

PARENTING RESOURCE GUIDE



4 - 13 Years

Table of Contents

An Introduction by Dr. Robin Williams	1
The School Nurse	2
What Every Child Needs	3
An Introduction to Childhood / Middle Years / Tweens	4
Normal Child Development	5-7
Nippising Developmental Screens	8-13
40 Developmental Assets	14-16
Health Check	17
Transitioning to Junior Kindergarten	18
Child Care	19
Communication	20
Self Esteem	21
Friendships	22
Temperament	23
Stress	24-25
Emotional/Mental Health	26-29
Sibling Rivalry	30
Positive Discipline	31-34
Parenting Styles	35-36
Sleep	37-38
Physical Activity	39
Healthy Eating	40-41
Sexuality and Puberty	42-44
Smoke Free Living	45
Substance Misuse	46-48
Sun Safety	49
Bullying	50-52
Internet and Media Use	53-57
Home Alone	58-59
Living with Anaphylaxis	60-61
Hygiene	62-64
Head Lice	65-68
ADHD	69
West Nile Virus	70
Children and Traffic	71-73
Car Seats, Booster Seats and Seatbelts	74-75
Vaccinations for Elementary School Children	76
How Long Must My Child Stay Home When Sick?	77
Transitioning to High School	78
Taking Care of Yourself as a Parent	79
Resource List	80



An Introduction by Dr. Robin Williams

Enjoy the journey on your way to being a great parent!

As Medical Officer of Health for Niagara and as a paediatrician, I have a deep commitment to the health and well - being of babies, children, youth, and families. Research currently shows that the most effective approach to raising healthy, competent children is to concentrate on building developmental assets. These assets form the foundation children need to make healthy choices and to succeed in life. The more assets your children have, the stronger their foundation will be. Lots of cuddles, kisses, laughter, love, and a focus on their strengths will help nurture and guide them from infancy into adulthood. Our staff is developing the **Parent Resource Guide**, a comprehensive series of five guides to support your parenting journey as you make the best choices for you and your family.

Getting Ready for Parenting

Being pregnant is an exciting time in your life! The **Reproductive Health** program can provide you with information and support before and during your pregnancy. This guide will get you thinking through the idea of parenting before you even become pregnant. If you're already pregnant, it will help prepare you for your journey into parenthood.

Birth to 12 months

Becoming a new parent can be exciting, yet overwhelming. The **Healthy Babies Healthy Children** program is available to assist parents to adjust to the many changes that occur during the first year. Information is provided to assist you through the newborn stage - physically, mentally, and emotionally - with the hope of giving your child the healthiest and best possible start in life.

18 months to 3 years

As your busy toddler grows and develops into a curious preschooler, the **Healthy Babies Healthy Children** program can offer practical tips and advice to guide you through this stage. This early childhood stage of development lays the foundation for the way your child relates to the world.

Age 4 - 13

The **School Health** program can provide you with information pertaining to healthy growth and development issues in children from the time they enter the school system until they begin their transition to high school. This is a period of tremendous growth for your children. We offer assistance on your parenting journey that will help you nurture your child toward early adulthood.

Age 14 - 19

Adolescence is the life phase between childhood and adulthood and is marked by many expected and unexpected changes. The teen years are a transition period for our youth - from dependence to independence. Our goal as parents is to guide them through this challenging and exciting period. The **School Health** program can provide you with information on healthy growth and development, on how to communicate with your teen, and on how to support and encourage them to succeed.

Our staff is happy to answer any parenting questions you may have. By calling our Parent Talk Information Line at 905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074, ext. 7555, you can speak to a qualified public health nurse Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. They can put you in touch with many excellent community resources and parenting groups. You may also want to visit www.niagararegion.ca and www.beagreatparent.ca to find further information that will assist you on your parenting journey.

A good life needs a good start. Remember, we're here, along with your physician, to help you whenever you need it!

Dr. Robin Williams

Medical Officer of Health
Niagara Region Public Health

The School Nurse



Did you know...?

Your child's school has a school nurse? That's right, Niagara Region Public Health provides a school nurse to every elementary and secondary school within Niagara.

Each nurse works together with their schools by providing health teaching, support, and resources to teachers, students, and parents on the importance of living a healthy lifestyle.

The nurse's role is mandated by the provincial government and is therefore closely related to the Ontario Health and Physical Education curriculum. Your child's school and Public Health recognize that health is an important resource for daily living, and that health and learning are closely connected.

What does the school nurse do?

The school nurse can offer schools and students support and resources on a variety of health related topics, including:

- Healthy Eating
- Physical Activity
- Tobacco Use Prevention
- Parenting
- Mental and Emotional Health
- Healthy Growth and Development
- Personal Safety, Injury and Substance Misuse Prevention

The School Health Program, using a comprehensive school approach is dedicated to encouraging every school within Niagara to create an environment that supports the optimal health of all students, staff, and their families.

To learn more about the role of the school nurse and the School Health Program, please call 905-688-8248 ext. 7379 or 1-888-505-6074, or visit us at www.niagararegion.ca

What Every Child Needs

In this fast paced high tech society, there are still needs that are basic to every child:

- Love (unconditional), nurturing and attention - every child needs at least one person who shows him/her commitment, caring and love.
- Food, warmth, clothing, shelter, protection.
- Structure, routines, limits (consistent).
- Social skills, including caring for others.

All parents have dreams and expectations for their children. To know whether your expectations of your child are realistic, you need to know about normal growth and development for children this age. For example, if your four year old has a friend's toy and says "it's mine" you could get upset with him and expect he should know better. But when you are aware that children at his stage of development believe "if you are holding something, it is yours" – you handle the situation calmly, teaching your child the skills he needs.

It is also important that you know that each stage of development builds on the next. If your child missed some steps, they need to work on those before they can move on. Knowing what is normal behaviour at each stage of development helps you to know when your child has a problem that needs further help.

How do I know if my child is developing normally?

For ages 4, 5 & 6, you can use the Nipissing District Developmental Screen, found on the next pages as a guide.

The skills in each screen are those that you can expect your child to have mastered by that age. If you have checked one or two "NOs," you can call the Niagara region Parent Talk Line or seek advice of your doctor. The Screens are a guide and are not meant to be a substitute for professional advice, assessment and/or treatment from a health care and/or child care professional. Also provided are a number of activities parents can do with their child that will help with his/her development.

For ages 7 to 11, see Normal Development Chart on the pages following the Nipissing District Developmental Screen.

