

# Building Healthy Schools...

## A Healthy Start to Kindergarten

### Travelling to School

Building active transportation in to your daily routine is a great and easy way to get kids active. We know that only 9% of Canadian kids aged 5 to 17 get the 60 minutes of heart-pumping activity they need each day<sup>1</sup>, so walking or wheeling to school is a great way to increase physical activity.

Active transportation has many benefits for children that may include better sleep, higher grades, and more positive emotions during the trip to school. Reducing car trips is good for the environment and can also decrease the release of car exhaust emissions that are a factor in cardiovascular and lung diseases.

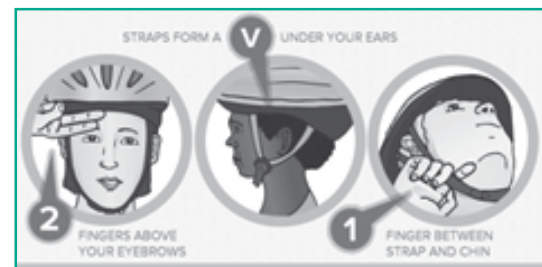
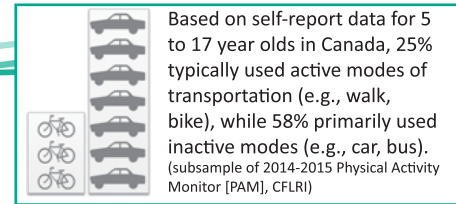
**Prior to school starting, plan a safe route to school for your child and practise that route while teaching your child pedestrian and road safety.**

Some schools have programs in place that are dedicated to the promotion of active transportation for the daily trip to school. Ask your teacher how to become involved! Consider organizing a walking school bus where volunteer parents or older students lead a group of students on a designated route; students get 'picked up' at spots along the route. Families that must drive can 'Park and Stride'. Try parking a few blocks from the school and then stride, or walk, the rest of the way. This practice gives kids a chance to get a little exercise before school begins, which can help improve focus and behaviours throughout the day.

If your child will be travelling to school on a school bus, annual First Rider programs are offered by the Student Transportation Services of Central Ontario (STSCO) which provides the opportunity to learn and practise how to get on and off the school bus, as well as bus safety tips. For more information you can call STSCO at 1-800-757-0307 or visit [www.mto.gov.on.ca](http://www.mto.gov.on.ca) and search "school bus safety".

**Remember...when wheeling to school make sure your child wears a properly fitted helmet every time they ride.**

1. ParticipACTION. Are Canadian kids too tired to move? The 2016 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth. Toronto: ParticipACTION; 2016.



### Self-Regulation and Your Child

Self-regulation means that a person is able to manage their emotions, behaviours, and attention in positive ways. Self-regulation is different than self-control.

Helping your child learn self-regulation now, will help him handle being in a classroom later. Right from birth, your baby's experiences are shaping and building connections in his brain. As you hold and calmly soothe your fussy baby, you are laying the foundation for good self-regulation. When you comfort your upset child, he learns from you how to calm himself. By interacting with your child in a positive way you are role modelling how to deal with stress efficiently and effectively.

Self-regulation lays the base for long-term well-being and school success. The following link contains videos and more information about self-regulation: <http://edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/selfRegulate.html>

### Help Your Child Become Resilient

Resilience is the ability to "bounce back" from change or stress and to move forward. Resilience is key to mental well-being and an important life skill for children to develop. Try these strategies from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health to foster resiliency in your child:

- treat them with warmth, care and sensitivity;
- expose them to a variety of learning environments to help develop awareness, imagination, know-how, initiative and decision-making skills;
- talk about feelings within your family to help children learn to identify and communicate their feelings to others;
- help children feel good about themselves by accepting and appreciating them the way they are and the way they want to be;
- help them learn to have more positive thoughts about themselves;
- teach them to be flexible, to make decisions, solve problems, set appropriate goals and persevere to reach them; and
- help them develop social skills by cooperating and interacting with others and making friends.

For more information visit:

[www.child-encyclopedia.com/sites/default/files/docs/coups-oeil/resilience-info.pdf](http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/sites/default/files/docs/coups-oeil/resilience-info.pdf)

# Developing Healthy Behaviours

## Sun Safety

No matter the season, sun safety is important year-round!

Children receive 80% of their lifetime ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure before the age of 18. It is important that children are protected, by promoting and practicing good sun safe behaviours.



