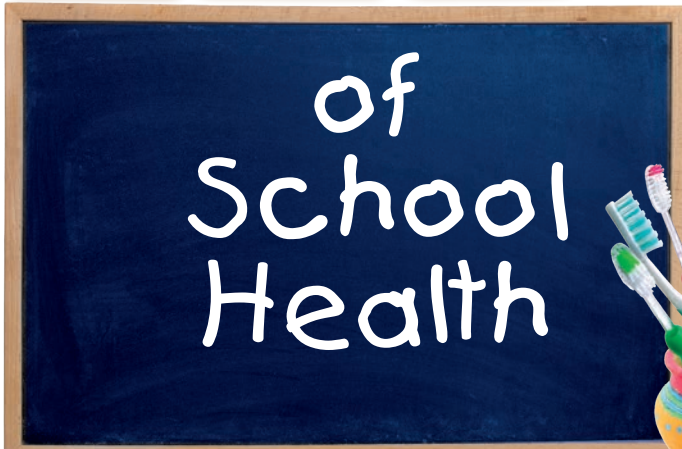


# The

2025 Edition

# ABC's



[www.healthunit.org](http://www.healthunit.org)

# A HEALTHY START TO SCHOOL

*Starting school is a new adventure for every child.*

The purpose of this book is to provide information about services for kindergarten children, and tips to keep them safe and healthy as they head off to school.

Look inside for information about:

- Oral Health and Vision Screening
- Speech & Language
- Immunization
- Eating Well, Being Active & Role Modeling
- Managing Screen Time
- Positive Parenting
- Supporting Your Child's Mental Health
- Car, Playground & Bus Safety
- Outdoor Safety
- Preventing the Spread of Germs
- Body Awareness
- Protecting Our Kids: Smoking and Vaping Laws Every Parent Should Know



## Need More Information?

***For more information about public health services:***

- Call: 1-800-660-5853
- Visit: [www.healthunit.org](http://www.healthunit.org)
- Email: [contact@healthunit.org](mailto:contact@healthunit.org)



[www.healthunit.org](http://www.healthunit.org)



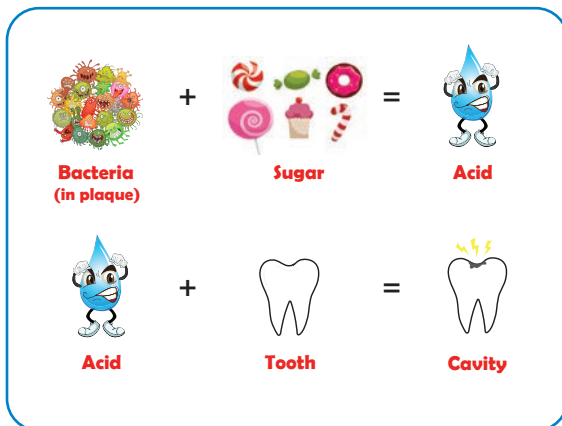
# Oral Health

Parents/guardians play a key role in developing good oral health habits in their children's lives. The most important one is having positive attitudes towards dental care and visiting the dental office regularly.

## What can you do?

These are a few steps that parents/guardians can do to ensure good oral health for their children.

- ❑ Brushing and flossing should be part of your family's daily routine, especially at bedtime.
- ❑ An adult should brush or assist with brushing until a child is 8-10 years of age.
- ❑ Helping with flossing is also important, because it cleans between the teeth.
- ❑ Choose tooth friendly snacks and drinks and keep the sugary snacks/drinks to a minimum.
- ❑ Checking your child's teeth monthly, making note of any changes and making an appointment with your dental professional if you see changes.



## First Dental Visit

Regular dental visits should start around the first year of age. There are things you can do that will make the first visits enjoyable. Take your child along to a sibling's or your own regular visit, read books about going to the dental office, and answer questions honestly. Avoid talking about negative dental experiences so that your child looks forward to their first dental experience. Registered Dental Hygienists (RDHs) from the Health Unit are happy to provide a free dental screening and oral hygiene instruction to support the recommendation of a First Year, First Visit with a dental professional. Call the Oral Health Team for more information at [1-800-660-5853](tel:1-800-660-5853), ext. 2456.

## Questions and Answers on School Dental Screening

### What is dental screening?

If you have received a letter from the Health Unit to say that your child's class is participating in dental screening at school, this means a Registered Dental Hygienist will provide a visual assessment of your child's teeth. All children receive a screening card outlining the findings and recommendations for follow-up care.

### Are children in all grades screened each year?

No. All JK/SK, and Grade 2 students are screened each year as a minimum. We will screen any child at the school if requested by the parent/guardian and consent is given. Parents/guardians may also remove their child from screening by calling the Oral Health Team at [1-800-660-5853](tel:1-800-660-5853), ext. 2456.

# Oral Health



A letter will be sent home to parents/guardians at least 10 business days prior to the scheduled dental screening date with instructions on how to exclude your child from dental screening.

## Is a school dental screening equivalent to an examination with a family dentist?

No. The purpose of dental screening by a Registered Dental Hygienist is to provide a visual assessment of the teeth to ensure there are no urgent dental needs, such as open decay, pain, and/or infection. This does not replace a thorough examination with a family dentist, but it can help identify and inform parents of dental findings that may need to be addressed as soon as possible. A process is also in place to contact the parents/guardians of children identified as having urgent needs, so that we may assist them in accessing dental treatment.

## What should I do if my child's screening card says "no obvious evidence of a serious dental problem", but also indicates that they "would benefit from preventive dental services"?