This chart gives you a general guideline but is not all inclusive. At times, children in this age range may not be at the stage of development for their age. Many skills build one step at a time and if a step has been missed they do not behave like most children their age. Especially with social skills, children of the same age can be at different stages of development.

Areas of the brain develop at different rates in boys and girls therefore some skills are mastered at different times. The brain is a work in progress, by age 11 for girls and age 12 for boys, the neurons in the front of the brain have formed thousands of new connections. Areas under construction include the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for planning behaviour, solving problems and regulating emotions. This is not complete until well in their 20s for girls and a little later for boys.

An Introduction to Childhood / Middle Years / Tween

You often hear children ages 8 to 12 years old referred to as “Tweens” (between child and teen).

One of the most important recent developments in advertising to children has been the defining of a “tween market.” Marketers discovered that tweens influence 20 billion dollars in household purchases and spend 2.9 billion of their own money (from birthdays and parents) on fun, food, entertainment and clothing each year. Marketers found that if they make positive connections with kids when they are tweens, that they greatly increase the chance of brand loyalty when tweens become teens and adults. Corporations target the insecurity and impressionability of tweens, making them believe that it is “cool” to need their product. Television shows, advertisements, magazines, videos, clothing, etc. have been created specifically to target tweens. Word of mouth and in-school hall talk are powerful makers and breakers of new fads, brands and the “cool” products.

Tips for Parenting Tweens:



- Stay connected with your tween, while encouraging age appropriate freedom and setting reasonable limits.
- Search out other supportive adults.
- Be aware of your child’s underlying feelings.
- Show that caring for, responding to and working to understand others are important values in your family.
- Stay informed about what is going on at school and stay involved in helping with school work.
- Help them to develop the ability to think for themselves.
- Negotiate compromises.
- Don’t be an enabler (buying clothes that are not age appropriate because they “have to have it.”)
- Discipline reasonably, your child needs to experience the consequences of their behaviour versus being rescued.
- Help your child with media literacy, help them to learn to critically assess advertisements.
- Boys need help in sensitivity; becoming competent, independent problem solvers.
- Girls need help in handling media images of women, pressure to be sexy and having a healthy relationship with food and their body.
- Support and encourage their uniqueness in a positive way.

It is important that parents have an understanding of how to communicate with their children by listening and talking to each other. Establishing positive relationships with your children is important during this time. Being a parent is one of the most rewarding, yet challenging jobs, you can have. Great emphasis has been placed on parenting skills for children in the early years of life and in the teenage years. We must not underestimate the importance of good parenting skills for the “middle years.”

NORMAL DEVELOPMENT AGE 7 - 11

Each child is different especially in this age range, so it is difficult to describe exactly what should be expected at each stage of development. Milestones tend to occur at certain ages, but there is a wide range of growth and behaviour for each age. These guidelines are offered as a way of showing how children progress through the development stages rather than fixed requirements for specific ages. A child may reach some milestones earlier or later than the general trend.

Development	7 Years Old	8 Years Old	9 Years Old
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still has better large muscle than small muscle co-ordination. • Begin to balance active and quiet times by him/her self. • Like competitive games. • Has better eye-hand co-ordination. • May ask questions about life, death and the human body. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still accident prone, especially on the playground. • Has more control over small muscles, so writes and draws with more skill. • Clothing and how they look is not as important to them. • Seem to be all hands and arms. • May worry about height and weight. • Seems to have endless energy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gains greater small muscle co-ordination. • Fine motor tasks become easier. • Likes active, fast moving games and sports. • Wants to be the best in sports and recreation skills. • Becomes more interested in clothing and how they look. • Laughs at bathroom humour.
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becomes better at expressing negative feelings using words. • May blame someone else for own mistake. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins to realize others have the same feelings of anger, fear and sadness. • Is easily embarrassed. • Becomes discouraged easily. • Needs encouragement to focus on strengths. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spends time focusing on self, thoughts, and feelings. • Tends to be critical of self. • Takes comfort in knowing others also have troubling feelings at times.
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plays with boys and girls together. • Usually has a best friend of the same sex. • Shows more concern about being popular with peers. • Looks for approval of peers as well as adults. • Likes to enforce rules. • Tattles on other children who are misbehaving. • Tends to be quite critical. • Begins to look for role-models. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tends to argue and be bossy. • Can also be very lovable and caring. • Is more able to understand the needs and opinions of others. • Spends time looking for friends they can get along well with. • Likes to belong to informal “clubs” formed by children themselves. • Also likes to belong to adult led groups such as Scouts. • Starts to show a sense of loyalty. • Enjoys secrets. • Teases and irritates the opposite sex. • Not wanting to do household chores. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has own ideas and interests that are not like his/her parents. • Does not like anything “different.” • Wants to talk, dress and act just like friends. • Is involved in informal clubs and small groups of same sex friends. • Begins to just sit and talk with friends.

Development	7 Years Old	8 Years Old	9 Years Old
Mental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has rapid language development. • Wants to be “first / best / correct,” in everything. • Is greatly concerned with right and wrong. • Still has trouble understanding honesty and dishonesty. • Begins to use logical reasoning to solve problems. • Continues to enjoy dramatic play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is often idealistic. • Is very interested in projects and hobbies. • Is proud of finishing tasks. <p>Resists adult help at times.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses reference material with increasing skill. • Spends a lot of time in a hobby or project, and then drops it for another. • May be a perfectionist. • Usually follows instructions. • Is developing personal standards of right and wrong. • Is very concerned about fairness.

Development	10 Years Old	11 Years Old
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical growth and development varies a great deal at this age. • Is full of energy and enthusiasm. • Is often awkward. • Works to be physically fit. • Is very interested in how the body works. • May be curious about drugs, alcohol and tobacco. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Females may have a growth spurt (usually later for males). • May tire easily – growth spurt uses energy • Constantly thinking and sensitive about how they look. • Appetite goes up and down. • Enjoys watching or playing competitive sports. • Is very interested in learning about body changes. • May be curious about drugs, alcohol and tobacco.
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goes back and forth between being a dependent child and an independent pre-teen. • Becomes more self-conscious. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be having sudden changes in emotions that go along with puberty. • Mature one minute, immature the next. • Tends to hide feelings. • Is hard on self and very sensitive to criticism.
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks approval for being “good” from important people in their life. • More interest in the opposite sex. • Peer group is very important, influenced by group decisions. • Gives in to peer pressure more easily. • Continues to spend time with small groups of same sex friends. • Confides constantly in best friend. • Can be fickle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wants parents help but may resist when offered. • Is critical of parents. • Is concerned with popularity and what peers think of them. • Likes to belong to a group and be like others. • Becomes influenced by fad. • Spends about twice as much time on week-ends with friends as with parents. • Friendships may change due to different levels of maturity. • Develops romantic feelings for others.