Did you know that UV rays from the sun can reflect off of snow, ice, water, sand and concrete causing sunburn, skin and eye damage and increase your risk of skin cancer? Being sun safe is easy to do. Teach your child to be sun smart and set a good example by being a good role model to your child. Keep well hydrated in hot weather by drinking water throughout the day.

Follow these sun safety tips:

### Time

In Canada, the sun's UV rays are strongest usually between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. from April to September. UV rays can be harmful even when it is cloudy. Check the UV index and when it is higher than 3 follow the sun protection messages.

### Shade

Teach your child about shade from trees or covered structures (i.e. umbrellas, porches, tents) and to seek shade whenever necessary, especially during sporting events.

### Cover Up

Wear a wide-brimmed hat, and clothing that covers as much skin as possible. Hats should shade the head, face, ears, and the back of the neck. Clothes made of tightly woven fabric or those labelled as UV-protective are best. Cover up even in the shade.

### Sunscreen

Use sunscreen labelled 'broad spectrum' and water resistant' with a sun protection factor of 30 and reapply often. Use plenty of sunscreen to cover the skin not covered by clothing. If sweating or after swimming, towel off and reapply sunscreen to dry skin. Use a sunscreen lip balm to protect lips

### Sunglasses

Choose sunglasses marked with "UV 400 or 100% UV protection" and wear sunglasses year round. Ensure children's sunglasses are unbreakable.

To learn more about sun safety, visit the following links:

[www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca) (search "sunsense")

[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs.sun-sol/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs.sun-sol/index-eng.php) (click on "Protect yourself and your family")

[www.dermatology.ca](http://www.dermatology.ca) (search "sun safe tips for parents")

## Healthy Teeth and Gums

Children with good oral health do better at school. Parents/guardians can help their children have a healthy mouth by sending healthy snacks to school, and helping them brush their teeth at least twice a day, at home - after breakfast and before bed.

Public Health Dental Staff visit all elementary schools to conduct Oral Health Screening. Parents are advised of screening dates by information letters and school newsletters. This visual dental screening does not replace a child's regular visit to the dentist. It helps in the planning and development of community dental programs, provides parents with advice/recommendations on the dental needs of their children and may provide access to the Healthy Smiles Ontario Program.

Dental services may be available at no cost for children and youth, age 17 and under, if they are experiencing a dental problem or need basic dental care and preventive services. Contact your Health Unit to find out if your child is eligible.

## Healthy Eating

Kindergarten is the best time to establish healthy eating habits at school. Help your child get the nutrition needed to make it through a busy day. Using Canada's Food Guide, try these suggestions:

### Breakfast

- Include at least three food groups such as: yogurt, berries and dry cereal; toast, grated cheese and scrambled eggs; pancakes, fresh fruit and milk.
- Your child's school may have a student nutrition program where all students can access a nutritious breakfast or snack each day.

### Lunch

- Whether your child has 2 nutrition breaks or one lunch break, include all four food groups at each meal. For example: veggies, hummus, yogurt and mini-muffins; cheese & crackers, cut fruit, and a hard-boiled egg; chilli, whole-wheat bun, fruit and milk.
- Pack water, plain milk or unsweetened fortified soy beverages. They have lots of nutrition and no added sugar. Find out if your school has a milk program.
- Offer whole fruit instead of juice. Whole fruits and vegetables are a better choice than juice as they add healthy fibre.
- 100% unsweetened juice, vegetable juice, flavored milk and flavored plant based beverages (e.g. soy, rice, almond and cashew drinks) all have added sugar. They are not the best choice. Offer no more than ½ cup, and limit how often you send, if at all.
- Avoid sending fruit drinks, sports drinks, pop, flavored coconut water, iced tea, or vitamin enhanced water. These drinks provide little nutrients needed for growth, and often bump out everyday, healthy choices.

### Snacks

- Include at least two food groups, for example: fruit and yogurt; veggies and whole grain pita wedges; unsweetened applesauce and pumpkin seeds.

### Remember to ...

- Choose to boost veggies and fruit! Aim to offer a vegetable or fruit at every meal and snack.
- Keep cold foods cold by using freezer packs, and hot foods hot in insulated containers.
- Recess and nutrition breaks can be short. Help your child by pre-peeling fruits and vegetables, cutting foods into bite-size pieces and quartering sandwiches.
- Offer healthy choices and include your child in packing food items for school. They will be more likely to eat foods that they choose or have helped to prepare.
- Have your child practise opening and using containers, foil, baggies or other packaging including yogurt or fruit cups.