This means that your child would benefit from scaling (cleaning) of the teeth, fluoride, and/or pit and fissure sealants. In addition to daily oral care at home, these services can help keep both the teeth and gums healthy. If the child does not receive routine care at a dental office, or it is a financial hardship to cover the cost of these services, please contact the Oral Health Team at 1-800-660-5853, ext. 2456 to discuss eligibility

requirements to receive these services at no cost from a Registered Dental Hygienist at one of our health unit dental clinics.

## What if teachers/school administrators feel a student would benefit from a dental screening?

A dental screening can be provided anytime during the school year, not just on our annually scheduled screening day. School staff are encouraged to direct the family to contact us for more information at 1-800-660-5853, ext. 2456.

## Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO) Program

Healthy Smiles Ontario is a free dental program for eligible children and youth.

### Who is Eligible?

- Children and youth 17 years and under if the family meets the income eligibility or the child has a dental need (including emergency care). Children whose families are in receipt of Ontario Works (OW), Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), and Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD) will be automatically enrolled in Healthy Smiles Ontario. Eligible children will receive a dental card and program information in the mail.
- New applicants may contact the Oral Health Team at 1-800-660-5853, ext. 2456 to discuss program eligibility, or visit [www.healthunit.org](http://www.healthunit.org).

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# Visual Health

Your child's sight is important! School-age children constantly use their eyes in the classroom and at play. Several different visual skills must work together so they can see and understand clearly. Children need to see the board, focus on a picture or follow words in a book. They need to see well to play sports or play on the playground. An eye exam with an optometrist is the only way to tell if your child's eyes are developing properly. Many eye health problems can be treated if they are caught early.

Eye exams are covered for all children 0-19 years old with a valid Health Card. Your child should have a complete eye exam at six months, before starting kindergarten, and yearly during the school years.

Children with vision problems may not show any signs. In fact, vision problems may be mistaken for attention or learning difficulties.

However, some signs that your child has a vision problem may exist. Be alert for:

- Turning or tilting the head
- Avoiding books and television
- Holding objects too close
- Irritability or short attention span
- Covering or closing one eye
- A lack of concentration
- Squinting
- Sensitivity to light
- Red, itchy or watering eyes
- Using a finger to maintain place while reading
- Omitting things, rubbing the eyes, or excessive blinking
- An eye that consistently turns in or out or confusing small words when reading
- Performing below their potential
- Visible frustration or grimacing
- Headaches



The only way to be sure if your child has a vision problem is to book regular, comprehensive eye exams with an optometrist. If problems are found early, many conditions can be treated for better outcomes.

There are programs to help with the cost of glasses. Please contact us to learn more.

For more information or to find a local Optometrist go to the College of Optometrists of Ontario <https://www.collegeoptom.on.ca/>.

# Speech & Language



## DON'T WAIT & SEE!

Children need good communication skills to be able to participate, learn, and have fun at school. It is best to get help as early as possible. Use the Communication Checkup [www.language-express.ca](http://www.language-express.ca) to check your child's speech and language development and to make a referral to the Language Express Preschool Speech and Language Program. You can also call Language Express at 1-888-503-8885. We can help your child and provide helpful ideas for you and your child's teachers.



**Children must be referred by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the year they start Junior Kindergarten.**

If your child is missing one or more of these skills, please call Language Express Preschool Speech and Language Program at 1-888-503-8885:

### 3-year-olds should:

- Understand same/different, one/all, heavy/light, night/day
- Enjoy pretend play and playing with other children
- Be able to talk about something that happened in the past (e.g., trip to Grandma's)
- Say 4-7 words in a sentence "I want my red ball."
- Understand and ask "Who?" "What?" "Where?" and "Why?" questions
- Adults outside of the family should understand at least half of what the child says
- Be able to clearly make these sounds in words: p, b, m, n, h, w, d
- Errors on l, sh, ch, v, j, r, th and lisps are normal at this age.

### 4-year-olds should:

- Be able to follow three-step instructions; i.e., "Get your boots, put them on and go outside."
- Tell stories with a clear beginning, middle and end, and be able to anticipate what will happen next in a story
- Use adult-type grammar, e.g., "Sam dropped his cookie, so I gave him part of mine."
- Be able to start a conversation and keep it going on the same topic for three turns
- Answer "Who?" "How?" and "How many?" questions
- Be able to say the following sounds correctly in words: k,y,f,g,t,d
- Errors on l, sh, ch, v, j, r, th and lisps are normal at this age.

## Which immunizations are needed for school registration?

All of the immunizations listed in the chart up to and including 18 months are required for school entry.

The 4 - 6 year immunizations are required before your child turns 7 years old.

## Be Wise: Immunize

AGE	Diphtheria	Tetanus	Pertussis	Polio	Hib	Pneumo conjugate	Rotavirus	Measles	Mumps	Rubella	Meningococcal C vaccine	Varicella	Hepatitis B	Meningococcal ACYW	HPV-9	Influenza
2 mo.	o	o	o	o	o	o	o									
4 mo.	o	o	o	o	o	o	o									
6 mo.	o	o	o	o	o		o									
12 mo.						o		o	o	o	o					
15 mo.												o				
18 mo.	o	o	o	o	o											
4-6 yr.	o	o	o	o	o			o	o	o		o				

Parents or guardians must submit a copy of their child’s immunization record to the Health Unit before the child starts school. Please **DO NOT** give a copy of their immunization record to the school.

This is not done automatically by your health care provider. Ask your health care provider to give you a print out of immunizations or to confirm your copy of the yellow immunization card is up to date.

We are not able to accept summaries from an immunization tracking app.

By law, under the Immunization of School Pupils Act, children in Ontario must be immunized to be allowed to attend school.