Development	10 Years Old	11 Years Old
Mental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is eager to learn and master new skills. • Is proud of doing things well. • Is concerned about what they can or can't do. • Actions are based on an understanding of right and wrong. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has increased attention and concentration span. • Tries hard to succeed. • Has a strong opinion. • Begins to understand the motives behind the way others behave.









Adapted from About Kids Health, The Hospital for Sick Children

40 Developmental Assets

The research from Search Institute® has identified building blocks of healthy development known as Developmental Assets® (opportunities, skills, relationships, values and self perceptions that all children need to succeed and grow up healthy, caring and responsible). There are 40 assets divided into 8 categories each with a symbol. The more assets children have the less likely they are to be involved in risky behaviour and the more likely they are to make healthy choices. Every day with your child is an opportunity to build assets.

Throughout this book, you will find many ways that parents can be asset builders for their children. Look for the matching symbols to see which group of assets you are building.

8 Categories of the 40 Developmental Assets

							
Support	Empowerment	Boundaries and Expectations	Constructive use of Time	Commitment to Learning	Positive Values	Social Competencies	Positive Identity

The Nippising Developmental Screens can be found at
<http://www.ndds.ca/>

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40 Developmental Assets™

Search Institute™ has identified the following building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.



Category	Asset Name and Definition	
External Assets	Support 1. Family Support -Family life provides high levels of love and support. 2. Positive Family Communication -Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents. 3. Other Adult Relationships -Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults. 4. Caring Neighborhood -Young person experiences caring neighbors. 5. Caring School Climate -School provides a caring, encouraging environment. 6. Parent Involvement in Schooling -Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.	
	Empowerment 7. Community Values Youth -Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth. 8. Youth as Resources -Young people are given useful roles in the community. 9. Service to Others -Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week. 10. Safety -Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.	
	Boundaries & Expectations 11. Family Boundaries -Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts. 12. School Boundaries -School provides clear rules and consequences. 13. Neighborhood Boundaries -Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior. 14. Adult Role Models -Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior. 15. Positive Peer Influence -Young person's best friends model responsible behavior. 16. High Expectations -Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.	
	Constructive Use of Time 17. Creative Activities -Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts. 18. Youth Programs -Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community. 19. Religious Community -Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution. 20. Time at Home -Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.	
	Internal Assets	Commitment to Learning 21. Achievement Motivation -Young person is motivated to do well in school. 22. School Engagement -Young person is actively engaged in learning. 23. Homework -Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day. 24. Bonding to School -Young person cares about her or his school. 25. Reading for Pleasure -Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.
		Positive Values 26. Caring -Young person places high value on helping other people. 27. Equality and Social Justice -Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty. 28. Integrity -Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs. 29. Honesty -Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy." 30. Responsibility -Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility. 31. Restraint -Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.
		Social Competencies 32. Planning and Decision Making -Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices. 33. Interpersonal Competence -Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills. 34. Cultural Competence -Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds. 35. Resistance Skills -Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations. 36. Peaceful Conflict Resolution -Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.
		Positive Identity 37. Personal Power -Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me." 38. Self-Esteem -Young person reports having a high self-esteem. 39. Sense of Purpose -Young person reports that "my life has a purpose." 40. Positive View of Personal Future -Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

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Guiding Principles of Asset Building

Everyone Can Build Assets

Building assets isn't just about great families or schools or neighbourhoods. It requires consistent messages across a community.

All Young People Need Assets

While it is crucial to pay special attention to youth who struggle – economically, emotionally, or otherwise – nearly all young people need more assets than they have.

Relationships are Key

Strong relationships between adults and children, children and their peers, and teenagers and children are central to asset building.

Check these websites for more information:

www.search-institute.org

www.myparents.com

www.beagreatparent.ca

www.abundantassets.com

www.thrivecanada.com

Asset Building is an Ongoing Process

Building assets starts when a child is born and continues throughout high school and beyond.

Consistent Messages Are Important

It is important for families, schools, communities, the media, and others to all give children consistent and similar messages about what is important and what is expected of them.

Intentional Repetition is Important

Assets must be continually reinforced across the years in all areas of a child's life.

Source: Search Institute, www.search-institute.org/

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Asset Building with your 4-13 year olds

Support

- Talk to young children at eye level.
- Surround them with people who are caring and encouraging.
- Answer questions in age appropriate ways.
- Assure them that though you may not like what they say or do at times, you will always love them, always listen and offer help.
- Respond to their emotional ups and downs in a calm, positive way.

Empowerment

- Celebrate small successes and don't evaluate everything they do.
- Provide lots of opportunity for them to make age appropriate choices.
- Have regular family meetings - ask for everyone's opinions and suggestions.
- Encourage them to help others.
- Help them learn the skills to be successful at solving problems.
- Teach personal and playground safety.

Boundaries and Expectations

- Your focus is on calmly teaching them what you want them to do, not on their misbehaviour. "Everyone makes mistakes, what did you learn from this."
- Be firm and consistent with rules and the consequences of breaking them.
- Praise them for meeting expectations, making good choices, trying their best.
- As your child shows increasing responsibility, allow them to negotiate house rules, privileges.
- Children are always to inform parents where they are going and with whom.

Constructive Use of Time

- Aim for a daily balance of learning, physical activity and rest.
- Keep in mind that your young child has a short attention span.
- Help your growing child to learn to balance school, chores, activities, time with family and friends.
- Encourage one or two out of home activities (e.g. sports, art, music) led by good role models.
- Help them find positive activities that match their interests and abilities.

Commitment to Learning

- No matter how successful they are when learning new skills; tell them you are proud of their efforts.
- Encourage learning wherever they go, not just at school.
- Help them develop a homework routine.
- Talk about what they are learning at school; guide them to find the help they need if they are having problems.
- Help them link their talents and interests with their school subjects.
- Break tasks into small steps so they will have success and want to keep learning.

Positive Values

- Be a role model for the values you want your children to have e.g. caring, honest, responsible.
- Praise them when you see them behaving in ways you value.
- Volunteer as a family to help others in need.
- Help them learn to make good choices and stand up for right, resisting negative peer pressure.
- Help them develop good health habits.

