



CASA Infant and Preschool Services  
Enhanced Intake Group



Session 1:  
Orientation to CASA  
Child Development

Online Version

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Agenda



- Welcome
- Informed Consent
- What/Who is CASA?
- What will your first appointment look like?
- Sleep
- Developmental Milestones
- Executive Functioning
- Community Resources
- Take home activity – Ages & Stages Questionnaire

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Welcome

- This is the first video in our 3-part Enhanced Intake series:
  1. **Orientation to CASA and Child Development**
  2. Supporting Emotional Regulation in Young Children
  3. Improving Behaviour through Proactive Parenting
- This series is attended in person or online following a referral to Infant and Preschool Services
- Please take some time in between each session so that you have time to try some of the strategies and see what works for you
- This series is intended to provide you with some helpful strategies and to help us identify which type of service might be the best fit for you and your family

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## Informed consent



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## Who we are

150 Staff



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- Psychiatrists
- Consulting Pediatricians
- Psychologists
- Social Workers
- Nurses
- Occupational Therapists
- Speech Language Pathologist
- Classroom Behavioural Specialists
- Child Care Counsellors
- Music & Art Therapists
- Evaluators, admin, and other support staff

Multidisciplinary team!

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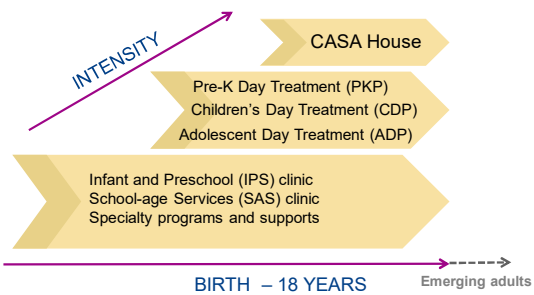
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## Addressing the spectrum of needs



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## Programs

- **Infant and Preschool Services (IPS)**- Ages 0-5, assessment and treatment
- **School Age Services (SAS)**- Ages 5-18, assessment and treatment
- **Day Programs**- for children with severe mental health and/or behavioural issues that impact their success in school
  - **Pre-Kindergarten Day Program**: ages 3.5-5
  - **Children's Day Program**: grades 3 – 6
  - **Adolescent Day Program**: grades 7 – 12
- **Residential Program – CASA House**- Grades 7-12, Family-centered care for those youth who have not benefitted as expected from previous clinical interventions
- **Specialized Programs**- Family therapy, trauma clinic, psychological assessment, Head Start, Indigenous Child and Youth Mental Health, Art & Music Therapy, Animal Assisted therapy and Equine therapy, etc.

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## Infant and Preschool Services (IPS)

- Mental health assessment and treatment for infant and preschoolers aged 0-5 with a variety of social and emotional needs
- Family-centered care - Active participation from caregivers is required for effective treatment
- No assessments for the purposes of custody or access



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## Infant and Preschool Services (IPS)

- IPS provides:
  - Early intervention
  - Collaboration with community supports (i.e. preschool/Kindergarten, daycare)
  - Evidence-based and trauma-informed assessment and treatment
  - Head Start Support
  - Individual, group, or family therapy
  - Parent education and groups
    - Incredible Years
    - Circle of Security Parenting
    - Child Parent Relationship Therapy
    - Other groups



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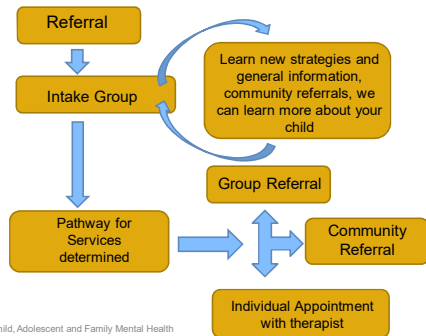
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## Intake Process



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## Guardianship

- Custody vs. Guardianship
- In order to access direct assessment or treatment for your child, we need consent from **all guardians**
- Low cost legal options in the community
  - Legal Aid
  - Edmonton Community Legal Centre (ECLC)
  - Student Legal Centre

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## What to Expect from Therapy

