

January Profile - The Thomson Family and Community Services Family Place



Jacquie Thomson has two children, Finley, age 3 1/2 and Maddie, 2. They all attend the Community Services Family Place program, A Playce for Us, every Tuesday morning. For Jacquie, it's a place where she can enjoy mutual support and friendship with other adults and share the joys and challenges of parenting. To Finley and Maddie, it is "mommy's school" and their favourite place. Finley likes the trains and he likes playing with the other kids. Maddie likes the toys and the playdough and they both like painting.

"They really love going there," says Jacquie. "Of all the places, that's the place they love going to the most."

Jacquie first heard about Family Place when she was attending the Baby Talk drop-in group at the Public Health Unit. She and some of the other mothers at Baby Talk decided to try it out. They registered for an 8 week program and loved it. They've been going ever since.

"The good thing about it is that the moms can go in a different room and talk about things, any issues that are concerning us. Two teachers go in with the kids and have snack and storytime and fun and one stays with us and actually facilitates the discussion. Usually they'll bring in a guest speaker to talk about something like dental care or money issues or anything we're concerned about. We've had speakers on potty training and nutrition as well. If we want to know something, they'll either bring somebody in or get the information for us."

Jacquie likes the way the A Playce for Us is set up. She and the other parents can see that their children are safe and having fun by looking through the two way window from the parents room. "You can actually see them though the window and watch what's going on all the time." she says.

"I just think it's a wonderful, wonderful place to go."

The staff at the Family Place programs believe that all families have the potential to grow and change, and that all children have the right to equal "best starts." The programs are sensitive to the diversity of family types, and the multicultural aspects of Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows and Katzie. Family Place also offers programs for parents and children together.

**For more information on Community Services Family Place
phone (604) 466-8484 or follow the link at
http://www.comservice.bc.ca/youth_&_family.htm**