Social Competencies

- Help them learn the skills of planning, organization, managing money, making and keeping friends, decision making, problem solving.
- Help them learn to express their feelings responsibly e.g. saying "I feel angry" instead of "you make me mad."
- Teach them to resolve conflicts using words not violence.

Positive Identity

- Tell them about your family history and culture.
- Talk to them about what gives your life meaning and purpose.
- Avoid comparing them with siblings or friends. Point out their strengths.
- Help them find ways to build their self esteem.
- Help them develop the skills and positive attitude to confidently deal with life's ups and downs.
- Teach positive self talk e.g. "I think I can."

Health Check - Has your Child...



Had a hearing check? (By age 3 unless otherwise indicated)

Hearing loss can happen at any developmental stage of life. Not being able to hear properly can affect a child's language skills and cause difficulty learning. Learning depends on hearing. Noise can affect tasks like reading, paying attention, problem solving and memorizing in children. If a child is exposed to too much noise, they may have problems understanding what is said to them as well.

Some signs of possible hearing loss:

- Not paying attention
- Speaking too loudly
- Complaining of not hearing what is said or words are not clear
- Muffled sound after leaving a noisy area
- Complaints of ringing or buzzing in the ears
- Disturbances in rest and sleep
- Can't hear high pitched sounds (watch ticking)
- Speech delays, having trouble pronouncing words, difficulty hearing "s", "sh", "f", "th"

Tips on protecting hearing:

- Turn the volume down on portable music players. Setting the volume at 4 or 5, half volume, produces 85dB. Limit the amount of time these players are used. The volume is often turned up in a noisy environment.

If you suspect a hearing problem see your doctor. Ear, nose and throat specialists can determine if hearing loss can be treated medically. An audiologist can check to see if a hearing aid would help.

Had their eyes checked? (By age 3 unless otherwise indicated)

Good vision is important for everything from learning (reading, seeing the blackboard) to sports ability. There is no vision screening done at school so it is up to the parents to have the child's eyes checked. Vision problems can happen at anytime especially during periods of rapid growth. There is no fee for eye exams for children.

Some signs of vision problems include:

- Complaints of not seeing well, tired eyes or blurry vision
- Frequent eye rubbing, blinking, squintin
- Complaints of headaches or dizziness
- Sitting too close to the television or holding books close to their face
- Confusing letters when reading or spelling

If you suspect vision problems speak to your doctor.

Had their teeth checked? (By age 3 unless otherwise indicated)

For healthy baby teeth and gums your child should brush their teeth at least twice a day for two minutes each time and floss every day. Healthy teeth are important for eating, chewing, smiling, talking properly and keeping spaces open for adult teeth. Good habits in childhood help create healthy habits for a lifetime.

Free dental services are available for children, age 17 and under, who are urgently in need of care through the Children in Need of Treatment (CINOT) Program. To find out if you are eligible, contact Niagara Region Public Health at 905-688-8248 ext.7201 or 1-888-505-6074. For more information on healthy teeth, go to the Canadian Dental Association website at: www.cda-adc.ca

Transitioning to Junior Kindergarten



Going to school for the first time is exciting! However it can also bring about some mixed feelings such as both fear and happiness. Prepare your child for this event by:

- Participating in open house at the school (i.e. “Welcome to Kindergarten”)
- Talking about the letters of the alphabet – magnetic letters on the fridge are great
- Teaching math by counting, looking at patterns, and sorting objects
- Reading nursery rhymes and poems – even make up your own games
- Giving your child small jobs to do – encourage them to celebrate their attempts and successes
- Help your child learn how to put on their coat and shoes
- Practice the first day of school: “This is where we will take you to school. I will be at the door when you are ready to go home.”

Remember, if you are feeling sad or anxious too, don’t let your child know!

Backpacks

Backpacks are a part of school life for your child. While they are helpful in carrying books and school supplies, backpacks can be overloaded, causing strain. Fully loaded, the backpack should not weigh more than 10% of your child’s weight for younger children. Older children can carry up to 15% of their body weight.

How do I choose a backpack?

- Choose a light weight material, not leather
- It should have padded straps and back
- Choose a backpack with lots of storage compartments – they will help balance out the weight throughout the pack
- The top should not be higher than the shoulders
- The bottom should rest on the lower back
- Look for a backpack that has a hip or waist belt – this will help take some of the weight off the spine and shoulders

Backpacks DOs and DON'Ts

Do:

- Squat or kneel to put the backpack on a table or chair before putting it on
- Wear both straps and adjust them so the pack fits snugly
- Use the waist or hip belt
- Put the heaviest items closest to your child’s body
- Check the fit, you should be able to get a hand between the back and the backpack

Don't:

- Use only one strap if it has two – the spine will lean and this puts stress on joints and muscles in the back
- Pack any odd-shaped or sharp items where they can dig into the back – put them in outside pockets
- Overload the backpack - carry only what is needed for that day

Child Care ♥

Help with child care has become a necessity since, in many families most adults work outside the home. Choosing child care is one of the most important decisions for a parent.

Tips for choosing child care:

1. Look for someone who offers more than “babysitting” by a TV or computer.
Do they offer healthy food, safe physical activity, a time and space to do homework?
2. Learn as much as you can about the child care program and provider.
 - Are other parents happy with the child care staff and facility?
 - Is there a happy feeling amongst the children and staff?
 - Can they meet your child’s needs and work with your child’s temperament?
 - Does their way of discipline and attitude towards children agree with yours?
 - Are there clear policies and consistent practices for managing children’s behaviour and emergencies?
 - Is there safe, age appropriate equipment and routines?
 - Is the facility clean, is food prepared in a hygienic way, is hand washing before eating stressed?
3. Look for a place that is licensed, whether it is a child care centre or home-based child care.
4. Extended family such as grandparents or aunts and uncles can be a great child care choice. Even if relatives are not an option for child care; the relationship your child has with others who take a special interest in them can help build their assets. Check out www.grandparenting.org



Communication

Parenting a child at any age requires love, guidance, tons of patience and a whole lot of communication!

The best thing for building a positive relationship with your child(ren) is to be able to communicate with them. Communication is more than just talking. While the words we use can send one message, our facial expression, body language, eye contact, and the tone of our voices can send another. If those two parts of the message don't match, confusion can set in and children may feel we really aren't listening to them, or worse, that we don't care.

Children need to learn to communicate well with others. By watching their parents interact they learn the fundamentals of good communicating, such as when to start a conversation, taking turns in a conversation, making eye contact when talking with someone, and how far to stand from a person when they are talking to them.

