

Starting Kindergarten

Public health information
to support your child



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Getting started at school

Starting kindergarten is a milestone in your child's life. It is normal for both children and caregivers to experience a range of emotions about starting this exciting new chapter.

How can I help my child prepare for kindergarten?

- 1 Read the information and tips in this booklet.
- 2 Keep a positive attitude about starting school. Children who are excited about learning, generally do well in kindergarten.
- 3 Give your child opportunities to interact with other children in small and large groups.
- 4 Healthy routines of being active, eating well, and getting enough sleep will help make this transition easier.

EarlyON

EarlyON child and family centres offer free drop-in programs for caregivers and children from birth to six years of age. If you want to meet people, get advice, learn or play with your child. Find the centre closest to you, visit Ontario.ca/EarlyOn:





How do I report my child's immunizations?

When you register your child for school you must also report their immunizations to Southeast Public Health.



All students attending school in Ontario must be up-to-date with immunizations under the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA), or have a valid exemption.



Children are due for ISPA immunizations at four years of age.



Check with your health-care provider to ensure your child is up-to-date on their immunizations, or contact Southeast Public Health (SEPH) if you do not have a health-care provider.

Health-care providers do not automatically report immunizations to public health.

Caregivers are responsible for reporting their child's immunizations to Southeast Public Health.

For more information about reporting immunizations, visit

SoutheastPH.ca/ImmunizationReporting



How can I help my child deal with stress?

Children might show stress with big emotions or physical feelings, like headaches or tummy aches.



Change is hard. Help your child deal with stress and challenges:



Spend time with them.



Listen to them.



Show them lots of love and affection.

Questions or concerns?

Reach out to your health-care provider or visit Children's Mental Health Ontario **cmho.org**, to find a child and youth mental health centre in your area.



Routines can help your child know what to expect.

Even at this early age, they are learning from you! Show your child how to positively deal with stress by staying calm in stressful situations.

For more tips on helping your child deal with stress:

**SoutheastPH.ca/
ParentMentalHealth**



Student mental health:
**smho-smsoc.ca/parents-
and-caregivers**



What are good sleep habits?

Sleep is very important for your child's physical and mental well-being. Not getting enough sleep can have an impact on your child's mood and function at school. Creating good sleep habits can help children get the sleep they need.



Bedtime tips:



Have a quiet, soothing bedtime routine that you follow every day.



Allow time for relaxing activities like a bath, reading or a quiet chat before bed.



Avoid TV, computer, game console and phone use before bed.



If your child has bedtime fears or nightmares, talk calmly, cuddle and provide reassurance.

Sleep guidelines:

Aim for uninterrupted sleep with consistent bed and wake-up times, even on weekends.

Age in years	Hours of sleep
Three to five	10 to 13
Six to 12	Nine to 12

Sleep for school age children:

SoutheastPH.ca/ChildSleep



bit.ly/HealthySleepForBaby



How do I encourage my child to move more?

Spending more time being active and playing will help your child do better in school and be healthier physically, mentally, and emotionally.



Ways for children to be more active:



Spending time outside helps children move more, sit less, and play longer.



Go with your child to the park and play together.



Provide a variety of activities so your child can decide what they enjoy most.

For activity ideas, visit:
activeforlife.com



Our region is at high risk for Lyme disease.

Check your children for ticks after playing outdoors, particularly from spring to early fall.

For more information or to learn how to remove a tick, visit SoutheastPH.ca/Lyme



How can I help my child enjoy a variety of foods?

A positive relationship with food is important for both mental and physical health.



Help your child develop a positive relationship with food:

As the adult, decide which foods are served, and when. Encourage children to listen to their body's hunger and fullness signals by allowing them to decide how much to eat.



Create a pressure-free eating environment by introducing new foods with familiar ones.



Consider how you talk about food. Avoid using words like “cheat day”, “bad food”, “good food”, or “treat”. Instead, call foods by their name and describe them using neutral, matter-of-fact statements. Describing foods based on their colour, flavour, texture or smell is a great way to engage children and build food literacy skills.



Packing food for the school day

Children usually have about 20 minutes to eat lunch at school.



Suggestions to help give your child enough time to eat:



Wash and peel fruits ahead of time.



Pack small, bite-size portions.



Use easy to open containers and have them practice opening and closing them.

Other helpful tips:



Pack a reusable water bottle!



Allergy alert! Some schools may have a list of restricted food items that might put a child at a high risk of an anaphylactic allergic reaction.



Check in with your school to see if food is provided throughout the day. Many schools in the SEPH area offer a student nutrition program.

For ideas on planning family meals, contact:

Healthy.Schools@SoutheastPH.ca

SoutheastPH.ca/FoodChoices



Why is breakfast important?

Children who eat breakfast are fuelled with energy and nutrients needed to grow, learn, and be active.



Try these quick and easy breakfast ideas:



A tortilla with chopped vegetables and scrambled eggs.



Oatmeal topped with apple chunks, cinnamon, and chopped nuts or sunflower seeds.



Whole grain English muffin with melted cheese, tomato, and spinach.



Congee with ginger and stir-fried vegetables.

Try making a balanced breakfast a routine in your home. Be a positive role model by starting your day off with a balanced breakfast.

For vegetables and fruit at wholesale prices, contact:

Good Food Box
foodcorelgi.ca
goodfoodbox@kchc.ca
shop.cdcquinte.com



How can my child get to school?