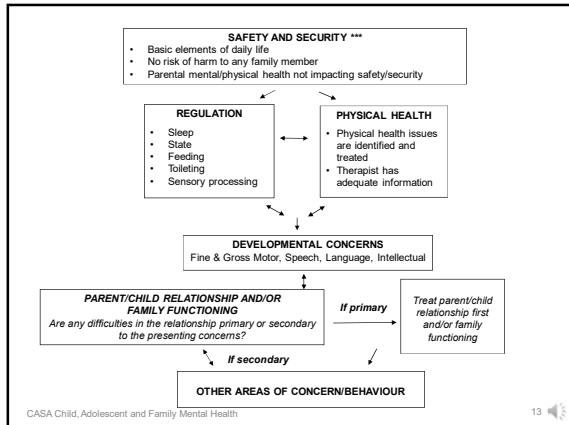
### Initial Assessment

1. Complete questionnaires – from all caregivers in attendance
2. Meet with your assigned mental health therapist
  - A. Complete informed consent
  - B. The therapist will ask a variety of questions about your child, such as what are your concerns; pregnancy, birth, and early life history; development; family history. Observation of child also occurs.
  - C. **First**, we gather information – diagnostic process is ongoing
3. Meet with nurse for basic measurements + health history
4. Your therapist will have meeting with the multidisciplinary team to discuss plan
5. Establish treatment plan - We holistically support the whole child

**\* Not everyone will need this – we may determine that another service is a better option for you**

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## Parental Involvement

- **Active participation** on your end – you play a critical role
- Most therapeutic approaches at this age involve the parent
  - Parent consultation on strategies
  - Dyadic work
- You are the biggest support for your child, so you can learn the same skills and then support them to use new skills at home!

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## The Developing Child

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## Why is Sleep Important?

- Sleep helps the brain rest and grow
- Sleep promotes good physical health
- Sleep affects the control we have over our emotions and actions



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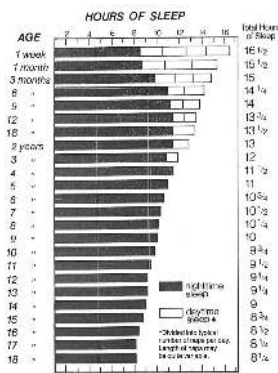
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## How Much Sleep is Needed?

- Total amount of time spent sleeping decreases with age
- Poor sleep or not enough sleep impacts mood, brain development, family relationships, and behaviour.

Fetler, R. (1985). Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems. New York (NY): Simon & Schuster.

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## How is Your Child's Sleep?

- Consider:
  - Bedtime routine
  - What time is bedtime?
  - How long does it take them to fall asleep?
  - Do they wake in the night?
  - What time are they up in the morning?



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## How development impacts behaviour

- Children are going to develop uniquely, therefore it is crucial that the caregivers in their life take note of any areas of struggle, and alter expectations
- The milestones serve as a guide— just because your child has not met every milestone, does not mean that there is something wrong with them
- It is important to keep developmental milestones in mind so that we are not expecting too much from the child, and then creating a sense of failure when they cannot meet our requests



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## How development impacts behaviour

- When children are able to meet their developmental milestones, and are met with praise, their self-image is impacted, and they feel a stronger desire to behave accordingly
- When children are behind in their development, this may create feelings of frustration which may translate into their behaviours. As a result, supporting developmental lags can sometimes improve behaviour.
- Different areas of development may progress at different rates (i.e. Cognitive skills; social skills; emotional skills)



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## Your Role as a Caregiver

- There are many components to development (i.e. emotional, social, cognitive, etc.)
- Development requires a nurturing environment, positive interactions, and role modeling, and children are not able to do that on their own –you are their guide

*It is not just the role of the primary caregiver to build positive foundations, but the role of all caregivers and adults in the child's life*

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## The Caregiver-Child Relationship & Development

- From birth, neural connections are influenced by the interactions that caregivers have with children
  - Serve and Return - impacts social and emotional development



(Alberta Family Wellness Initiative)

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## The Caregiver-Child Relationship and Development

- Development is nurtured by caregivers' empathy towards the developmental milestones that a child is striving to achieve, and through an appreciation of the unique developmental differences in each child
- A strong parent-child relationship impacts children's development and also helps parents to feel more competent