Establishing good communication skills and strategies early on with your child can set the foundation for a healthy and happy relationship now and for the future. Once this foundation has been set, most things parents need to discuss with their children become easier. Discussions around bedtime, appropriate clothing choices, bath time and curfews are easier which makes the tougher topics easier as well. When children feel they are truly being listened to and heard, they are more inclined to be open to discussions with their parents on those more difficult issues that will arise as they get older, such as peer pressure, sex and sexuality, and drugs like tobacco, alcohol or illegal substances. Regardless of the topic, remember to start early. You have the opportunity to discuss these issues first before others can confuse your child with incorrect information.

Communication Tips:

Parents must listen more and talk less. Active listening is the key to successful communication with any person and parents need to be especially aware of this with their children. Too often we dismiss what children have to say and this can really impact their self-esteem and desire to continue a conversation if they believe the other person is not listening. Respect what they say because what they say matters. It's up to parents to "hear" what they have to say.

Finding good times to talk can be hard in our busy lives but making time to talk with your child about what is going on can help prevent problems before they arise. A great time to start a conversation with your child is in the car on the way to activities or school, at meal times with everyone sharing about their day, or before bed. Children are more willing to open up and talk at the end of their day because they may feel they have you all to themselves.

Use open ended questions when talking with your child instead of questions that only need a yes or no answer. For example, instead of asking 'did you have a good day at school' you can ask 'what was the best part of your day.' Allow them to explore and share their thoughts and feelings. By keeping the lines of communication open, you create an open environment in which children can feel safe and ask questions freely.

You might need to be the one to start conversations about the tough topics - some children never ask questions. Try discussing a recent news article or an issue that they saw on TV or heard on the radio. Provide correct information; if you don't know the answer, tell them that you don't know and then find out the facts together. This is a great time to communicate your family's values and beliefs and what is important to you. Remember to practice what you preach by being a good role model. Help them to develop skills to resist pressure and follow through with their decisions even when friends disagree. Talk about your expectations and be clear.

Self-Esteem



What is self-esteem?

It is a person's sense of self worth, how he/she feels about him/herself. It is formed as children grow and gain skills. It can be positively or negatively affected by parents.

Why is self-esteem so important?

Having good self-esteem and feeling capable and confident with oneself is important for people to lead healthy, happy, and productive lives.

Children with poor self-esteem feel unhappy and view themselves negatively. They feel discouraged and fearful of making a mistake, so they give up easily or do not try at all. They tend to associate with others who have low self-esteem.

What can parents do?

To prepare our children for a future as independent, competent young people, they need to be taught some basic skills and have opportunities to practice and develop them. The communication skills you have already established continue to play an important role.

Things to do

Build on strengths
 Be positive and affectionate, give hugs
 Love them unconditionally
 Allow for mistakes
 Encourage friendships
 Support reasonable risk taking
 Praise sincerely
 Expect help with chores

Things to avoid

Hiding your feelings
 Making comparisons
 Pointing out weaknesses
 Choosing your child's friends
 Being too protective
 Using sarcasm
 Redoing chores

Have the attitude that everyone makes mistakes and those mistakes are opportunities for learning. Instead of punishing children for their mistakes, use the mistake as a teachable moment. Say, "How could you have done this differently based on what you know now?" or "What would you have done differently?" Remember: children are not bad. It is the behaviour that is unacceptable, never the child.

How can parents foster their child's self-esteem?

- Be firm but fair; allow for reasonable consequences
- Spend quality time with them and listen to them
- Teach new skills in small steps
- Provide consistent routines for mealtimes, bedtimes, homework and household chores; this helps your child learn organizational skills
- Model the skills you want your child to learn
- Encourage your child to do things for themselves
- Allow your child to make choices and decisions
- Build on your child's strengths and encourage them to try, sincerely praising all attempts made

Friendships



Friends become more important to children in the middle school years. What your children see as they watch your friendships will greatly influence what they think is a good friendship and how they behave with their friends. Talk with your child about the qualities of a good friend.

With your younger children, you have a say in who they play with as you arrange their visits with friends and you can help them with their social skills as you supervise their play. Young children may be friends one minute, fighting the next and back to being friends the next. Teach them the skills they need and try to guide them to solve their problems as much as possible on their own. At school children have more opportunity to choose their own friends.

Get to know the children your child spends their time with by volunteering in the classroom, sharing the driving to sports events, etc.

- Get to know your child's friends by encouraging your child to invite them to your home. Go over the house rules before the friend arrives.
- Children remember the last part of a visit especially, so a snack is a great way to end a visit. Later ask your child what they like about their friend and point out qualities that you appreciated.
- Get to know the children your child spends their time with by volunteering in the classroom, sharing the driving to sports events, etc.
- Supervise your children's TV and DVD watching. Help them choose programs that show examples of good friendships and healthy relationships.

As children are old enough to visit outside your home with their friends, be clear about your rules and expectations. Ask for phone numbers and addresses of their friends. Get to know the families of your child's friends. Every so often say encouraging things about their positive friendships and resist the urge to criticize those that seem negative. Many children get defensive about the friends their parents don't like and may become even more determined to keep those friendships. Talk about how friends resolve conflicts.



Temperament

Also important to being the best parent you can be, is understanding and taking into account your child's personality and temperament. Children go through the same ages and stages, but they do not respond to a situation and relate to others in the same way. Temperament is one of the things that make children act differently.

What is temperament?

- The usual way the child experiences and relates to the environment
- Very important in the development of a child's distinct personality
- Made up of several different traits: activity level, sensitivity, awareness and intensity in expression of feelings, persistence, distractibility, adaptability (ability to accept change), how a child approaches new experiences, regularity (need for routine), usual mood
- Neither good nor bad – every trait can be used in good ways

Our temperament stays pretty much the same through our lives, but we can choose how we express and use it.

Why is understanding temperament important?

1. When parents understand the temperament of their child, they can avoid blaming themselves for issues that are normal for their child's temperament.
2. Temperament affects how your child learns, reacts, behaves, and makes friends.
3. Understanding your child's temperament helps you see how the world looks through their eyes. You can learn to anticipate issues that might present difficulty for your child.
4. You can understand how you and your child are alike and different.
5. You can guide and discipline your child in positive ways that work with his/her temperament.
6. It will assist you to help your child learn how to make good choices.
7. You will know what activities and environments will help him/her learn best.
8. You can encourage your child to try activities that better suit his/her temperament.