### You have 3 options for submitting a copy of the immunization record.

**1. Online:**

<https://healthunit.org/health-information/immunization/immunization-notice/>

**2. Drop off at any office of the Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit.**

**3. Mail to: Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit, 25 Johnston St., Smiths Falls, ON, K7A 0A4 Attention: Immunization**

For options 2 and 3 you must include the child’s full name, their date of birth, parent name and contact information. The child’s Health Card number is very helpful.

Children are immunized so they can make antibodies that fight infections.

Unprotected children, who have contact with a vaccine preventable disease, may get very sick or even die.

There is an exemption process if there are medical or conscientious reasons for not fully immunizing the child.

Visit our website for more details: <https://healthunit.org/health-information/immunization/school-requirements/>.

# Packing a Kid-able Lunch

## Foods They'll Eat

- **Small finger foods.** Sandwiches cut into strips, pre-cut vegetables and fruit, cheese cubes, stuffed mini pitas, quesadilla triangles, and wraps cut into circles are all easier for little fingers to handle.
- **Fruits that don't need peeling, like apples, or are easy to peel, like bananas.** Or you can also take the peel off in advance (e.g., oranges).
- **Foods that look like food.** Some items look like a toy and end up being played with instead of eaten, such as dinosaur cheese or animal shaped crackers.
- **Favourite leftovers.** A favourite meal from the night before is a great lunch for school too.

Remember ... **Keep hot things hot and cold things cold.** Stock up on freezer packs and a kid-friendly thermos (small and easy to open).

Find out more on keeping foods safe at: [www.healthunit.org/wp-content/uploads/Pack\\_a\\_Safe\\_Lunch\\_for\\_your\\_Kids.pdf](http://www.healthunit.org/wp-content/uploads/Pack_a_Safe_Lunch_for_your_Kids.pdf).

Many schools have Student Nutrition Programs that offer healthy breakfast, lunch or snack programs for all students free of charge. For more information, or to become involved, contact your school or visit: [www.foodforthoughtlanark.ca](http://www.foodforthoughtlanark.ca) for Lanark schools <https://www.ucl.ca/healthy-eating-for-better-learning/> for Leeds/Grenville schools.



## Make it Kid-able

- **Use containers that kids can open,** so they don't spend lunch time trying to get into their food.
- **Avoid single-serving items,** such as sealed cheese portions or small bags of crackers that take extra time to open.
- **Use reuseable drink bottles that they can open and drink out of easily.** Water, white milk and unsweetened fortified soy beverage are great drink choices for kids. Avoid drink boxes if they can't get the straw in themselves.
- **Keep it familiar.** They are in a new environment and will likely feel more comfortable eating foods that they know and recognize.



## What if they don't eat all of their lunch?

Small portions of food will be more appealing (and less wasteful). Let their appetite guide how much they eat. Expect that a few lunches and suppers may get missed as they adjust.

For more lunch ideas visit: [https://healthunit.org/wp-content/uploads/Packing\\_Healthy\\_School\\_Lunch\\_Tips.pdf](https://healthunit.org/wp-content/uploads/Packing_Healthy_School_Lunch_Tips.pdf)



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Creating a positive environment at home makes it easier for children to be healthy.

# Eating Well & Being Active Starts at Home

## Eating Well

- Offer the whole family the same variety of foods from [Canada's Food Guide](#).
- Encourage children to try new foods. Offer them along with familiar ones. It may take up to 15 tries before new foods are accepted.
- A child who helps with dinner, snacks and lunches is more likely to eat them and will learn valuable cooking skills. See [www.unlockfood.ca/en/Articles/Child-Toddler-Nutrition/Cooking-with-Kids.aspx](http://www.unlockfood.ca/en/Articles/Child-Toddler-Nutrition/Cooking-with-Kids.aspx).
- Good hand hygiene is easy and can reduce the spread of illnesses. Be sure that you and your child have washed your hands with soap and water before preparing and eating food.
- Listen to your children. They know when they are hungry and full.
- A relaxed approach to food is the best way to help your child become a healthy eater. Avoid bribing, pressuring and coaxing to eat.
- Food jags are periods when children will only eat a few foods. Be patient and try not to worry, especially if your child is active, growing and healthy.
- Have regular meal and snack times. Snacks can help keep kids focused and energized.
- Eat meals without distractions (e.g., screens, toys). This allows everyone to focus on food and eating.
- Reward your child with praise. Using food to reward or to discipline can connect food to mood and can confuse natural feelings of hunger and fullness.
- Vitamin supplements are usually not necessary. Speak to your health care provider if you have concerns about your child's health or growth.

## Being Active

- Actively play with your child. Playing together can be a great way to connect as a family.
- Provide opportunities for your child to play and explore, both on their own and with friends.
- Think about play as children's work. It helps them solve problems, learn to control their emotions and cope with stress.
- If your child wants to play sports, focus on the social and fun aspects of the sport and less on winning.
- Encourage your child to try a variety of activities. Sometimes what draws them to an activity is different than what we as parents think.
- Make time to walk or cycle with your children when you can instead of driving.

**Note:** *Preschoolers (3–4 years) should accumulate at least 180 minutes of activity throughout the day. This can be at any intensity and include a variety of different activities in different environments.*

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# Raising Healthy Eaters

## When feeding children...

- Try to limit highly processed foods.
- Use the Nutrition Facts table to help you choose foods higher in fibre and lower in salt (sodium), fat and sugar.
- Ensure children have an appetite at mealtimes by serving snacks at least one to two hours before meals.
- Children have small stomachs and need nutrient-rich food for healthy growth and development. Try to keep foods such as chips, chocolate, candies, sugary drinks and pop for very special occasions. Brush teeth immediately after eating high sugar or sweet and sticky foods.
- Quench thirst with water. 100% fruit juice, fruit drinks and cocktails, and sports drinks are high in sugar. Choose whole fruit instead of juice.
- Encourage conversation. Turn off games, TVs and other screens at meal time.