**The parent-child relationship is the foundation in which children are given the opportunity to grow and develop**

(Webster, Stratton, 2011)

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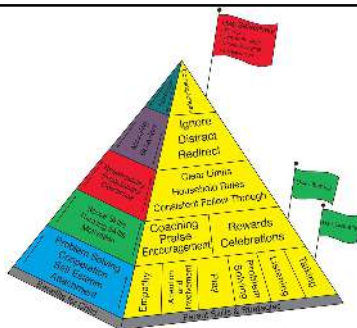
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Parenting Pyramid®

Figure 1. Parenting Pyramid. From *Parenting Pyramid* by The Incredible Years (2011). Retrieved from <http://www.incredibleyears.com/download/product/The-Incredible-Years-Parent-Teacher-Childrens-Training-Series-1980-2011p.pdf>

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## What to expect from a typical 3-4 year old

- No longer a toddler– has developed a sense of independence
  - Still figuring it out, therefore they will test boundaries
  - The importance of giving them choices to foster independence yet provide structure
- Motor skills are much more developed, therefore they are able to move around quicker
  - More energy (i.e. running around, jumping, etc.)

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## Brain Development: Upstairs vs. Downstairs Brain

- Children are born with a well-developed **downstairs brain** (amygdala) – the part of the brain that plays a key role in producing emotions.
- The **upstairs brain** (pre-frontal cortex) doesn't even start developing until around 5-7 years of age. Even then, it doesn't really finish developing until age 25.
- When your child is having big feelings, they don't have the upstairs brain yet to help them make sense of those feelings or act reasonably when they are upset.

(Siegel, 2012)



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## Executive Functioning

- Executive function - a combination of cognitive, social, and emotional skills that help regulate the flow of information, think flexibly, prioritize tasks, and find ways to manage stress and self-control – **key for learning!**
- Executive function develops over time, meaning that children at different developmental stages may struggle differently
  - Getting frustrated when they need help
  - Trouble following directions
  - Easily distracted
  - Tantrums over “minor issues”
    - Just because it is minor for us, does not mean that it is minor for them

(Wiebe et al., 2011; Zysset et al., 2018)

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## Executive Functioning Video



Source: <https://www.albertafamilywellness.org/what-we-know/the-brain-story>

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## Executive Functioning

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL  
The "executive function" system of the brain



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## Factors Affecting Behaviour: Clean-Up Time Example

- Clean up time
  - You have asked your child to clean up repeatedly, and they are not listening.
  - What might be affecting this situation?
    - Are there a variety of distractors?
    - How many toys? Are they overwhelmed?
- Clean up time is a typical 3-4 year old struggle
  - At this age, children are still developing cognitively, therefore we must adapt our expectations and provide necessary supports for success

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## Ages & Stages Questionnaire

- To get a better sense of your child's own development, you can access an Ages & Stages Questionnaire that will be scored for you
- Please call our Clinical Care Coordinator to let us know when you have completed this video, and they will send you the Ages & Stages Questionnaire for your child
- Responses will help us determine where your child's strengths and difficulties lie and plan appropriate care

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## Community Resources

- Local Parent Link
- Triple P Parenting Program
- Goodbye Bedtime Battles
- Goodbye Mealtime Struggles
- Speech Language Assessment
  - 780-408-8793
  - Talk Box:
    - <https://www.alberta.ca/creating-language-rich-environments.aspx>
- OT Assessment
  - 780-735-3491
- Preschool programs:
  - Pre-Kindergarten program at Edmonton Public
  - 100 Voices at Edmonton Catholic
  - Head Start

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## Questions?

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Thank You!

Please contact us for an  
Ages & Stages  
Questionnaire and  
continue to Video 2



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## References

- Figure 1. Parenting pyramid [Digital image]. (2011). Retrieved from <http://www.incredibleyears.com/download/product/The-Incredible-Years-Parent-Teacher-Childrens-Training-Series-1980-2011p.pdf>
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- Siegel, D. & Payne Bryson, T. (2012). *The Whole-Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind*. Random House: New York.

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