### Community Support and Resources

- For information about community food programs in your area, click [www.foodinpeterborough.ca](http://www.foodinpeterborough.ca) or [www.211ontario.ca](http://www.211ontario.ca) (search "food") for programs in Haliburton County, Northumberland County and City of Kawartha Lakes.
- Visit [www.eatrightontario.ca](http://www.eatrightontario.ca) for healthy, low cost lunch and snack ideas, or to contact a Registered Dietitian for free.
- Visit [www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca](http://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca), [www.hkpr.on.ca](http://www.hkpr.on.ca) and [www.northumberlandfamily.ca](http://www.northumberlandfamily.ca) for more great healthy eating tips.

## Playing it Safe on the Playground

Did you know that children age five to nine have the highest risk of playground injuries? This is because they are more likely to test their own limits and use playground equipment improperly such as jumping from the top of slides.

Parents can play a key role in preventing playground injuries. Preparing children to properly use playground equipment, identify potential hazards, and to make educated choices when it comes to their behaviour in the schoolyard are all effective steps in preventing injuries.

For more information about playground safety and preventing injuries in children, go to [www.parachutecanada.org](http://www.parachutecanada.org) and click "playground safety".

# Preventing Diseases and Illnesses

## Immunization

Immunization protects children from diseases. To be in school, your child must have an up-to-date immunization record or a valid exemption. Keep your child's yellow immunization card in a safe place and remember to request that the immunization card be updated each time your child is immunized.



As a parent of a school-aged child, it is your responsibility to provide a copy of your child's immunization record to your local Health Unit and then to notify the Health Unit of updated immunizations.

For information click [www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca](http://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca) or [www.hkpr.on.ca](http://www.hkpr.on.ca) and search "immunization".

## Hand Hygiene

Teaching and encouraging good hand hygiene is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of illness. Teach children to clean their hands with soap and water before eating lunch or snacks, and after using the washroom.



Proper hand washing can be taught as your child sings 'Row, Row, Row Your Boat' or 'Happy Birthday' while:

- wetting hands with warm water;
- lathering soap on both sides of hands and in between fingers;
- rinsing hands; and
- drying hands thoroughly.

Also, teach children to cough and sneeze into their sleeve to cover their mouth and nose. This can play an important role in reducing the spread of illness.

## Second-hand Smoke

"Children and youth model their behaviour after people they look up to". This means parents, guardians, caregivers, and other family members play an important role in helping their children remain smoke-free.



Children are more at risk of getting sick from second-hand smoke as their bodies are still growing and their immune system is not fully developed. Symptoms seen in children regularly exposed to second-hand smoke include:

- wheezing, asthma, and other breathing problems; and
- bronchitis, croup, pneumonia, and chronic ear infections.

Children who miss school due to illness lose out on many valuable learning opportunities. Reduce your child's exposure to second-hand smoke by making your home and car smoke-free. Have family members and guests who smoke, smoke outside. Smoking in vehicles with children less than 16 years of age is illegal and can result in a fine of \$125.00.

For tobacco-free living tips visit [www.smokefreehousingon.ca](http://www.smokefreehousingon.ca) and [www.playlivebetobaccofree.ca](http://www.playlivebetobaccofree.ca). For tips on quitting smoking visit [www.smokershelpline.ca](http://www.smokershelpline.ca). To speak to a Certified Respiratory Educator or order free smoke-free home and car stickers, please call the Ontario Lung Association 1-888-344-5864 or click [www.on.lung.ca](http://www.on.lung.ca) for resources.

## The ABCDs of Rabies:

If someone asked you "where do you get rabies from?" a lot of people might say dogs or cats. Some people might say you can get rabies from raccoons or skunks. Others might even say you can get rabies from squirrels or mice. Well, that is all true. In fact any mammal can get rabies, but it doesn't mean they will. So how do you tell if an animal has rabies? That's the hard question. Rabies is a virus which is hidden in the saliva of infected animals so you can't actually see it. It is also hard to know exactly how an animal will act when they do get rabies; they don't always look mean or scary!

To make sure your child is safe, teach them the ABCDs of rabies:

### A: Acting strange

Teach your child to stay away from unfamiliar animals that are acting strangely, overly friendly, sick or mean. Tell your child to stand still if a strange animal does approach; eventually the animal will get bored and walk away.

### B: Bats

Teach your child about bats – they can get rabies too. Children should stay away and tell an adult if they see a bat acting strangely, such as flying outside in the daytime or slowly crawling on the ground, or if they see a bat indoors.

### C: Clean

Children need to inform an adult right away if they are bitten by an animal. The bite should be cleaned with soap and water, then disinfected.

