

READY, SET, KINDERGARTEN!

Junior Kindergarten Resources



March 2022

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WELCOME TO KINDERGARTEN



Starting Kindergarten is a busy time! In this document, you will find information about how to prepare your child for their first day, what to expect, and some other health behaviour tips to help make this transition as smooth as possible.

Ready-Set-Go! Health Check-Ups to Think About

1. Immunizations: Make sure your child is up to date on their vaccines before school starts

Parents care deeply about the well-being of their children, including protecting them from illnesses caused by diseases that are vaccine-preventable. The Health Unit is required by law to keep an updated vaccination record throughout your child's school years to protect your child in case of an outbreak. Kindergartners must be up-to-date with their routine vaccines. Vaccination boosters are due between the ages of 4-6 years.



Vaccinating your children is the best way to keep them safe from many serious and potentially deadly diseases. Parents/guardians are required to provide updated information to the Health Unit, as health care providers do not necessarily report this information to the Health Unit. Call the Health Unit to review your child's vaccination record or online: [Timiskaming Health Unit Vaccination Record](#), [Porcupine Health Unit Vaccination Record](#).

- Diphtheria
- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Measles
- Tetanus
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Meningococcal C Infections
- Varicella (chicken pox)
(mandatory for children born in 2010 or later)

2. Healthy Smiles Ontario Program for Children and Youth: Schedule a dental check-up

Healthy teeth and gums are very important as your child grows. Oral hygiene helps your child to develop healthy eating habits, social skills, and good sleep patterns. You should brush their teeth two times a day for two minutes each time. Help your child with brushing until they are able to print their own name and don't forget to floss. Yes, even baby teeth.

Eligible children and youth ages 17 and under in need of dental care in the province of Ontario can get access to FREE dental services through the Healthy Smiles Ontario program. Review the [eligibility requirements](#).

Registered Dental Hygienists (RDH) from the health unit will perform dental screenings to students in JK, SK, as well as Grades 2, 4 and 7 annually. A dental screening is a quick visual inspection done to identify urgent conditions that are causing or will cause pain, and may provide access to the Healthy Smiles Ontario Program. Parents/guardians will be notified of the screening and an RDH will follow up on any urgent conditions. A dental screening is NOT a substitute for your child's regular exam at the dentist.

Regular dental visits are needed to maintain oral health and prevent issues before they start. Contact the health unit to find out how we can help!

Timiskaming Dental Team

705-647-4305 (1-866-747-4305), Ext. 2280

Porcupine Dental Team

705-267-1181 or 1-800-461-1818



3. Vision Health: Get an eye check-up

Vision health plays a vital role in a child's growth and development. In fact, 80% of classroom learning is visual and it is estimated that 25% of school-age children have vision problems that can affect their ability to learn. Fortunately, many vision conditions can be treated if they are caught early. Many vision disorders have no symptoms and can only be diagnosed by an optometrist. Comprehensive eye examinations are covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) once every 12 months for all children 0-19 years old. When required, free glasses are available to JK and SK children through the **Eye See...Eye Learn®** program; an initiative from **participating optometrists** and corporate partners.



Trained staff from the health unit perform vision screenings to SK students in all schools annually. Vision screenings do not replace regular eye exams by an optometrist but can help to identify children at risk for vision disorders and encourage parents to book a comprehensive eye exam with their optometrist.



Staying Healthy!

Reduce the risk of catching and spreading infections!

Cover your mouth and nose with either a tissue, your upper sleeve or your elbow, when you cough or sneeze.

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, utensils and food.

How much sleep is enough?

Age	Hours of sleep
Toddlers (1 to 2 years)	11 to 14
Preschoolers (3 to 5 years)	10 to 13
School aged children (6-12 years)	9 to 12

For information on healthy sleep routines, please visit:
https://caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/pregnancy-and-babies/healthy_sleep_for_your_baby_and_child

Healthy School Lunch

Eating a variety of nutritious foods can help your child be more alert and ready to learn. A healthy school lunch gives children the energy and nutrients they need to learn and play.

