

Starting school is an exciting time for both children and parents. Here is some information to help make this a safe and healthy experience.

Healthy Eating

Healthy eating gives children the fuel they need to grow, play and learn! Help your children by following these tips:

- Pack a healthy lunch that includes foods from at least 3 of the 4 food groups from Canada's Food Guide. For example: a carton of milk, an apple and a whole grain pita stuffed with your child's favourite lean meat and veggies.
- Don't forget to pack healthy snacks as well. Aim for 2 food groups per snack. For example: whole grain crackers and cheese, or yogurt and fruit.
- Keep lunches safe by using an ice pack and/or insulated bottle (like a thermos) to keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot.
- Pack a reusable bottle with water to ensure your child stays hydrated and healthy. Don't forget to wash it daily with warm, soapy water.



For more information on packing healthy school lunches your kids will love, visit Eat Right Ontario at eatrightontario.ca.

The Nutri-eSTEP Screening Tool is a fast and simple way to stay on track with your child's nutrition and physical activity habits. Visit nutritionscreen.ca.

Growth and Development

Identifying growth and development issues early is the key to making sure your child reaches their full potential and is ready to start school.

Completing the **Nipissing District Developmental Screen (NDDS)** can help you identify, early, the areas in which your child may need extra attention. Sign up online endds.com to complete the tools electronically.

Remember all children grow and develop at different rates.



It May Be Time to Immunize

It may be time to update your child's immunizations. According to the *Immunization of School Pupils Act*, all children attending school must have an up-to-date immunization record or valid exemption with Hastings Prince Edward Public Health. Notify Public Health each time your child receives an immunization. If your child's record is not up-to-date, he/she could be suspended from school.

Physical Activity and Your Child

Young children need to be active every day for good health.

While at school, your child will have the chance to learn new skills and to be active with their class and friends.

However, it is important to remember that your child needs lots of opportunities to be active outside of school too. While at home, create safe places for your child to play and make time to be active together as a family whenever possible.



For good health, it is also important to limit the amount of time your child spends sitting. For example:

- Stop during long car rides for play time.
- Set limits around screen time.
- Keep TVs and computers out of your child's bedroom.

Canada's 24-hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth (5-17 years old), along with physical activity guidelines for other age groups, can be found at participaction.com.

Explore haveaballtogether.ca/ for more information and over 100 ideas to get 0-6 year old children moving!

Healthy Smiles

Healthy teeth and gums play an important role in helping children develop good speech and social skills. Packing healthy lunches and snacks that are low in sugar encourage healthy eating habits. Children with good oral health struggle less at school and have greater self-esteem.

The Oral Health team at Hastings Prince Edward Public Health provide a dental check for all kindergarten students at school. Watch the school newsletter for more information.

Free dental screenings for children 0-17 years are offered at Oral Health Clinics. Financial assistance is also available for eligible children through the Healthy Smiles Ontario program.

Visit Ontario.ca/healthysmiles for more information.

The logo for Healthy Smiles Ontario, featuring the text "Healthy smiles Ontario" in a serif font inside a light green circle.

Breathing Well at School for Everyone

Why does clean indoor air matter? Air quality affects our health and well-being. It influences our behaviour and our ability to concentrate and learn. We spend over 90% of our time indoors, so we breathe indoor air most of the time.

Every family can do something to make it easier to breathe well at school. Here are some fresh air basics:

- Before bringing something into the classroom, find out how it will affect the air quality. For example, try to send school supplies (markers, glue) that are odourless and non-toxic.
- Support the school in keeping the air scent free and less harmful for those students who may have breathing troubles, such as allergies or asthma. For example, consider using unscented laundry detergents on your family's clothing or scent free powders or shampoos.

Asthma is a common chronic disease for many Canadian children and everyone can play a role in making sure the indoor air is good for all. If your child has asthma, talk with the principal and teachers about things that will help keep your child safe. For more information visit: asthmainschools.com.

School Safety

Injuries are not accidents.

They are predictable and preventable.

Safe behaviours to teach your kindergarten-aged child when going to and from and when playing at school include:

Bus Safety

- Make sure your child waits well away from the road.
- Explain and show them how they must walk at least 10 big steps in front of the bus before crossing in front of the bus so the driver can see them.
- Visit triboard.on.ca/index.cfm?action=main.firstRiderProgram for information about “First Time Rider” safety program.

Pedestrian Safety

- Walk and talk with your child about how to cross the road safely.
- Children do not have the ability to determine a safe crossing route, to assess a vehicle’s speed, nor to judge safe gaps in traffic until sometime between nine and eleven years of age. Supervise children who have not yet reached this stage.

Playground Safety

- Teach your child playground safety rules:
 - ⇒ Wait their turn.
 - ⇒ Go down the slide feet first.
 - ⇒ Hold onto railings and sit down on swings or slides.
 - ⇒ Remember to keep away from moving swings and the bottom of slides.

Sun Safety

- Protect your child from the sun year round:
 - ⇒ Slip on comfortable clothing that covers arms and legs.
 - ⇒ Slap on a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses.
 - ⇒ Slop on broad spectrum sunscreen with a minimum SPF 30 to their skin at least 15 to 30 minutes before going outside. Also, don’t forget the lip balm.
- Visit dermatology.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/tips-parent-EN.pdf for more sun safety information.





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Children and Tobacco Smoke Exposure

Children are more at risk of getting sick from second- and third-hand cigarette smoke because their bodies are still growing and they breathe faster.

- **Second-hand smoke** is a combination of the smoke from a burning end of a cigarette and what is exhaled by the smoker.
- **Third-hand smoke** is the smoke that clings to objects such as furniture, carpet, fabric, hair, skin, toys etc.

Children around second- and third-hand smoke could miss more school time and lose out on important learning opportunities from symptoms like:

- Breathing problems such as asthma or wheezing.
- Infections such as bronchitis, croup, pneumonia, and ear infections.

New research is also showing a link with second-hand smoke exposure and problems with aggression, math, reading and logic.

Take steps to protect your children by:

- Making your home and car smoke-free.
- Reducing or quitting smoking.
- Being a positive role model for your children by not smoking around them.
- Talking to them about the harms of smoking.

We can support you to become a smoke-free family.

What You Can Do to Stay Healthy

The single most important way to prevent the spread of infections is hand washing. When you can see that your hands are dirty, make sure to wash with soap and water; otherwise use alcohol-based hand sanitizer. This will wash away the germs that cause many common illnesses.



How else can I protect my family?

- Cover your cough/sneeze.
 - Use a tissue and then throw it out.
 - Cough/sneeze into sleeve.
- Many viruses and bacteria settle on objects in the environment and we pick them up on our hands. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth as this is the most common route that germs enter our body.
- Stay home or keep your kids home when they are ill.

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hpepublichealth.ca