

## What happens at family resource programs?

Specific programs and services offered at family resource programs foster desired human development outcomes in several key areas including:

Physical and Mental Health, Parenting, Lifelong Learning, and Community Development

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT	PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OFFERED AT FAMILY RESOURCE PROGRAMS
<b>Physical and Mental Health</b>	
<b>Prenatal Period</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• harmful effects of stress relating to anxiety about birth and life circumstances, smoking during pregnancy, ingesting substances such as alcohol</li> <li>• importance of good nutrition and health care during pregnancy</li> <li>• safe births</li> <li>• normal birth weight</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• food supplements and nutritional information for expecting mothers</li> <li>• information and support before birth</li> <li>• prenatal courses for parents</li> <li>• courses for expectant fathers</li> <li>• smoking cessation programs</li> <li>• comprehensive programs to prevent low-birth weight</li> <li>• moms-to-be support groups</li> <li>• nurturing for young single moms</li> <li>• visits from public health nurse</li> </ul>
<b>Postnatal Period</b>	
<p>“Research demonstrates that forming secure attachments to a few caring and responsive adults is a primary developmental milestone for babies in the first year of life. Infants and toddlers who are able to develop secure attachments are observed to be more mature and positive in their interactions with adults and peers than children who lack secure attachments” Zero to Three 2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• breastfeeding (both for nutrition and for touch, direct gaze etc.)</li> <li>• baby’s reliance on primary caregiver for help regulating strong states of being</li> <li>• prevention of Sudden Infant Death (SIDS)</li> <li>• talking and singing to baby establishes early communication, precursor to early literacy</li> <li>• parent-child attachment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• food supplements for breastfeeding moms</li> <li>• breastfeeding advice</li> <li>• new parent support groups</li> <li>• information about immunization</li> <li>• information about importance of responding to baby in distress</li> <li>• encouragement to talk and sing to baby</li> <li>• support for parents of multiples (twins, triplets)</li> <li>• attachment programs such as Make the Connection</li> <li>• SIDS prevention information</li> <li>• Mom and Baby exercise</li> <li>• In-home visits</li> <li>• Parent-Child Mother Goose and other rhyming/singing activities with babies</li> <li>• infant massage training</li> <li>• baby clothing and equipment exchanges</li> <li>• car seat programs</li> </ul>

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<b>Developmental Milestones</b>	
<p>As child matures, each stage of development building upon earlier stages; it is important to detect delays or problems as early as possible when they are easier to address</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• observation and developmental check-ups to pick up any delays that may be cause for concern</li> <li>• use of parent-friendly screening tools such as Nipissing and Ages and Stages Questionnaire</li> <li>• sensitive interactions with parents if there are concerns about development</li> </ul>
<b>Physical Activity</b>	
<p>It is recommended that all children aged 1 to 5 years participate in at least two hours of physical activity every day, accumulated over many sessions and as part of play, games, active transportation and recreation. (Active Healthy Kids Canada),</p> <p>Exercise through active play enhances physical health and is also related to brain functioning due to increased blood supply to the brain and increased growth of capillaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unstructured free play</li> <li>• room to run and climb</li> <li>• games and sports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parachute games</li> <li>• climbing frames, low balance beams to encourage physical activity</li> <li>• balls and other equipment for games</li> <li>• movement and music activities</li> <li>• indoor and outdoor playgrounds, play gyms</li> <li>• field trips, outings</li> <li>• information for parents about importance of physical activity for young children (e.g. FRP Canada Physical Literacy resource sheet).</li> </ul>
<b>Mental Health</b>	
<p>“There is increasing evidence that the origins of mental health problems diagnosed in later childhood, adolescence and adulthood can be found during pregnancy and very early childhood.” Richard E. Tremblay, <i>Prevention of Mental Illness: Why not start at the beginning?</i> CEECD Bulletin Vol. 9, No. 1, March 2010.</p> <p>Maternal depression and low sense of self-efficacy is linked with children’s depression and anxiety disorders later in life (Coté, Boivin, Liu, Nagin, Zoccolillo and Tremblay, from Bulletin on Early Childhood Development, 2010)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identification of mental health issues (adults and children)</li> <li>• acceptance</li> <li>• facilitation of social support networks</li> <li>• care and nurture of mother experiencing post partum depression</li> <li>• postpartum depression support groups</li> <li>• referral to counsellors and health professionals</li> <li>• watchful eye on family</li> <li>• stimulation for children who may not be getting very much at home</li> <li>• work with partner and friends to ensure natural circle of support</li> </ul>