You can take an online quiz developed by Kera Unlimited to help you figure out your child's temperament. Visit www.readyforlife.org

Stress



Stress is the way our body reacts to certain situations (stressors). Our attitudes and thoughts about a situation have a lot to do with determining whether something is a stressor for us or not. If the demands of the situation challenge or outweigh our ability to cope with it, the situation is seen as “stressful.” The main difference between adult and childhood stress is that children don’t have as much control over the situation.

Symptoms of stress can be divided under the following categories: physical, mental, emotional, and behavioural. Teaching our children to recognize these symptoms, especially the physical ones, will help them identify what’s bothering them.

Some common symptoms of stress in children are:

Physical

- Fast heartbeat
- Dry mouth
- Tense muscles
- Neck pain
- Tense face
- Fast breathing
- Cold sweaty palms
- Recurring headaches
- Stomach aches
- Frequently tired, ill

Mental

- Poor concentration
- Forgetful
- Difficulty problem solving, making decisions

Emotional

- Being more quiet than usual, worrying
- Being more irritable, sad, panicky, angry, fearful, frustrated, sensitive

Behavioural

- Nervous habits – nail biting, hair twisting
- Aggressive, trouble getting along with family and friends
- Lack of appetite or eating too much
- Trouble sleeping
- Whining, crying
- Immature behaviour
- Excessive energy or restlessness
- Poor performance

Long term risks for children if their stress is not controlled:

- Decreased confidence and energy level
- Decreased concentration and creativity
- Difficulty in relationships
- Depression and drug abuse
- Weakened immunity

Children can have trouble identifying their stressors. Some common stressors are:

Everyday Situations

- Not being able to express a need or feelings
- Problems involving friends, family member
- Fear of failure
- Fear of the dark
- Not feeling good about oneself

Life Events

- Moving to a new school
- Divorce
- Bullying
- Birth of a sibling
- Death

Growing Up

- Adjustment to physical, emotional changes of puberty
- Parents or child have unrealistic expectations of abilities, school progress
- Peer pressure

Some things parents can do to reduce the negative stressors in their children's lives:

- Spend plenty of quality time with your children.
- Ask lots of questions about school, friends and life in general, and be prepared to listen and show a real interest in their lives.
- Avoid overloading their schedules with too many activities.
- Provide a consistent structure for your family's life: regular supper time, bedtime.
- Teach stress management techniques (see below) and demonstrate them yourself.

It's important that kids learn how to manage their stress levels. Parents can help them learn by using different techniques:

- Identify the source(s) of stress. If you don't know what's causing the stress, it's hard to deal with it.
- Take care of your body. Plenty of sleep, plenty of physical activity and good nutrition are effective stress busters.
- Use a support system. Share their feelings with good friends and family. It's amazing how much better they can feel after simply talking about a problem with a sympathetic listener.
- Take time for yourself. What are you doing that is "all about you?" Everyone needs time to relax and focus on activities and interests that they enjoy.
- Laugh! Lots! This is the body's natural stress release mechanism.
- Relaxation techniques - deep breathing, yoga, meditation, prayer.
- Have a sense of humour.
- Play with a pet.

Kids Help Phone

Kids Help Phone is Canada's only toll-free, national, bilingual, phone and web counselling, referral and information service for children and youth. They provide immediate anonymous and confidential support, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. 1-800-668-6868 or www.kidshelpphone.ca.

Emotional / Mental Health

Emotional Health

Emotionally healthy children are able to recognize their feelings and the feelings of others and are able to express their feelings with appropriate words.

Tips for Parents:

- Crying when hurt; sad, ill, upset is a normal reaction. But crying or emotions are not to be used to get someone to do something you want e.g. a child crying to get you to buy them a toy
- Teach your child the words to use to express their feelings. Help your child build a 'feelings' vocabulary. Talk about your feelings and the feelings of others e.g. "I know you're tired and I am too. Let's get the groceries quickly and go home for pizza."
- With younger children, make various facial expressions and ask them to tell you which feeling goes with your expression.
- As you look at pictures in books or watch TV with your child, ask them what the characters are feeling and why they think that.
- Reflect back to your child the feelings you hear in their voice e.g. "You sound angry."
- Model and teach your child the formula: "I feel...when...I need..." e.g. "I feel sad when I've had a hard day and I need a hug."

What to do when...

Your 4 or 5 year old is fearful about monsters, "bad people"

- Children at this stage of development may still be learning to separate out what is real from what is not
- These fears can be related to unexpressed anger or a feeling of lack of control
- Never tease, the feeling is very real to the child. Have the attitude that you know that they can find a solution and you will help
- Check for anything they might be angry about and help them talk about it or let it out (e.g. by hitting a pillow)
- Assure them of your protection and teach them how to deal with strangers

Your child has a nervous habit (e.g. nail biting, thumb sucking)

- This often begins related to stress and becomes a comforting habit
- Identify if the stress is ongoing and use stress reduction
- Try to substitute such as drawing, as a way to keep hands busy
- Try using behaviour change charts that provide a visual positive feedback when the behaviour is not demonstrated. (i.e. a star or sticker on a chart)

Your 6-13 year old is anxious

- As children learn more about the world, they begin to fear real things (e.g. fire, storms, and illness). Fears can also be related to perfectionism, school difficulties, bullying, and family conflict.
- Take their fears seriously. Ask questions, listen, reflect back what you hear them saying. Offer insights. Put into place strategies needed to help your child feel safe.
- A big worry for older children has to do with their place in the world (e.g. concerns about how smart they are, how they look, friends). Much worry is due to over thinking. Discussing "If that really did happen, how would you deal with it" helps children realize there are choices in the actions they can take.

Mental Health

Mental health involves balancing the different aspects of life – physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual. Good mental health involves being “resilient”, being able to recover or “bounce back” from difficulties or change. There are risk and protective factors (characteristics of individuals, their families and communities) that decrease or increase the likelihood that a child will be resilient. Parenting, using the 40 Assets framework, helps you focus on increasing protective factors.

Another important concept to understand is that what we think about a situation affects how we feel and act. For example, for some children if it rains on a day when they had planned to do an outdoor activity, they can think the whole day is spoiled and be miserable. For other children they will think of this as an opportunity to do an indoor project and be happy.

Unresolved stress and emotional problems (related to anger, sadness, fear and worry) can develop into serious mental health problems. Early intervention is critical to providing a hopeful and healthy future.

