskatoon. Registration forms can be mailed out or downloaded from the website: www.autismservices.ca internet. An Autism Services membership is required which is free for first time parents and caregivers

then \$20.00 per year thereafter.

Bowling, swimming, strength training, yoga, art therapy, music therapy, drum circle, sensory motor skills group, friendship skills group and a guys club round out the programs offered to various age groups across all levels of the autism spectrum.

Autism Services in cooperation with the Alvin Buckwold Child

Development Program, Saskatoon Health Region, is offering a set of classes for families new to the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Classes are free and childcare is available. An autism one day crash course, communication, sensory motor development sessions as well as a parent support group are available. **Contact Gail Duncombe for more information at 665-7013, Ext.3.**

Epilepsy Saskatoon

Epilepsy Saskatoon located at #327 St. Paul's Hospital Residence, 1702-20th Street West, provides information, support and a social setting for those who have epilepsy to meet, learn and share their experiences. They can be reached by email at: epilepsysaskatoon@sasktel.net or call **665-1939** or toll free at: **1-866-EPILEPSY**.

Upcoming events for 2009 are as follows:

- There will be a Bake sale on February 13, 2009 at St. Paul's Hospital in front of the Test Center.
- The fundraiser in March will be a ticket sale for VIA Rail passes or a two flights within Canada.
- An educational workshop on Saturday, March 21st will offer epilepsy researchers from the university discussing medical breakthroughs in treatment and medication for epilepsy.

Please contact the Epilepsy Saskatoon office for more information on these events or any other questions that you may have about epilepsy.

FASD

Support Network of Saskatchewan

The FASD network offers a great tool for families, caregivers, professionals, front line workers and the general public all about **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder**. Information about FASD as well as helpful strategies and tips for anyone (i.e. teachers, coaches, employers) are presented in the **FASD: A Guide to Awareness and Understanding**.

The goal is to increase awareness and understanding of FASD to improve the lives of individuals and families living with FASD. Up to 5 copies of the guide can be ordered free of charge after which a one dollar per copy fee will be charged.

The network offers information, support and tip sheets to download free of charge about dealing with difficult behaviours associated with FASD. Check out the website at:

www.skfasnetwork.ca for upcoming events and conferences starting in February 2009. FASD Linking Brain Function with Behaviours is in Regina February 9th and another FASD training session is in Saskatoon starting February 11.

**Call for more information:
975-0884 or 1-866-673-3276**

**Knowledge is
Power !**

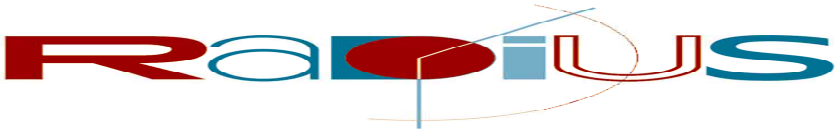


News Updates



We Need You! Support workers and respite caregivers still needed...

The Community Living Association Saskatoon Inc. (CLASI) has permanent part time positions available for hire starting at \$10.50 per hour. The duties include providing care and companionship to children, youth, or adults with intellectual disabilities. To apply call or email CLASI: **Phone: 652-9111 Fax: 652-9112 Email: sacl1@sasktel.net or: fmd@saskatoonacl.ca**



Radius Acquired Brain Injury Community Integration Service is looking to hire people with a minimum of one year post-secondary training in the human service field for their Youth Companion Program. This Youth Companion Program will address the support needs, interests and choices of youth ages 13 to 22, when they are not in school. Radius is seeking companions who will be responsible to help facilitate participation of youth with a disability in recreational and leisure activities, typical of their age group. If interested in applying or obtaining more information please call: **Phone: 306-665-0362 Fax: 306-665-5579 Email: ycp.radius@sasktel.net**

Ongoing Research...

St. Thomas Moore College

COOL RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY!

Youth with recurrent or chronic pain (e.g., stomach ache, joint ache) who are between the ages of 8-16 years are invited to take part in a **study about memory for pain**. Prizes will be given for participation and parents/guardians will be entered into two \$100.00 draws.

If you wish to participate please call:
966-8314

or email focusonmemory@stmcollege.ca or
visit us online at
www.usask.ca/childpain/memory



**UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN**

**Early Childhood Intervention Program
Autism Conference Coming up May 6- 9,
2009! Watch for it next newsletter! For
information: Call 306-651-3118 or email
eofd@sasktel.net**

Laughter is the best medicine...

What's white and goes up?
A confused snowflake!

What do you sing at a snowman's birthday party?
Freeze a jolly good fellow!

What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?
Frostbite!

What do you get if Santa goes down the chimney when the fire is lit?
Crisp Cringle!

What do you call people who are afraid of Santa Claus?
Claustrophobic!

What do you get if you cross an apple with a Christmas tree?
A pineapple

What Christmas carol is a favourite of parents?
Silent Night!

Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night...

