

Pursuit of leisure vital for disabled

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We all know how important play is for small children.

Though we used to think it was just a means of making kids happy and therefore keeping them out of our hair for a while, we now know that children learn to socialize with others during play.

I remember when my daughter was 18 months old. I suddenly realized that she spent most of her time toddling around with her little head raised to see the faces of her family. So we enrolled her in a play-and-learn class at Seneca College.

Blythe enjoyed the classes very much. And she delighted in coming home and telling her big brothers what she had done during the day.

For me, the classes took a special twist because I had never been to kindergarten or any grade in elementary school below Grade 7. Consequently, I was taught by Blythe about "The Five Little Monkeys Jumping On The Bed," and other kindergarten favorites I had missed.

Everyone needs to have fun and experience the feeling of being part of a group. We entertain friends at home, join a club, meet friends at the local pub - all these activities enrich our lives.

But many people with disabilities, especially those with mental handicaps, lack any sort of social life.

A new book called *The Pursuit Of Leisure: Enriching Lives With People Who Have A Disability* examines the problem. And it challenges readers to come up with solutions and open up recreation programs to provide leisure for folks with a mental handicap.

To obtain *The Pursuit Of Leisure*, write to G. Allan Roeher Institute Publications, Kinsmen Building, York University, 4700 Keele St., Downsview M3J 1P3. Enclose a cheque or money order for \$12.50 plus \$2 for postage.

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A review of the support service needed by adults with physical disabilities is getting a lot of attention.

Called *Independence and Control: Today's Dream, Tomorrow's Reality*, it was written by the Centre for Research and Education in Human Services for the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services.

An advisory committee of disabled consumers, voluntary associations and service providers also worked on the project.

Though the review was published last year, it is still receiving a lot of notice because the need for action is so urgent.

The review says certain core needs of the disabled are often unmet: financial security, health and nutrition, safety and comfort, personal growth and relationships, and independence and control over their own lives.

A free copy may be obtained from the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, Services for Disabled Persons Branch, 11th Floor, 700 Bay St., Toronto M5G 1Z6. Or call 965-4945 and ask for Sue Lantz.

* Mary Ann Brett's column for and about the disabled appears Mondays in The Star's Life section. Write to Mary Ann Brett, Life section, Toronto Star, One Yonge St., Toronto M5E 1E6. Please include your telephone number.

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