The seven most common mental health problems affecting children and youth are:

- Anxiety Disorder
- Depression
- Conduct Disorder (Bullying)
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Eating Disorders
- Schizophrenia
- Bi-polar Disorder (Manic-Depression)

What are the signs of emotional/mental health problems in children?

Look for changes in behaviour; behaviour that is not age appropriate; behaviour that is ongoing and is having a negative impact on health, family or school:

- Not wanting to go to school; poorer marks and behaviour at school
- Not wanting to be around family or friends, spending a lot of time alone, having imaginary friends after age ten
- Frequently angry, irritable, agitated, worrying, fearful
- Frequent complaints of headaches and stomach aches
- Loss of interest in friends, previously enjoyed activities
- Big changes in energy level, motivation, eating or sleep patterns
- Difficulty coping with regular activities and everyday problems
- No longer taking care of personal appearance and hygiene
- Frequent aggression, hitting or bullying, damaging property
- Rebellious against authority, stealing, frequent lying
- Alcohol and/or drug use
- Dangerous or illegal thrill seeking
- Ongoing feelings of hopelessness, sadness; crying a lot
- Comments about themselves constantly negative
- Persistent thoughts or comments about death, hurting themselves or others – seek help immediately!

**If the signs persist and you suspect a child or teen has a mental health need,
find help at www.kidsmentalhealth.ca**

Where do I start if I think my child is having difficulties?

- Speak with your child about what you have noticed, tell them why you are worried (keep it brief).
- Encourage your child to discuss his/her concerns. Listen without interrupting.
- Let them know there is no problem so big that it can not be solved and you are there to help them work it out.
- Talk to your child's teacher, coach, anyone who might have insight into your child's feelings and behaviour.
- Has something happened in your family to trigger your child's problem? e.g. death, divorce. Children are very aware of family problems such as alcohol/drug misuse and can feel helpless to know what to do.

Who can I go to for help?

Start with your child's doctor. A physical check up may turn up a physical cause for the way your child is feeling. It is important your child receive an accurate diagnosis, especially before considering medication.

Make notes to take to the doctor about your specific concerns and what you have tried so far. Provide any information you think is helpful from teachers, coaches, trusted friends and relatives, etc.

A referral can be made to a paediatrician, child psychiatrist, psychologist, Child's Mental Health Services, and Child and Family Counselling Centres. Often family counselling is necessary to resolve problems.

For help at school

- Contact your child's principal and teacher. Request to have a meeting. Ask about psycho-educational testing to rule out any learning disability. There are also private practitioners who can provide psycho-educational testing.
- Ask for an Individual Education Plan (IEP) to help meet your child's needs.
- Many schools have learning resource teachers and youth counsellors.
- Talk with your school nurse.

What can I do if I don't seem to be getting anywhere?

You are your child's best advocate. Don't be discouraged. Keep a file with your entire child's medical, psychological and school reports. You may need to request a meeting of key people together to create a care plan and ensure all the pieces come together. These people might be family members, physician, social worker, mental health professionals, and teacher. Often there are long waiting lists to see professionals.

What can I do while I'm waiting to see a specialist?

- Educate yourself, search the library or Internet for information on child and youth mental health to gain as much information as possible.
- There are some good tips to minimize your children's emotional explosions from books like "The Explosive Child" by Dr. Ross Greene.
- Connect with support groups.
- Take courses offered through community agencies.

Recommended Websites and Help Lines:

Distress Centre of Niagara: www.distresscentreniagara.com
St. Catharines, Niagara Falls & area: 905-688-3711
Port Colborne, Wainfleet & area: 905-734-1212
Fort Erie & area: 905-382-0689
Grimsby, West Lincoln & area: 905-563-6674

Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868 or www.kidshelpphone.ca

Niagara Child and Youth Services Crisis line: 1-800-263-4944

Children's Mental Health Ontario www.kidsmentalhealth.ca

Parents for Children's Mental Health www.parentsforchildrensmentalhealth.org

Centre of Knowledge on Healthy Child Development www.knowledge.offordcentre.com

Canadian Mental Health Association www.cmha.ca

Information adapted from:

F.O.R.C.E. Society for Kid's Mental Health www.bckidsmentalhealth.org

Children's Mental Health Ontario pamphlet



Sibling Rivalry 👍 ❤️

Sibling relationships are especially important because they set the stage for other close relationships: a child who has learned to appreciate a brother's or sister's point of view, to be sensitive to a brother's or sister's feelings, to enjoy closeness, to be able to stand up for his rights and to enjoy the feeling of giving to another person has an advantage in developing other close relationships, including friendships in older childhood and in adulthood.

Important factors to consider

- how your children get along is influenced by how you and your parents and siblings got along when you were a child
- recognize and highlight each child's unique abilities and interests
- recognize and acknowledge you children's efforts to be helpful to each other
- teach your children to be empathetic, to share and take turns
- help children learn to be assertive so they will not need to be aggressive
- sort out the differences between your issues and concerns and those of your children
- fairness means making sure each child gets what they need, not giving each child equal amounts
- signs of a jealous child - seeking your attention (often in negative ways)
 - becomes quiet, withdrawn
 - becomes insecure, afraid, develops nervous habits

What you can do to decrease rivalry

- prepare your child for the arrival of a new baby
- let your child help with the care of the baby and other siblings
- point out the strengths, talents and uniqueness of each child
- don't compare one child to another

Helpful books

Siblings Without Rivalry – Faber & Mazlish

Beyond Sibling Rivalry – Peter Goldenthal



Positive Discipline

What is Positive Discipline?

Positive discipline is not physical punishment. Positive discipline teaches and guides children so they feel safe and secure. Be positive with discipline because how you teach is as important as what you teach.

Positive discipline helps your child to:

- Make good choices
- Get along with others
- Treat others with respect
- Learn to solve problems
- Be confident
- Develop self control
- Know the consequences of actions

Positive discipline does NOT:

- Frighten
- Hurt
- Criticize
- Shame
- Cause guilt
- Break trust
- Reject
- Force children to obey

- Using positive discipline will help to improve communication and create a strong relationship between you and your child
- Using positive discipline will help your children become happy, responsible, caring, and emotionally mature
- Using positive discipline will help build a lifelong positive relationship with your child – spend time together, play and listen to them in order to determine their needs.

The Canadian Paediatric Society suggests that children be disciplined according to their “age, stage of development, and personality.”

What is Punishment?

