



# A HEALTHY START TO SCHOOL

## STARTING SCHOOL IS A VERY EXCITING STEP

With encouragement and understanding, the transition to this new stage in life will be a fulfilling adventure. This brochure is full of ideas on how to make school healthy and rewarding.



## HEALTHY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Your child's growth and development is important to their success in school. Track your child's growth and development by completing the Looksee Checklist (formerly called NDDS) for your child. Visit [york.ca/earlyyears](http://york.ca/earlyyears) for information on child development and [lookseechecklist.com](http://lookseechecklist.com) to use the Looksee Checklist.

### FOR THE BEST HEALTH AND WELL-BEING, EAT HEALTHY, STAY ACTIVE, SLEEP WELL AND MAKE YOUR SPACE SMOKE-FREE



#### **Pack nutritious lunches and snacks**

Keep your child's energy up at school by packing healthy lunches and snacks. Use Canada's Food Guide to help choose foods from the three food groupings for lunches and one or two food groupings for snacks. Involve your kids in making their lunches. Be food safe; use a thermos to keep hot foods hot and ice packs to keep cold foods cold. Get 60 minutes of physical activity per day, every day.

Visit [canada.ca/foodguide](http://canada.ca/foodguide) for more information on healthy eating habits.



#### **Get 60 minutes of physical activity per day, every day**

Children need at least 60 minutes a day of heart pumping activity for physical and mental well-being.

Help your child reduce the time they spend being sedentary each day by limiting screen time (television, electronic devices, etc.) to no more than two hours per day. Limit sedentary (motorized) transport, extended sitting and time spent indoors throughout the day.

Learning physical literacy or basic movement skills such as running, jumping, balancing, catching, throwing, kicking, swimming, etc. helps children successfully join in a variety of sports and physical activities for life. Allow time for unstructured outdoor active play every day.

For more information visit [york.ca/physicalactivity](http://york.ca/physicalactivity)



#### **Sleep tight — and for at least 10 hours**

Make sure your child gets at least 10 hours of uninterrupted sleep per night to replace their body's energy. Keep regular bed times and wake up times.



#### **Make your space smoke-free**

A smoke-free environment is essential to keep your child healthy. Your child's lungs are still developing, making them more vulnerable to the effects of smoke exposure. Smoking in the home increases your child's risk of getting colds, ear infections, bronchitis, asthma and pneumonia.



## CHOOSE A SAFE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY WAY TO GET TO SCHOOL

When possible, think of ways to be environmentally friendly in your travel methods, such as walking, biking or taking the bus. Walking to school increases physical activity and helps lessen traffic congestion at the school, improving safety conditions for children. If you need to drive your child to school, park your vehicle away from the school and walk the last block.

## KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE

### Safety tips for protecting children:

- Teach children to obey crossing guards and bus drivers
- Always cross the road with children nine years of age or less — young children do not have the ability to be aware of traffic; even older children may need to practice crossing the road safely
- Supervise young children at all times around fall hazards, such as stairs and playground equipment, whether you're at home or out to play
- Ensure your child wears the proper helmet fitted correctly every time they bike, skateboard, scooter or in-line skate
- It is safest to keep a child in a forward-facing car seat with harness straps for as long as they are within the weight and height limits of their convertible, 3-in-1 or combination car seat (usually up to 29kg/65lbs.). After that, use a booster seat until they are at least 145cm/4'9"
- Children under 13 years of age are safest buckled up in the back seat of a vehicle
- It is important to keep all substances (alcohol, cannabis edibles, pain medications etc.) out of children's reach and in a safe place
- Start the conversations early about substance use and be a positive role model. Remember, you are the most important influence in your child's life

## DRESS YOUR CHILD FOR THE WEATHER

**Keep your child comfortable and protected by making sure outdoor clothing matches the weather:**



In winter, children need hats, gloves and boots.