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<b>Environmental Factors</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• harmful effects of pesticides especially during gestation</li> <li>• harmful effects of some plastics</li> <li>• unsafe equipment such as walkers, cribs</li> <li>• unsafe food supply</li> <li>• safety (products, equipment)</li> <li>• lead exposure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dissemination of information about product recalls</li> <li>• workshops, information and education about green household and gardening products</li> <li>• safety bulletins, product recalls</li> <li>• messages about the dangers of second-hand smoke</li> <li>• information about symptoms of lead poisoning and ways to reduce exposure to lead</li> <li>• information about the use of phthalates (soft plastics) in children's toys and products</li> </ul>
<b>Parenting</b>	
<b>Positive Parenting</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• authoritative parenting combining warmth and sensitivity with firmness around expectations</li> <li>• mind-mindedness/empathy</li> <li>• 'autonomy support'/encouragement</li> <li>• understanding about child development and typical behaviours to expect</li> <li>• understanding about temperament and 'goodness of fit'</li> <li>• developing strong bond between child and parent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parenting workshops and classes</li> <li>• modelling warm adult-child interaction as well as setting firm limits</li> <li>• one-on-one guidance about child development</li> <li>• dissemination of take home information in the form of parent resource sheets, books, DVDs</li> <li>• access to website resources such as <a href="http://www.parentsmatter.ca">www.parentsmatter.ca</a> which is hosted by FRP Canada</li> <li>• opportunities for parents and caregivers to observe other children the same age or older than their own and how their parents parent</li> <li>• empathy and strategies to use when sensitive/reactive child acts up</li> <li>• parenting groups for fathers, single parents</li> <li>• programs for separating parents</li> <li>• programs to help non-custodial parents stay connected to their children</li> <li>• programs that allow parents and children to stay together if that is their preference</li> <li>• referrals to specialized services, counselling</li> </ul>

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<b>Toxic stress, family violence and child maltreatment</b>	
<p>Researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Kaiser Permanente and the University of Toronto have conducted large-scale studies (ACE – Adverse Childhood Experience studies) which show connections between adverse childhood experiences such as child abuse or witnessing family violence and negative health consequences decades later in adulthood including heart disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, liver disease and autoimmune disease</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parenting groups for mandated parents</li> <li>• anger management workshops</li> <li>• reporting concerns about child maltreatment to child protection services</li> <li>• liaison with child protection services (reference to T &amp; P)</li> <li>• referral to shelters and other services for family members experiencing family violence</li> </ul>
<b>Lifelong Learning</b>	
<b>Curiosity and Love of Learning</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• age-appropriate high quality toys</li> <li>• materials and equipment to manipulate and independently explore</li> <li>• dress-up clothing and props, building blocks, books</li> <li>• musical instruments</li> <li>• arts and crafts materials</li> <li>• adults encouraged to pursue their educational goals</li> </ul>
<b>Social and Emotional Development</b>	
<p>“A child’s social-emotional development is as important as her brain and physical development. It is her desire to connect with others that motivates her to learn. Her sense of who she is in the world deeply impacts how much and how well she learns, as well as the quality of the relationships she builds with others.”</p> <p>Zero To Three: Promoting Social Emotional Development (<a href="http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/social-emotional-development">http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/social-emotional-development</a>)  retrieved May 25, 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• children interact with other children and other adults; mixed age groupings</li> <li>• opportunities for self-directed imaginative play encourages social-emotional development</li> <li>• enjoyable time spent with parent or caregiver</li> </ul>