## Help your child enjoy vegetables

Children may say no to vegetables for many reasons. If your child is happy and growing there is no need to panic. Remember that children pick up messages about how you view food. If you are excited about a new food, they may be too. It could take up to 15 tastes or more before a child will decide they like a new food. Don't give up!

### Try these tips:

- Be a positive role model by letting your child(ren) see you enjoying a variety of vegetables. Try to eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable daily.
- Offer raw veggies with salsa, guacamole, hummus, bean dip or plain yogurt.
- Grate, grill, bake, mash or steam vegetables. Enjoy them plain, with cheese, or with a dressing.
- Add vegetables to stir fries, casseroles, lasagna, fried rice, pita pizzas, muffins, pasta sauces, tacos, stews, soups, salads, wraps and omelettes.
- Let children clean carrots, snap beans, tear leafy greens or mix the dressing.
- Children will often eat the vegetables they helped grow in the garden or in containers.
- Take advantage of seasonal vegetables.

### Remember...

#### The parent/caregiver decides:

- What foods to offer
- When to offer regular meals and snacks
- Where you and your child will eat

#### The child decides:

- Whether to eat
- How much food to eat

# Role Modeling for Your Child's Health

## *Your Kids are Watching and Listening*

Children copy what they see and hear. Whether it is acting like their favourite animal or repeating a song they have heard on the radio, this is how they learn. What you say and do has a big impact on shaping your child's health habits, self-esteem and body

image. Choose words and actions wisely. When comments are made about weight or appearance, there may be unintended harmful effects including: unhealthy thinking about weight and eating, as well as lowered self-esteem.

<b>Focus On:</b> ✓	<b>Try to Avoid:</b> ✗
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enjoying all foods in moderation and without guilt.</li><li>• Not commenting on what or how much someone is eating.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Verbalizing feelings of guilt related to eating certain foods (e.g., <i>"I was bad today I ate fries"</i>, <i>"I shouldn't have eaten that"</i>, <i>"no thanks, I am being good today"</i>).</li><li>• Making negative comments about the type and amount of food being eaten.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describing foods by using their name; for example, carrots, apples, bread, pasta, chicken, chips, cookies, cake.</li><li>• Enjoying a variety of food.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Labeling foods as "Good" and "Bad" foods.</li><li>• Calling certain foods "junk food".</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Making positive comments about accomplishments, skills, abilities or personality traits.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Making negative comments about your own body or the bodies of other people.</li><li>• Talking about dieting or weight loss in front of children even if you think they can't hear or are not listening (they just might be).</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Changing the subject or re-directing the conversation away from weight. For tips visit: <a href="https://healthunit.org/wp-content/uploads/Clever_Replies_to_Damaging_Remarks.pdf">https://healthunit.org/wp-content/uploads/Clever_Replies_to_Damaging_Remarks.pdf</a></li><li>• Complimenting people on their good qualities and personality traits.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engaging in conversations about the benefits of diets and weight loss or not wanting to be fat.</li><li>• Commenting on people's body shape, size or weight.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focusing on the fact that healthy children come in a variety of shapes and sizes.</li><li>• Talking about the positive qualities your children and their friends have that are not related to how they look (e.g., humour, kindness, leadership).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Comparing children's bodies or making comments about their weight or size (e.g., underweight, overweight, tall, short).</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encouraging children to try activities, move to their ability, play and have fun.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Associating physical activity with weight loss (e.g., encouraging children to be active to lose weight).</li></ul>

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# Encourage Outdoor Play

**Active Outdoor Play** is an important part of a child's physical, mental and emotional development. It builds strong bodies and improves coordination and balance. Active play helps improve sleep and brain development. Active play builds confidence and positive self-esteem, which can reduce anxiety. It gives young children the chance to develop and practice social skills and helps them learn in school.



We want children to be safe and learn to avoid hazards but also to challenge their bodies' abilities while they learn to identify and manage risks. Children benefit from being given the freedom to explore a variety of different environments (e.g., snow, rocks, grass, trees, water). This can build confidence, resilience and problem solving skills while helping them learn their limits.

## Being outside in nature is the best place for play. Did you know?

- When children are outside they move more, sit less & play longer.
- Children are more curious about, and interested in natural spaces than pre-fabricated play structures (ParticipACTION Report Card, 2015).
- For some ideas on fun outdoor activities to encourage, visit <https://activeforlife.com/activities/?age=4&skill=>.

**Physical literacy** means they have learned certain basic movement skills\* that they can use to do a variety of different activities. With these skills they will feel more confident and comfortable being active. Physically literate children lead healthy active lives.

**\*Basic Movement Skills** include swimming, kicking, throwing, hopping, climbing, running, falling, catching, jumping, balancing and dodging.

**Let kids play and explore naturally! Kids are more likely to play if physical activity experiences:**

- Are fun!
- Are a positive experience, free of negative pressure
- Provide diverse and interesting activities, games and skill development opportunities
- Are challenging
- Consist of small but reachable goals
- Promote basic motor skill development, such as running, rolling, climbing, throwing and catching
- Take place in short bursts with frequent breaks
- Are part of a child's daily routine

Promote and allow outdoor play as much as possible. This is a great place for kids to develop physical literacy. Nature provides perfect places for learning to jump, climb, balance, swim, throw and catch.