On sunny days or when the UV index is three or more, children should wear a bucket hat, cover up, play in the shade, put on sunscreen and wear sunglasses.

## ENCOURAGE HEALTHY SMILES

Tooth brushing is an important part of your child's daily routine. Use a child-sized toothbrush with soft, rounded bristles. Replace it every three to four months or sooner if worn, frayed and after your child has been sick.

Children up to six years of age are not able to brush their teeth properly— you will have to do it for them. Let your child have a turn brushing when you are done.

**Set a good example by letting your child see that you take care of your teeth daily and teach them to:**

- Brush at least twice a day for two minutes, especially before bedtime
- Floss daily, rinse mouth with water after eating/drinking and wait 30 minutes to brush teeth after meals and snacks
- Use a small green pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste for children aged three and older if they are able to spit, unless otherwise advised by their oral health professional
- Avoid sugary snacks between meals. Encourage your child to drink water rather than pop

Take your child to see a dentist regularly to maintain a healthy mouth, beginning with the first dental visit by first birthday. Visit [york.ca/dental](http://york.ca/dental) for more tips on healthy brushing and for information on dental programs available for children.



# IMMUNIZATION AGAINST CHILDHOOD DISEASES

Immunization is the best defense against serious childhood diseases.

Ontario law requires students attending school be up-to-date with diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, polio, mumps, measles, rubella, meningococcal disease and varicella (chickenpox - for children born in 2010 or later) immunizations.

All vaccines on the Routine Immunization Schedule in Ontario are publicly funded.

## **Students whose immunizations are not up-to-date may be suspended from school.**

When registering for school (junior or senior kindergarten), York Region Public Health will contact you requesting a complete immunization history. It is the parent's responsibility to keep a record of a child's immunization and inform York Region Public Health of these immunizations. The name of the vaccine and the date it was given should be included in the yellow immunization record.



Call York Region Public Health at **1-877-464-9675 ext. 73456** every time your child gets a vaccine to make sure your child's immunization status is up-to-date.

Please visit [york.ca/immunization](http://york.ca/immunization) for more information.

## **Exemptions**

Some students may be exempt from immunization based on medical, religious or conscientious grounds.

Parents/guardians that do not want their child immunized due to non-medical reasons are required to attend an immunization education session and complete the statement of conscience or religious belief form.

Exemption forms may be accessed at [york.ca/immunization](http://york.ca/immunization) or by contacting York Region Public Health Immunization Program at **1-877-464-9675 ext. 73456**.

Always discuss the benefits and risks of any vaccine with your health provider.

## **Additional vaccines**

Vaccines against human papilloma virus (HPV), hepatitis B and meningococcal disease are offered free of charge for certain age groups at your child's school. Please call **1-877-464-9675 ext. 73456** for more information.

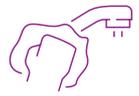


## ENCOURAGE GOOD HANDWASHING

Germes can cause illnesses, like colds, influenza (coughing, sore throat, muscle aches and fever) and norovirus (vomiting and diarrhea). They spread when we shake hands, share objects and touch door handles and tables. Washing hands correctly is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of germs.

### Follow these guidelines with your child:

1. Wet hands with warm running water
2. Apply soap
3. Rub hands together for 15 seconds  
(don't forget between fingers, thumbs, finger tips and back of hands)
4. Rinse hands with warm running water
5. Dry hands
6. Use a paper towel to turn off the tap



### Remind your child to wash their hands:

- Before eating or drinking and before and after handling food
- After using the washroom, blowing their nose, sneezing or coughing into their hands, touching garbage or animals and playing outdoors
- Before and after visiting someone who is sick
- When hands look or feel dirty

By washing your hands correctly and at the right times — you are being a great role model for your child!



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the e-newsletter or email us at  
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Support your child's learning by  
volunteering on the Healthy School  
Committee in your child's school.

**PUBLIC HEALTH**  
1-877-464-9675  
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