

A Healthy Start to Kindergarten

Checkpoints for Pre-Kindergarten Health

- ✓ School nurse program
- ✓ Arriving safely
- ✓ Staying healthy
- ✓ Immunization reporting
- ✓ Healthy eating
- ✓ Active living
- ✓ Balancing busy lives
- ✓ Dental screening
- ✓ Vision screening

A Healthy Start to Kindergarten

The start of school is an exciting time for children and their families. Public Health is your partner in preparing young children for a healthy start to school. Good health is linked to learning! Early attention to potential health concerns helps make sure they don't get in the way of your child being at their best in school.

Yours in health,
School Nursing Team



SCHOOL NURSE PROGRAM

Public Health works with schools to promote healthy living at every age. To learn more about any of the topics in this Guide or to speak to the Public Health Nurse assigned to your school, visit <https://www.swpublichealth.ca/en/community-health/school-health.aspx> or talk to the school secretary.

ARRIVING SAFELY - BOOSTER SEATS

Even though your child is now school aged, the law requires they use a car seat until they are 18 kilograms (40 lbs). It is best to continue using a car seat until they reach the manufacturer's height or weight limits for your seat. Once they outgrow the car seat, a child must move to a booster seat. Boosters raise your child higher so that the adult seat belt is in the correct position on their body.

You should use a booster seat if your child:

- is under the age of eight and
- weighs less than 80lbs and
- is less than 145 cm tall (4 feet 9 inches)

The safest practice is to use the booster seat past 8 years of age, until your child reaches 145cm (4 feet 9 inches) tall.

For more information, visit: https://www.swpublichealth.ca/en/my-health/resources/Personal-Safety-and-Injury-Prevention/SWPH_CarSeatandBoosterSeat_Brochure_web.pdf

STAYING HEALTHY

Reduce the risk of catching and spreading infections!

Encourage your child to wash their hands:

- After using the washroom
- Before eating
- Anytime they look dirty
- After touching animals
- After sneezing and coughing

Also, remind your child not to share objects such as water bottles.

For information on common illnesses and infections and how to care for a sick child visit www.caringforkids.cps.ca.



You will also want to have a back-up plan to care for your child if they get sick and need to stay home from school.

IMMUNIZATION REPORTING

Immunizations protect children from serious and life-threatening illnesses that are easily spread through schools. Children need proof of immunization against:

- ✓ Tetanus
- ✓ Diphtheria
- ✓ Pertussis
- ✓ Polio
- ✓ Measles
- ✓ Mumps
- ✓ Rubella
- ✓ Meningococcal
- ✓ Varicella (mandatory for children born in 2010 or later)

Public Health needs to have complete immunization records for all children attending school. We need to know all past vaccines, as well as EVERY TIME your child gets another “shot” or immunization – from kindergarten right through to high school graduation. This is the law under Ontario’s Immunization of School Pupils Act.

During the school year, students with incomplete information or missed immunizations will receive a notice from Public Health. Children with missing information, or those who are not fully immunized, may be suspended from school.

What to do if you cannot find your child’s immunization record:

If you cannot find the record, contact your healthcare provider. Call us if you can’t get your children’s record from your healthcare provider.

What to do if you do not want your child vaccinated:

A signed legal document called an affidavit can be completed to exempt your child from receiving the required immunizations. Your healthcare provider can complete a medical exemption for your child if he/she has a health issue or allergy that prevents them from being immunized safely. You can also complete a philosophical or religious beliefs exemption by attending an education session and getting the document notarized. Call us for more details and to book an information session.

5 easy ways to report your child’s immunizations:

Online: www.swpublichealth.ca/vaccineswork

Mail or In Person: 1230 Talbot Street, St. Thomas OR 410 Buller Street, Woodstock

Phone: 1-800-922-0096 Fax: 519-631-1682 (St. Thomas) or 519-539-6206 (Woodstock)

Packing school lunches

A healthy school lunch gives children the energy and nutrients they need to learn and play. When planning lunches, keep these tips in mind:

- Involve your kids. Children who help prepare their lunch are more likely to eat it. Even small children can help decide between two different veggie or fruit choices and pack crackers into reusable containers.
- Plan lunches with a variety of vegetables, fruits, protein foods (like hummus, eggs, milk, yogurt, fish or chicken) and whole grains (like whole grain cereals, crackers, breads or wraps).
- Make water your child's "go to" drink. A reusable water bottle will keep your child hydrated all day. Plain white milk or plain fortified soy beverage packed in a thermos also make a good choice.
- Make lunches "kid" friendly. Use containers that can be easily opened by your child.
- Check-in about the amounts you are sending and adjust as needed.
- Rather than buying costly pre-made lunch kits, make your own healthy lunch kit. Pack a reusable multi-compartment container with bite-sized cheese cubes, left over chicken chunks, whole grain cereal, veggie sticks or fruit slices. To make veggies more appealing, offer hummus or other dips with cut up raw veggies. Add variety by choosing different types of whole grains (bread, rolls, pitas, tortillas) to give sandwiches a twist.
- Pack lunches in an insulated lunch bag with an ice pack to keep cold foods cold. Keep hot foods hot by using a thermos. Remember to clean the inside of the lunch bag each day.

Are you concerned about how your child is eating?

If your child is between 18 months & 5 years old go to www.nutritionscreen.ca and get information about:

- What is going well with your child's eating habits
- What to work on to help your child become a better eater
- Ideas for meals, snacks and drinks

Visit www.unlockfood.ca and search "Packing Healthy School Lunches and Snacks."



ACTIVE LIVING

Physical activity is needed for healthy growth and development. Children learn better when they spend time running, jumping, and playing outdoors every day. It also helps them to sleep and feel better.

Plan activities that cause them to breathe harder and feel warm such as bike riding, running, skipping, climbing on playground equipment, dancing or throwing and kicking a ball. All these activities help your child learn movement skills that they need to be active. The Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth give recommendations on the right amount of physical activity, sleep, sitting and screen time for a balanced day and good health. Visit www.participaction.com for some great ideas!

BALANCING BUSY LIVES

Families are busy. We're trying to fit work, school, family time, household tasks, and outside commitments into each day. It can feel like a lot to manage. On top of that, many families find that screen time is getting in the way of physical activity, sleep and family connection. We have some ideas on keeping the balance.

- Have a predictable family screen schedule and post it on your fridge.
- Create a screen free morning and bedtime routine for your child.
- Model healthy screen time by limiting your own screen time when your kids are around.
- Schedule a regular family game night.
- Plan to eat family meals together whenever possible.
- Develop a regular bedtime routine. Before bed do relaxing activities such as reading, listening to calm music or laying in bed talking quietly about the day.
- Tuck children into bed each night to give them a feeling of security.



How much sleep is enough?

Toddlers (1 to 2 years)
11 to 14 hours

Preschoolers (3 to 5 years)
10 to 13 hours

School aged children (6-12 years)
9 to 12 hours

Children ages 14-17
8 to 10 hours

For information on healthy sleep routines, please visit www.caringforkids.cps.ca.



Recreational screen time recommendations

2-4 yr olds
1-hour daily maximum
– less is better

5-17 yr olds
2-hour daily maximum
– less is better

DENTAL SCREENING

Many children miss school because of tooth decay. When tooth decay is not treated it can affect your child's learning and speech. It can also affect how your child's adult teeth grow. Our Oral Health Team traditionally visits elementary schools in our region. With your permission, your children in JK, SK and Grade 2 and Grade 7 will receive a free dental screening by a Registered Dental Hygienist. Please note that this program could potentially be disrupted during Covid-19.

If you have a concern about your child's teeth, please call us to discuss options for screening your child's teeth.

For more information about dental services for children aged 0-17, visit: www.swpublichealth.ca/en/community-health/oral-health-in-schools.aspx

Note: dental screening does not replace a regular check-up by your child's dentist.



VISION SCREENING

Take advantage of a free eye examination to rule out vision concerns for your child. Eye problems can go unnoticed because kids often don't know they are not seeing correctly, so they don't complain to parents about their eyesight. Eye examinations are covered once a year by provincial health insurance for people under 20. Call your local optometrist.

Did you know? Children born in 2017 and 2018 and starting kindergarten in 2022 qualify for a pair of [complimentary glasses](#). To find a participating optometrist and to learn more go to: www.EyeSeeEyeLearn.ca



St. Thomas Site

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