**Open the door and let your kids explore nature!**

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# Managing Screen Time For Kids: Practical Tips for Parents

Kids love to learn and play on their devices. However, spending large amounts of time on screens means less time for other healthy activities such as being outside, play dates with friends or being creative. Here are some tips to help your family create good screen time habits:



- Set limits to screen time and involve the whole family. This helps everyone reduce their screen time, and helps your child learn good habits.
- Watch with your child and talk about it. This allows you to discuss difficult content and family values.
- Replace screen time with other activities.
- Be a good example and set down your own screen. Take the time to look at and listen to your child particularly when they come to you.
- Create healthy habits and encourage using screens in the common areas of your home. Keeping screens out of the bedroom can help your child have a healthy sleep routine.
- Avoid using screens to soothe or distract as this can make it harder for a child to calm themselves when they don't have a screen. Plan ahead and bring a toy or a book when grocery shopping or sitting at the doctor's office rather than handing over a device to distract.
- Encourage putting screens away at certain times of day. An hour of screen-free time before bed can help your child fall asleep easier. Turn off screens during mealtimes and encourage conversation.
- Keep in mind that screen time can have its place. However, children learn more from spending time with you! Take time to play together and be together as a family. ...without screens!

For more information, visit <https://caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/behavior-and-development/screen-time-and-young-children>.\*

*\*DISCLAIMER: This resource states that increased screen time can result in having an increased body weight. The Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark District Health Unit has adopted a "Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds" approach which aims to shift the focus away from weight to overall health. Focusing on weight can lead to weight bias, stigma, and discrimination, which can lead to poor health. Visit this link for more information: [Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds - Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit](#).*

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# Supporting Your Child's Mental Health

Parents play an important role in their child's mental health by creating a caring home that supports their feelings and social skills. Here are some tips for parents to keep in mind:



## 1. Create a Safe and Supportive Environment:

- Have a regular daily routine to help your child feel secure.
- Give your child hugs and love to make them feel safe.

## 2. Encourage Talking:

- Let your child know it's okay to talk about their feelings.
- Use simple words to talk about emotions like happiness, sadness, and fear.

## 3. Show Healthy Emotions:

- Show how to handle feelings like anger or sadness in a calm way.
- Teach your child ways to feel better, like deep breathing or counting to ten.

## 4. Support Social Skills:

- Help your child make friends by having playdates or group activities.
- Teach them how to be kind, share, and solve problems with others.

## 5. Limit Stress:

- Don't over-schedule your child. Give them time to relax.
- Talk to your child about changes in their day, like going from home to school.

## 6. Watch for Changes in Behaviour:

- Look for signs of worry, sadness, or changes in your child's behaviour, like not wanting to play with friends.

## 7. Teach Healthy Habits:

- Make sure your child gets enough sleep. A bedtime routine helps.
- Offer a variety of foods using Canada's Food Guide.
- Encourage your child to be active. Exercise helps them feel better and reduces stress.

## 8. Be Involved:

- Spend time with your child to show you care and support them.
- Stop what you're doing and listen carefully to your child. Ask questions to show you care.

By using these tips, parents can help their child grow with healthy emotions and habits. This will help them feel better and be happy for life.

For more information, visit: <https://smho-smso.ca/parents-and-caregivers/noticing-mental-health-concerns-for-your-child/>

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# Positive Parenting



Positive parenting helps parents feel more confident and less stressed about raising children. Kids who grow up with positive parenting tend to do well at school. They make friends easily. They feel good about themselves. They're less likely to have behaviour or emotional problems when they get older. And parents are likely to have fewer arguments with their partners.

Do you want just a few tips to help set up a toddler's bedtime routine? Do you have a teenager whose attitude is upsetting the whole family? Triple P can help. And you can choose the type of help you want – in groups with other parents, one-on-one with a trained provider or even DIY online!

Here is a short list of Triple P tips you may find helpful:

- Spend small amounts of time with your child often. Do things you both enjoy.
- Give your child lots of hugs, pats on the back, or cuddles.
- Talk to your child about things they are interested in.
- Give your child lots of praise. For example, "Thank you for picking up your toys."
- Teach your child new skills by first showing the skill yourself.
- Set rules that are fair, easy to follow and enforce, and positively stated.
- Have realistic expectations.
- Try to find time every week to let yourself unwind or do something that you enjoy.

For more information in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville, call 1-800-660-5853, email [triplep@healthunit.org](mailto:triplep@healthunit.org) or visit [www.triplep-parenting.ca](http://www.triplep-parenting.ca). Parenting matters!

Source: [www.triplep-parenting.ca](http://www.triplep-parenting.ca)



# Car Safety

The safest place for children under age 13 is in the back seat.

To ensure your child is as safe as possible, be sure to:

- 1) Use the right seat for your child's weight, height and development. Always follow the manufacturer's recommendations for height and weight limits.
  - Rear facing as long as possible; follow manufacturer's weight & height limits.
  - Child seat with 5 point harness until at least 18-36 kg (40-80 lb).
  - Booster seat until 36 kg (80 lbs), 8 years old, or 145cm (4'9") tall.
- 2) Make sure the child seat is installed correctly. Always follow the child seat user guide and check your vehicle owner's manual to see what location in your vehicle a child seat can be installed.

**When buying a child seat in stores or online, ensure it carries the national safety mark (pictured below).**



**Do not** use a child seat or booster seat that:

- Is under recall, check the Transport Canada website for a complete list of recalls (<https://tc.canada.ca/en/road-transportation/defects-recalls-vehicles-tires-child-car-seats/safety-alerts-notice-child-car-seats>).
- Is past the expiry date (seats expire after 5-9 years).
- Has missing parts.
- Has been dropped or in a collision.
- If considering a second hand seat, visit this website for more information: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/road-safety/second-hand-car-seats.html>.



Watch this video for tips on choosing, installing and checking that a child car seat meets safety standards: <https://youtu.be/KtLHBvmR7ho><https://www.ontario.ca/page/choosing-child-car-seat>  
For more information: <https://tc.canada.ca/en/road-transportation/child-car-seat-safety>





## Playground Safety

Play is an important part of your child's day.