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<b>Numeracy and Literacy</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comfort with foundational concepts before school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• speech and language assessments and workshops</li> <li>• programs such as Hanen’s You Make a Difference to encourage speech and language development</li> <li>• toys, equipment and visual materials designed to encourage basic number concepts</li> <li>• literacy and numeracy activities woven throughout programs (see 2010 Report on a National Survey of Family Literacy Activities in Family Resource Programs at <a href="http://www.frbpc.ca">www.frbpc.ca</a> )</li> <li>• children’s books and reading corner/sofa</li> <li>• visiting storytellers, puppeteers, etc.</li> <li>• regular storytime</li> <li>• visits to the public library</li> </ul>
<b>Community Development</b>	
<b>Poverty Issues</b>	
<p>“Epidemiologists have suggested that early-childhood stressors related to low income could alter or dysregulate biological systems, with adverse implications for future health” (G.J. Duncan, K.M. Ziol-Guest &amp; A. Kalil, Early-Childhood Poverty and Adult Attainment, Behaviour, and Health, in <i>Child Development</i>, January/February 2010, Vol 81, pp. 306 - 325)</p> <p>“In the context of poverty studies, the greater malleability of children’s development and the overwhelming importance of the family (as opposed to school or peer contexts) for preschoolers lead us to expect that family income in early childhood may be much more important for shaping children’s ability and achievement than conditions later in childhood (Bronfenbrenner &amp; Morris, 1998; Shonkoff &amp; Phillips, 2000) quoted in Duncan, above, p. 307.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduce barriers to participation as much as possible, i.e. free or low cost programs, transportation, childcare, food provided</li> <li>• community kitchen cooking groups with inexpensive and nutritious food</li> <li>• good food boxes – combined buying power to provide higher quality food at lower cost</li> <li>• toy and equipment lending</li> <li>• emergency food and supplies cupboards</li> <li>• financial literacy workshops</li> <li>• free community events such as barbeques, fairs</li> <li>• clothing exchanges</li> <li>• transportation to programs, appointments</li> <li>• provision of small luxuries such as Moms Night Out</li> <li>• pre-employment and employment training</li> <li>• respite childcare</li> <li>• information about social programs, subsidies</li> <li>• volunteer opportunities for skill development</li> <li>• hope for the future</li> </ul>

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<b>Citizen Engagement</b>	
<p>Parents with a sense of self-efficacy are more confident and effective with children, when seeking employment, within adult relationships etc. Also, communities are enriched by their engagement.</p>	<p>Support for activities which encourage responsible citizen engagement such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dealing with a landlord or business complaint</li> <li>• participating on the school council or board of directors of family resource program</li> <li>• writing a letter to an MP or newspaper</li> <li>• volunteering</li> <li>• coping with issues of discrimination</li> <li>• participating in the election process</li> </ul>
<b>Reduced Social Isolation</b>	
<p>"... chronic social isolation across multiple developmental periods has a cumulative effect and can lead to poor health in adulthood." <i>Science Daily</i> 2010/08/1008151111448</p>	<p>A key objective of FRPs is to break down the barriers that create social isolation for parents and their children. Through offering a range of ways for parents to access services (informal drop-ins, playgroups, scheduled adult-child activities, parenting groups, home visiting, and outreach services) and a non-threatening environment, FRPs reach deep into the community, attracting and engaging many families often considered 'hard to reach'.</p>
<b>Social Capital</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encourage friendships and growth of natural social support networks</li> <li>• encourage mutual aid, parent-to-parent support</li> <li>• provide volunteer opportunities</li> <li>• English as an Additional Language classes</li> </ul>