

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

Eating well gives children the energy they need to grow, play, and learn! Follow these tips for healthy meals and snacks:



- A healthy meal includes at least 3 of the 4 food groups from Canada's Food Guide. A healthy lunch could include a carton of milk, sliced fruit, and a sandwich with your child's favourite lean meat and veggies on whole grain bread.
- Plan healthy snacks that include at least 2 of the 4 food groups. Try whole grain crackers and cheese, yogurt and fruit, or sliced veggies with hummus.
- Be food safe! Use an ice pack and/or insulated container (like a thermos) to keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot.
- Pack a reusable water bottle to ensure your child stays hydrated and healthy. Don't forget to wash it each day with warm, soapy water.

The Nutri-eSTEP Screening Tool is a fast and simple way to find out about your child's eating and 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.

Visit <http://hpepublichealth.ca/healthy-living/immunization-services>.

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!

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: asthmafriendly.ca/schools.

Injuries are not accidents. They are predictable and preventable.

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.
- Visit <http://parachutecanada.org/injury-topics/item/pedestrian-safety-tips> for more information.

Sun Safety

Protect your child from the sun year round:

- **Time of day:** If you can, limit your child's time in the sun when the UV index is 3 or higher, usually between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- **Shade:** Keep them protected by seeking shade or make shade by using an umbrella, a UV protective tent, or pop-up shade shelter.
- **Cover up:** Use clothing that covers their skin as much as possible or UV-protective clothing. Have them wear a wide brimmed hat or baseball cap with flaps that cover their head, neck, and ears.
- **Sunscreen:** Apply plenty of sunscreen with SPF 30 or more, labelled 'broad spectrum' and 'water resistant' on your child. Reapply when needed (especially after swimming, sweating, or towelling). Use a sunscreen lip balm.
- **Sunglasses:** Your child should wear close fitting/wrap-around sunglasses with UV 400 or 100% UV protection. Their sunglasses should be unbreakable.

Your child should avoid getting a tan or a sunburn.

Visit <http://www.cancer.ca/en/prevention-and-screening/reduce-cancer-risk/make-healthy-choices/be-sun-safe/?region=on> for more sun safety information.

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 also offered at Oral Health Clinics. Visit Public Health's Oral Health web page for a schedule of clinic dates and locations. Financial assistance is available for eligible children through the Healthy Smiles Ontario program.

Visit Ontario.ca/healthysmiles for more information.

The logo for Healthy Smiles Ontario is a light green circle containing the text "Healthy smiles Ontario" in a dark green, sans-serif font. The word "Healthy" is on the top line, "smiles" is on the second line, and "Ontario" is on the third line.

Healthy
smiles
Ontario



MAIN OFFICE

179 North Park St.
Belleville, ON K8P 4P1
Tel: 613-966-5500
Toll-Free: 1-800-267-2803
TTY: 711
Fax: 613-966-4363
info@hpeph.ca

BRANCH OFFICES

NORTH HASTINGS

1P Manor Lane, L1-024,
P.O. Box 99
Bancroft, ON K0L 1C0
Tel: 613-332-4555
Fax: 613-332-5418

QUINTE WEST

499 Dundas St. West
West End Plaza
Trenton, ON K8V 6C4
Tel: 613-394-4831
Fax: 613-965-6535

**PRINCE EDWARD
COUNTY**

Suite 1, 35 Bridge St.
Picton, ON K0K 2T0
Tel: 613-476-7471
Fax: 613-476-2919

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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:

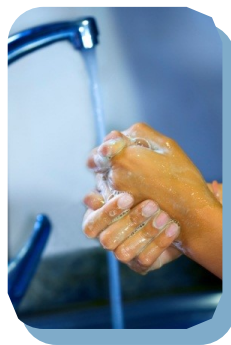
- Making your home and car smoke-free.
- Reducing or quitting smoking.
- Being a positive role model for your children by not smoking around them.
- Talking to them about the harms of smoking.

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

Visit hpepublichealth.ca/healthy-living/tobacco

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 your 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.

Visit hpepublichealth.ca/healthy-living/infection-control.

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