A playground provides a place for social interaction, physical activity and a safe place to learn to manage risks.

- Playgrounds should be checked for hazards and broken equipment.
- Playgrounds should have deep soft surfaces to minimize injuries from falls.
- Children should use equipment appropriate to their age and ability.
- Children should be taught to assess and build their skills to use the equipment.
- Pay attention to clothing that could catch on equipment and be a choking or strangulation hazard. Tuck in clothing, zip up jackets, tie up drawstrings and remove scarves and helmets.

For more tips of safety at the playground:  
[Playgrounds and play spaces – Parachute](#)  
[Playground Safety – Canada Safety Council](#)

## Bus Safety

Your child may travel to and from school on the school bus. This can be an exciting change for your child but does come with some responsibilities. Teach your child proper school bus safety.

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation offers these helpful tips:

- Be at the school bus stop on time.
- Wait in a safe place well back from the edges of the road.
- Do not play in the ditches or on the snow banks.
- Enter the bus in single file holding the handrail.
- Find a seat quickly and stay seated facing forward at all times.
- Do not place objects in the aisle.
- Avoid rowdy behaviour. Do not throw things, yell, eat or drink while on the bus.
- Always keep your arms and head inside the bus.
- Never distract the bus driver. Follow their instructions.
- When you leave the bus, move away from the side and move forward. If you can touch the bus, you are too close.
- Stay out of the danger zone. If you drop something near the bus, never try to pick it up because the driver might not see you. Ask an adult or the driver for help.
- Look at the bus driver for the signal before crossing.
- Look both ways before crossing the road.

For more information about School Bus Safety:

[www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/school-bus-safety.shtml](http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/school-bus-safety.shtml)  
<https://www.steo.ca/safety/school-bus-safety-rules/>

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# Protecting Children's Health

## Ticks and Lyme Disease

Lyme disease is caused by a bacteria that can be transferred to humans through the bite of an infected tick. Preventing bites from ticks is the best way to prevent Lyme disease.

- Wear protective clothing and insect repellent when outside. Stay on pathways, trails and in mowed areas when playing outside.
- Check yourself and your family for ticks when returning inside.
- Remove attached ticks using tweezers or a tick twister. A tick must be attached for more than 24 hours to transfer the Lyme disease bacteria. Consult your health care provider if the tick was attached for longer than 24 hours.

For symptoms of Lyme Disease and information on ticks, insect repellents, and extreme weather, visit [www.healthunit.org](http://www.healthunit.org).

## Extreme Heat

We may experience extreme heat days between May and October. It's important that when heat and humidity is forecasted, children try to remain as cool as possible and drink plenty of water. Children should be dressed appropriately for heat and be encouraged to play in the shade and avoid overexertion. Common health effects from extreme heat include dehydration, exhaustion, fainting, swelling of hands, feet and ankles, and heat rash.

## Extreme Cold

Extreme cold can also be a cause of concern for children. The following tips will help keep your child warm:

- Dress in layers, with a wind resistant outer layer.
- Wear a hat and insulated mittens or gloves. Keep your face warm by using a scarf, neck tube or facemask.
- Wear warm and waterproof footwear.
- When it is very cold cover as much exposed skin as possible. Your body's extremities, such as the ears, nose, fingers and toes lose heat the fastest.
- When there is an extreme wind chill limit the time children spend outside.
- Walking or running will help warm you by generating body heat.

**Children are susceptible to the cold.** Watch for signs of **frostnip**, or **frostbite**.

### Frostnip:

- A mild form of frostbite, where only the skin freezes.
- Skin appears yellowish or white, but feels soft to the touch.
- Painful tingling or burning sensation.

### Frostbite:

- A more severe condition, the skin and the underlying tissue (fat, muscle, bone) freeze.
- Skin appears white and waxy and is hard to the touch.
- No sensation – the area is numb.

# Get To Know Dangerous Weeds

Common dangerous weeds in Eastern Ontario include wild parsnip, poison ivy, and giant hogweed. A person coming into contact with the sap or oil of these weeds can suffer severe rashes, burns or even blindness when the sap is rubbed into the eye. Knowing and teaching your children what the weeds look like and avoiding the weeds are the best ways to prevent health effects caused by these weeds.

**CAUTION! POISONOUS PLANTS**

GIANT HOGWEED	WILD PARSNIP
<b>Poisonous:</b> Yes, do not touch this plant. <b>Height:</b> 1 to 5.5 metres. <b>Leaves:</b> Large, deeply cut with sharp coarse teeth, reaching widths in excess of 1 metre. <b>Stems:</b> Covered in coarse, whitish like-hairs with red/purple spots. <b>Flowers:</b> White, umbrella shaped, up to 1.2 metres across. <b>CAUTION:</b> If you come in contact with this plant, you could experience severe burns to your skin. Contact with eyes can cause temporary or permanent blindness.	<b>Poisonous:</b> Yes, do not touch this plant. <b>Height:</b> 1 to 2 metres. <b>Leaves:</b> Pinnately compound with 2-5 pairs of opposite, sharply toothed leaflets. <b>Stems:</b> Completely smooth and reddish/green in colour. <b>Flowers:</b> Yellow, umbrella shaped, 10-20 cm across. Similar in appearance to dill. <b>CAUTION:</b> If you come in contact with this plant, you could experience severe burns to your skin. Contact with eyes can cause temporary or permanent blindness.