Getting to school in an active way like walking, cycling or taking the bus helps your child get more physical activity and arrive to school more alert and ready to learn.

Walking safety:



- Walk on the sidewalk where there is one.
- Use crosswalks, and follow crossing guard signals. Do not cross the street mid-block.

Bike safety:



- Wear a bike helmet.
- Learn and use hand signals.
- Children under 10 years of age need someone with them.

School bus safety:



- Be sure the driver can see you before crossing the street in front of a bus.

Keeping the school area safe:



- If your family needs to drive, keep your car away from the school during drop-off and pick up times.
- Park one or two blocks away from the school and walk.

For more information:

ontario.ca/page/school-bus-safety



ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca





How do I support my child's development?



Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. Learn about programs to support your child's development from birth until they start school. Find out where to get help if you have concerns. Visit Ontario.ca/page/early-child-development.



If you have concerns about your child's development: The SmartStart Hub can help you explore your child's strengths, needs, and connect you to helpful services.

City of Kingston, and Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Counties and Leeds, Grenville & Lanark Counties: kidsinclusive.ca/services-and-programs/specialty-services/smartstart-hub

Hastings and Prince Edward Counties: bit.ly/SmartStartQuinte





Development check-in tools: Identify needs or concerns you may have about your child, sign up for a free newsletter and learn about activities you can do with your child at home. Visit eyci.healthhq.ca.



To access developmental screening for your child, connect with your health-care provider or one of these services:

Visit the Ages and Stages Developmental and Social-Emotional Screening:

- In Hastings and Prince Edward Counties, cythpe.com/family-friendly-docs.
- In the City of Kingston, and Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Counties, maltbycentre.ca/iemh-care-pathway.



In Leeds, Grenville & Lanark Counties, contact 1-800-660-5853, ext. 2467 to speak with a public health nurse.



How can I prevent the spread of illness?

Sharing is great, except when it comes to germs!





Help prevent the spread of illness by:

- Teaching your child to cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue or elbow.
- Keeping your child home from school when they are sick.
- Teaching your child not to share drinks, eating utensils, lip balms and other things that come in contact with their mouth or saliva.
- Keeping your child's routine and seasonal immunizations up-to-date.

Teach your child to wash their hands:

- Before making or eating food.
- After using the toilet.
- After sneezing, coughing, blowing and wiping their nose.
- After playing outside.
- After touching pets or handling garbage.

How to hand wash

 <p>1</p>	 <p>2</p>	 <p>3</p>
<p>Wet your hands.</p>	<p>Apply soap.</p>	<p>Rub your hands together for 20 seconds.</p>
 <p>4</p>	 <p>5</p>	 <p>6</p>
<p>Rinse your hands well.</p>	<p>Dry your hands with paper towel.</p>	<p>Turn taps off with paper towel.</p>

For more information:
bit.ly/CaringForKidsHealth





How do I keep my child's teeth healthy and strong?

Parents can help children care for their teeth. Brush, floss, and visit the dentist regularly.

Brush teeth twice a day for two minutes.



Children need help brushing their teeth.



Brush in small circles along the gum line.



Use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste with fluoride.



Floss your child's teeth every day.

If you can't pay for dental care, we may be able to help.

Healthy Smiles Ontario gives free dental care for eligible children.

Visit Ontario.ca/HealthySmiles



Check out the new **Canadian Dental Care Plan** at Canada.ca/Dental

Your child may be eligible for both programs.





Is there dental screening in school?

Each year, children in kindergarten, Grade 2, and some other grades have their teeth checked by the Southeast Public Health dental team.



The screening is a quick look into the mouth with a sterilized mouth mirror. A card is sent home with the dental findings.

Does your child need dental care?

Healthy Smiles Ontario gives free dental care for eligible children 17 years of age and under.

Dental care includes teeth cleaning, checkups, and treatment.

For more oral health tips, visit:

SoutheastPH.ca/TipsforHealthyTeeth





Does my child need glasses?

Take your child for a free eye exam. Yearly eye exams with an optometrist (eye doctor) are free for children with an Ontario health card.

Children in kindergarten can get free glasses.*

To find out more, visit EyeSeeEyeLearn.ca or call your eye doctor.

*From eye doctors who participate in the Eye See Eye Learn program.



For more information about healthy eyes, visit:
SoutheastPH.ca/SchoolVision



How can I protect my child from the risks of tobacco, vaping, and cannabis?

Accidental poisoning in children from edible cannabis or vape liquid is a serious risk.



To avoid this risk, treat all edible cannabis and vape liquid like other dangerous household items:



Keep locked away and out of reach of children.



Keep separate from food and drinks that your child regularly consumes.

To protect children, smoking and vaping are not allowed:



On school property or within 20m of it.



In a vehicle carrying children 16 years of age and under.

For more information about cannabis poisoning in children, visit:

bit.ly/Cannabis-Poisonings





Contact information

Belleville

179 North Park
Street, Belleville,
Ontario, K8P 4P1

Monday to Friday
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Telephone
613-966-5500

Toll-Free
1-800-267-2803

Brockville

458 Laurier
Boulevard, Brockville,
Ontario, K6V 7A3

Monday to Friday
8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.
1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Telephone
613-345-5685

Toll-Free
1-800-660-5853

Kingston

221 Portsmouth
Avenue, Kingston,
Ontario, K7M 1V5

Monday to Friday
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

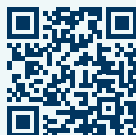
Telephone
613-549-1232

Toll-Free
1-800-267-7875

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