When planning lunches, keep these tips in mind and refer to [Canada's food guide](#):

- All area schools are peanut-free. Check your school policy on other food allergies.
- Involve your kids. Children who help prepare their lunch are more likely to eat it. Use containers that can be easily opened by your child.
- 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). To make veggies more appealing, offer hummus or other dips with cut up raw veggies.
- 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.
- 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 beverages packed in a thermos also make a good choice.
- To reduce long term costs of packing lunches and to make environmentally friendly impacts, use reusable lunch containers and wash them between uses.
- Pack lunches in an insulated lunch bag with an ice pack to keep cold foods cold. Keep hot foods hot by using a thermos.
- If accessing food for your child is difficult, please reach out to your school and local food banks for additional support.
- For healthy school lunch ideas, visit [Healthy school lunch ideas](#).



What to expect from the Northern Fruit and Vegetable Program (NFVP)

The NFVP is a school-based food literacy program that supplies two servings of vegetables and fruits weekly to students at school in Northern Ontario.

The goal of the NFVP is to encourage healthy eating and lifestyle habits among children through exposure to vegetables and fruits as well as through food literacy and healthy lifestyle education. Exposure to new foods includes not only eating the food but being around the food or around others enjoying the food.



About the Student Nutrition Program

The Student Nutrition Program offers school-age children and youth nutritious food through breakfast, lunch, and snack programs.

The goal of the program is to support learning and healthy development. Nutritious food helps kids learn and focus. Research has shown that students have trouble learning when they are hungry at school.

Active

Outdoor play is a basic childhood need and taking risks is a necessary part of play. Your child will be going outside to play and learn. Dress them for the weather and protect them from the sun's harmful rays with a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen.



Physical activity helps children:

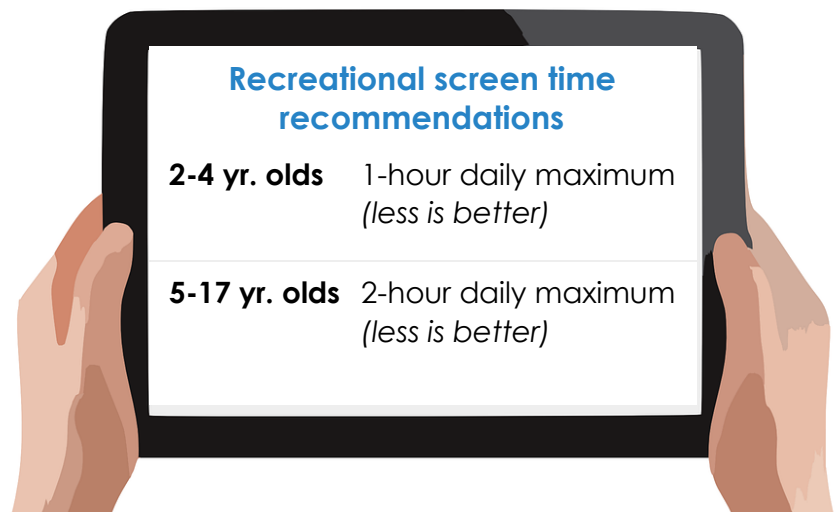
- Learn new things
- Have fun playing with friends
- Reduce stress and anxiety
- Feel good about themselves
- Improve their health
- Sleep better at night

As your child grows, it is important that they get a good balance between moving, sleeping and sitting. Get moving! At least 180 minutes is recommended. This can be spent in a variety of physical activities spread throughout the day, of which at least 60 minutes is energetic play - more is better!

Healthy Screen Time

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.



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.

- Schedule a regular family game night.
- Plan to eat family meals together whenever possible.
- Routines help children understand expectations and provide a sense of security in their lives.
 - Keep wake-up routines cheerful and positive. Mornings can be less stressful by organizing as much as possible the night before.
 - Developing a regular bedtime routine can include relaxing activities such as reading, listening to calm music or laying in bed talking quietly about the day.
- Dedicate screen-free time to do something fun with your child. This is an opportunity to talk about your day and bond with your child.

Teach the Skills – Active Travel

All JK/SK students are eligible for the school bus. However, starting in Grade 1 children must walk if they live within 800 m of the school, and starting in Grade 4, children must walk if they live within 1.6 kms of the school.

It's never too early to start teaching children walking and biking skills. Adult-led instruction and modelling of safe-pedestrian behaviours can help children learn by giving an opportunity to discuss their safety in real-world walking situations. Visit WalkNRoll.ca for [colouring pages](#) and other age-appropriate resources for teaching children [safe walking](#) and [biking skills](#).



Growth and Development Key Points for Street Safety

Children aged four to six:

- Need supervision.
- Are ready to practice the basics.
- May do the unexpected.
- Need adults to model safe walking behaviour.