**HOW DO I PROTECT MYSELF?**

- WHEN WORKING NEAR THESE PLANTS:**
  - Wear goggles, rubber gloves, rubber boots and Tyvek coveralls
  - Make sure to bring a bucket, soap, water and a scrub brush, and thoroughly wash rubber boots and gloves before taking off all of your protective clothing
- IF I COME INTO CONTACT WITH THESE PLANTS:**
  - Seek immediate shelter (exposure to sap makes human skin hypersensitive to sunlight)
  - Thoroughly wash exposed skin with soap and water
  - If skin reacts, seek medical attention

**STILL UNSURE?**  
Take a photo and submit it along with its location to the online weed identification service at [www.weedinfo.ca](http://www.weedinfo.ca)

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## Wild Parsnip:

Found in ditches, uncut fields and fence lines. It grows between 50-150cm tall and has a yellow flower. Severe burns are caused when sap from the plant in combination with UV light touches skin. The sap can cause blindness when rubbed into the eye.

## Wild Giant Hogweed:

Was introduced as an ornamental plant from Europe. The plant can be found in ditches, stream banks and uncut properties. It can grow up to 5m (16ft) high. It has large rosette leaves, a white flower with a flat bottom and a rounded top. The sap of this plant also causes severe burns and blindness in combination with sunlight.

## Poison Ivy:

Found in the woods, fields, fence lines, and ditches. The stem is woody and can grow on ground surface with upright leafy stalks 10-80 cm high; or it can be found as a climbing vine. A severe rash can be caused from the oil of plant if it touches skin.

For more information about Dangerous Weeds and their controls visit [www.healthunit.org](http://www.healthunit.org).

# Preventing the Spread of Germs

Germs can spread easily from person to person and especially from child to child in one of three ways:

1. Directly by touching someone who has germs in the nose, mouth, eyes or on the skin. Direct contact can be kissing, touching or holding hands with a person who has an illness.
2. Indirectly by touching a toy, doorknob or a used tissue that has been touched by an infected person and now has germs on it. Some germs can stay on surfaces for many hours.
3. Germs in the nose and throat can spread through droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes without using a tissue. Droplets can be sprayed and breathed in by another person who is close by.

## Why is cleaning hands so important?

- 80% of common infections are spread by hands.
- It's the best way to stop the spread of germs and reduce illness. This includes hand washing with soap and water or using alcohol based hand rub.

**It's important to teach and assist young children to clean their hands frequently, and to role model this behaviour.**

Wondering if your child should attend school or daycare? Do the screening here (<https://www.ontario.ca/school-screening/>)

## Six steps to handwashing with soap and water.

1. Wet hands with warm running water.



2. Add soap, and then scrub hands together to make a soapy lather. Do this away from the water for at least 20 seconds.



3. Wash the front and back of your hands, as well as in between fingers, around thumbs and under nails.



4. Rinse hands well, under warm running water.



5. Dry hands with a paper towel.



6. Turn off water using a paper towel.



## FACTS ~Alcohol Based Hand Rub (ABHR):

- Effective at killing most germs if it contains 60 to 90% alcohol
- If hands are visibly soiled, the dirt must be removed first by washing before ABHR can kill germs
- Alcohol is not absorbed through the skin
- Parents can keep ABHR close by to use when shopping or in the car
- Adult supervision is necessary

## 4 steps to use ABHR:

1. Apply a dime-size amount into open palm
2. Rub hands together covering all surfaces
3. Rub -- in between and around fingers, back of each hand, fingertips and each thumb and wrist
4. Keep rubbing for at least 15 seconds or until hands are dry

## Important times to teach children to wash their hands

- Before making or eating food
- After arriving at school
- After sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose
- After playing with animals
- After using the phone or computer
- After using the bathroom
- After playing outdoors
- After coming home from school



Cover your mouth & nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Put your used tissue in the wastepaper basket.



If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, **not** your hands.



Wash your hands with soap & warm water for 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand rub, if soap & water are not available.

## Stay up to date with your COVID and Flu Vaccines based on eligibility

You should stay home (self-isolate) until:

- Your symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours if you had nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea) and
- You do not have a fever and
- You do not develop any additional symptoms

After you are done self-isolating, for 10 days after your symptoms started:

- Wear a well-fitted mask in all public settings (including school and child care)
- Avoid visiting anyone who is immunocompromised or may be at higher risk of illness (for example, seniors)
- Children age 2 to 5 years old should only wear a mask if they are supervised, can safely tolerate masking, and can put their mask on and take it off

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# Body Awareness

## Messages for today:

Our bodies are good and special (including the genitals).

Talking about body awareness demonstrates that you are an *"Askable Parent"*.

## Bathtub Talk

The bathtub is a good place to talk about public and private body parts. We encourage parents and caregivers to use dictionary words like penis and vulva/vagina so children have recognizable words to use if they need to talk to an adult about an inappropriate touch.

- Encourage school age children to clean their own genitals. You can do this by saying, "You are older now and you can care for your own private parts most of the time. When you need help, you can ask me." This will help your child feel confident. With mastery and direct instruction to ask for help, your child will be less likely to think that their genitals are "unmentionables".
- Teach school age children that they should not stare at or touch other people's private parts and that others are not to touch or stare at theirs. It is important to give the message that the genitals are covered because they are special, NOT hidden because they are dirty or shameful. If asked, the genitals are special because they are the parts that will allow children



to be parents when they are grownups. Note: Looking at each other's genitals is part of preschool development.

- Children should not be scolded or shamed about these activities. If this occurs, reinforce the messages about public and private parts, and encourage the children to come and talk to you if there are concerns.

## The Bare Naked Book

This is a body catalogue for parents and children. It offers a head to toe inventory of body parts (including the penis and vagina) illustrated with appropriate family/community drawings.