### D: Distance

Teach your child that the safest thing to do is to keep your distance from the animal at all times until an adult says it is safe. The animal may not have rabies, but we don't know if the animal wants us near them.

For more information go to [www.cdc.gov/rabiesandkids](http://www.cdc.gov/rabiesandkids) or visit your local public health website.

## Backpack Safety

Backpacks are a popular and practical way for children to carry school books, lunch and extra clothing. They are designed to distribute the weight of the load among some of the body's strongest muscles. As practical as backpacks are, they can strain muscles and joints, and may cause back pain if they're too heavy or are used incorrectly. It is recommended that children carry no more than 10-15% of their body weight in their packs.

To learn more, click [www.aboutkidshealth.ca](http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca) and search "backpack safety".

# Your Child's Growth and Development

## Nipissing District Developmental Screen

The Nipissing District Developmental Screen (NDSS) is a checklist that is easily completed by parents and caregivers to identify delays in children up to six years of age. Areas of development include gross and fine motor, cognitive, social/emotional, self-help skills, vision, hearing and communication. The checklist also provides suggestions and activities to enhance development. Visit [www.endds.com](http://www.endds.com) for more information or contact your local Health Unit.

## Speech and Language

Developing speech and language skills will help your child to make friends, learn to read, and succeed in school and life. Milestones and activities for children from birth to six years of age are available at [www.kidtalk.on.ca](http://www.kidtalk.on.ca).

Warning signs for three year olds:

- stuttering which lasts longer than three months (struggle and tension while speaking);
- rarely makes eye contact; and
- has difficulty playing with others.

Warning signs for four year olds:

- other people have a hard time understanding what your child says; and
- gets frustrated when others cannot understand his/her speech.

Some children have difficulty developing their speech and language skills. This puts them at risk for failure in school, which could lead to further problems later in life. Make sure your preschooler's speech and language skills are on track by calling your local Health Unit to talk to a Public Health Nurse. In the Peterborough area call 705-743-1000. In the Haliburton, Northumberland and City of Kawartha Lakes area call toll-free 1-866-888-4577.

For more information visit:

- [www.kidtalk.on.ca](http://www.kidtalk.on.ca)
- Five Counties Children's Centre 1-888-779-9916
- Northumberland Child Development Centre 905-885-8137

## Hearing

Hearing problems may affect your child's speech and language. Signs of hearing problems may include: not responding when called, loud talking, frequent ear infections or colds, turning up the volume on the TV or radio. If you have any concerns about your child's hearing, contact your doctor or an audiologist to arrange a hearing test. To learn more visit [www.kidtalk.on.ca](http://www.kidtalk.on.ca).

## Vision

Vision problems may affect your child's learning. Signs of vision problems may include squinting, headaches, blinking and/or rubbing eyes often, and blurred or double vision.

If you have any concerns about your child's vision, contact your doctor or an optometrist to arrange an eye exam. OHIP covers the cost of an annual eye exam for children up to 19 years of age. For more information visit [www.kidtalk.on.ca](http://www.kidtalk.on.ca). Financial assistance for glasses is available for JK students only. Visit [www.optom.on.ca/OAO/ESEL/aboutESEL.aspx](http://www.optom.on.ca/OAO/ESEL/aboutESEL.aspx) for information.

## Sleep

Preschoolers need up to 12 hours of sleep when they no longer have naps. Good sleep habits are important for children so they are prepared to learn. Healthy bedtime routines include:

- a consistent bedtime;
- quiet time before bed - avoid stimulating activities like TV and computer games for one hour before bedtime;
- no TV, video games or computer in the bedroom, making the bedroom quiet and cozy; and
- reading to your child as part of the bedtime routine; share reading from a book rather than a tablet or other screen.



To learn more visit:

[www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/healthy\\_sleep\\_for\\_your\\_baby\\_and\\_child](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/healthy_sleep_for_your_baby_and_child).

## FREE Glasses for JK Students

One in four children has a vision problem.

Young children do not know what normal vision is supposed to look like and therefore may not complain to their parents. Children's eye exams are paid for with their health card, so there is no cost to parents.



Don't miss out on free glasses for JK students through the Eye See Eye Learn Program.

For more information visit [www.EyeSeeEyeLearn.ca](http://www.EyeSeeEyeLearn.ca) or call 1-855-424-3735.

If you have questions about these or other topics please call your Health Unit and speak to a Public Health Nurse:

- Peterborough County and City residents call 705-743-1000
- Residents of Haliburton County, Northumberland County and City of Kawartha Lakes call 1-866-888-4577