"The Bare Naked Book" by Kathy Stinson  
Art by Heather Collins  
Annick Press ISBN 10 - 155451049X  
Available through Amazon.ca

# Protecting Our Kids: Smoking and Vaping Laws Every Parent Should Know

Provincial law prohibits smoking or vaping of tobacco or cannabis and the use of vapourizers or e-cigarettes for any substance on school property or within 20 metres of school property (two school bus lengths). This includes inside vehicles.



## Be in the Know!

There are new smoking and vaping laws. It is against the law to smoke tobacco or cannabis or vape anything on or within 20 metres of school property.

### Breaking the law is costly!

**FINES:** Smoking or vaping on or within 20m of school property, **including in your car:**

**\$305**

Selling, supplying or sharing tobacco or vaping products with anyone under the age of 19:

**\$490**



Provincial law also prohibits smoking or vaping of tobacco or cannabis and the use of vapourizers or e-cigarettes for any substance within 20 metres of children's playgrounds, sports fields (including spectator areas) and community recreation centre property. This includes inside vehicles.

For more information about the Smoke Free Ontario Act, 2017 – visit our website [www.healthunit.org](http://www.healthunit.org).

## Do you smoke but want to quit?

Quitting smoking is one of the best things a person can do to improve their overall health. Contact the Health Unit for more information about our quit-smoking services at 1-800-660-5853 or [quit@healthunit.org](mailto:quit@healthunit.org).

# A Parent's Guide

## to Community Resources in **LANARK COUNTY**

### Family Support

Housing	1-888-9-Lanark
Ontario Works	1-888-999-1142
Find a Doctor: <i>Health Care Connect</i>	1-800-445-1822
Health811	811
Oral Health Programs	1-800-660-5853
Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit	1-800-660-5853
Upper Canada District School Board	1-800-267-7131
Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario	
<i>Kemptville Office</i>	1-800-443-4562
<i>Smiths Falls Office</i>	1-800-267-7945
Triple P Parenting	1-800-660-5853

### Programs for Children

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Lanark County	613-283-0570
Daycare Subsidy	613-267-4200 ext 2302
Children's Resources on Wheels	613-283-0095 or 1-800-267-9252

### Growth & Development

Preschool Speech & Language	613-283-2742 or 1-888-503-8885
Infant Hearing Program	1-800-267-7875 ext 1145
Healthy Babies Healthy Children	1-800-660-5853
Lanark Community Programs	613-257-7121 or 1-800-667-2617
Lanark Early Integration Program	613-257-7121 or 1-800-667-2617
Connections Lanark Home Visiting Program	1-888-284-2204

### Child Protection/Safety

Family & Children's Services	1-855-667-2726
Interval House	1-800-267-7946
Kids Help Phone	1-800-668-6868
Ontario Poison Centre	1-800-268-9017
Lanark County Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Program	613-283-2330, ext. 1258

### Food & Nutrition

Health811 (ask to speak with a Registered Dietitian)	811
Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit	1-800-660-5853
Food Access Programs	1-800-660-5853
Connections	1-888-284-2204
Our LGL Food System (ask for "Foodcore")	1-800-660-5853

### Mental Health

Open Doors for Children and Youth (Lanark)	1-877-232-8260
Mental Health Crisis Line	1-866-281-2911
Lanark, Leeds and Grenville Addictions and Mental Health	1-800-361-6948
Smokers Helpline	1-877-513-5333



# A Parent's Guide

## to Community Resources in **LEEDS & GRENVILLE COUNTIES**

### Family Support

Housing	1-800-267-8146
Ontario Works	1-800-267-8146
Find a Doctor: <i>Health Care Connect</i>	1-800-445-1822
Health811	811
Oral Health Programs	1-800-660-5853
Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit	1-800-660-5853
Upper Canada District School Board	1-800-267-7131
Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario	
<i>Kemptville Office</i>	1-800-443-4562
<i>Smiths Falls Office</i>	1-800-267-7945
Triple P Parenting	1-800-660-5853
EarlyON Child and Family Centre	613-341-9044 or 1-866-433-8933 ext.2374

### Programs for Children

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Leeds & Grenville	613-345-0281
YMCA Brockville & Area	613-342-7961
Daycare Subsidy	1-800-267-8146
Subsidy for Recreational Activities <i>Making Play Possible</i>	613-498-4844 or 1-800-809-2494
EarlyON Child and Family Centre	613-341-9044 or 1-866-433-8933 ext.2374
Positive Opportunities Partnership for Kids (P.O.P.)	613-382-2149

### Child Protection/Safety

Family & Children's Services	1-855-667-2726
Interval House	1-800-267-4409
Kids Help Phone	1-800-668-6868
Ontario Poison Centre	1-800-268-9017
Assault Response and Care Centre	1-800-567-7415

### Food & Nutrition

Health811	811
Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit	1-800-660-5853
Food Access Programs	1-800-660-5853
Connections	1-888-284-2204
Our LGL Food System (ask for "Foodcore")	1-800-660-5853

### Mental Health

Children's Mental Health of Leeds & Grenville	1-800-809-2494
Mental Health Crisis Line	1-866-281-2911
Lanark, Leeds and Grenville Addictions and Mental Health	1-866-499-8445
Smokers Helpline	1-877-513-5333

### Growth & Development

Preschool Speech and Language: Language Express	613-283-2742 or 1-888-503-8885
Infant Hearing Program	1-800-267-7875 ext 1145
Infant & Child Development Program	613-345-1662
Developmental Services of Leeds & Grenville	613-345-1290 or 1-866-544-5614
Inclusive Childcare	1-613-345-1290
Healthy Babies Healthy Children	1-800-660-5853

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# NOTES:

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# NOTES:



For more information call 1-800-660-5853  
or visit [www.healthunit.org](http://www.healthunit.org)