Punishment is not discipline. Punishment is an act that is meant to physically or emotionally hurt a child. Examples of physical and emotional punishment that are not acceptable:

- Name calling
- Pushing
- Yelling
- Hitting
- Spanking
- Slapping
- Swearing
- Teasing
- Verbal put downs

Parents and caregivers use punishment because they:

- Believe punishment is a good way to teach children a lesson.
- Are angry and they take their anger out on their children.
- Are unaware of their child’s stage of development, personality and needs.
- Feel it is quick way to gain control and change their children’s behaviour.
- Repeat what they learned as children.

Feelings of anger can affect your relationship with your child and can even interfere with your judgement. Don't hold your anger in, learn to deal with it.

Signs of Anger:

- Red face
- Rapid breathing
- Tense body
- Clenched teeth, hands or toes
- Feeling stressed, agitated
- Frustration
- Head hurts

Tips for Controlling Anger:

- Walk away
- Breathe
- Count to 10 or more
- Write your feelings down
- Talk to someone
- Use humour

Reasons NOT to use punishment

- It is easy to hurt a child when acting in anger
- The child may think it is okay to solve problems with violence
- The child may feel humiliated and frightened
- The child will not understand what behaviour is expected
- Use of punishment will hurt the relationship between parents and child

Positive Discipline for School Age Children 6-12 years

School Aged Children

- Want to spend time away from their family
- Experience peer pressure
- In the later stages, experience body changes as puberty approaches
- Understand right from wrong and the consequences of their actions
- Place more importance on their relationships with friends
- Become self-conscious and private

What You Might Expect	What Your School Aged Child May be Trying to Tell You
Controlling	“I like to be the boss and winning is very important to me.” “I don’t know how to deal with failure.”
Questioning	“I am starting to see the differences in my world and I am trying to make sense of them.”
Unfocused	“I can’t sit and pay attention for too long, especially when I don’t like what I’m doing.”
Independent	“I want to spend more time with my friends and less time with family. My friends are very important to me.”
Self-Conscious	“I am concerned with how I look. My body is changing and I sometimes feel awkward and embarrassed. What my friends think about how I look is more important to me than what you think. I want to fit in.”
Rebellious	“I am developing an identity separate from my parents so I will talk back, disagree with, and challenge you.”
Moody	“My changing body means active hormones. My emotions are up and down and my feelings can be easily hurt. Life is stressful because of school, my friends, peer pressure and new rules.”

Planning for Positive Discipline

Building Positive Relationships

Spend positive quality time with your child every day. This could be listening to your child or it could be completing an activity that your child enjoys. Provide your child with frequent approval and praise.

Communicate

Communicate expectations clearly. You may need to repeat instructions and rules more than once. Offering a simple explanation may help your child understand and accept your decisions. Avoid lengthy lectures as your child will tune you out.

Be the Parent

You are the parent and you can’t guide and teach your child if you are trying to be his friend. You still need to consistently supervise, set rules and follow through with what you have said you are going to do.

Model, Model, Model!

Good behaviour starts with parents being a good role model. Being a good role model means demonstrating:

- How to problem solve
- Caring for others
- Making good decisions everyday
- Finding positive ways of dealing with your anger

Planning for Positive Discipline

Your child is doing something you don't want him to do – problem solve together by:

- Staying calm
- Talking with your child not at him
- Listening
- Helping your child handle the situation
- Discussing what can be done differently next time
- Negotiating when you can to make children part of the process

Your child says that you are the meanest parent in the world

This is normal. Being a parent is a tough job and means that your child is not always going to like your decisions. Stay calm, follow-through with what you said you were going to do, and remember that your child still loves you.

You've explained your decision, but your child continues to demand her way

Keep your cool and try to distance yourself from the interaction. This may include asking someone else to help or after making sure your child is safe, finding a quiet place for yourself to take a short break. Sometimes, you may be able to negotiate a compromise. Avoid comments like "because I said so" to help reduce power struggles.

Remember...the school age years are a time of great change. It is a time for limits, consistent follow through, patience, negotiation, and compromise. Teaching your child by talking through problems will help them become independent.

Parenting Styles

As your child grows from age four to 13, they become more independent and peers have much more influence in their lives, but parents still have a major parenting role to play.

Your parenting style is influenced by many things including how your parents raised you. The parenting style that seems to have the best results for parent and child has the following characteristics:

- The parent is “tuned in” to the child and is able to meet his/her needs.
- The parent has the basic belief that children will do well if they can and that parent and child are on the same team.
- The parent is aware of the stages of growth and development so their expectations of the child are not too high or low.
- The parent takes into account the child’s temperament when teaching and disciplining
- The parent lets the child know that he/she is always loved and valued.
- Respect for self and others is encouraged.
- Focus is on the strengths of the child and always looking to catch the child being “good” so you can praise him/her.
- The family has rules and routines which are consistent
- Discipline is positive; consequences are natural and logical.
- The parent seeks to understand the meaning behind a child’s behaviour.
- The parent encourages the child to have some control of his/her life by offering choices and helps the child to learn decision-making and problem solving skills.
- The parent teaches the child how to think, not what to think.
- The parent works to have the child develop the needed skills to become gradually more independent.

Importance of Routine

Children need consistency in their daily lives to help them feel safe and secure. Going through the same routine day after day provides that consistency. Morning and bedtime routines are especially important. When routines are disrupted, negative behaviour often occurs.

Importance of Consistent Rules

Children need consistent rules so they know clearly what is acceptable and what is not. They need to be aware of the consequences when rules are broken. Children will test the rules. To feel secure and safe, children need the rules to be firm. As children get older, they should have a part in making the rules (i.e. curfew). If rules are broken, don’t scold and embarrass your child in front of their friends. Parents need to work as a team. Even when you and your partner do not agree, try to reach a compromise and support each other. Children will try to play one parent against the other. Discuss your disagreement in private, away from the children.

Importance of Choices

Giving children choices helps them feel they have some control in their life and helps them with decision-making skills.

Natural and Logical Consequences

Discipline using the natural and logical consequences of an action is a positive way to help a child

- Learn from their mistakes.
- Learn that their decisions and their behaviour affect themselves and people around them.
- Take on responsibility for their actions and choices.
- Develop their ability to make good choices.
- Develop self discipline.

A natural consequence occurs as a direct result of doing or not doing something. All a parent has to do is point out the likely consequences (i.e. if you leave your bike outside on the front lawn in the rain instead of putting it away in the garage, you will have a rusty bike). Natural consequences are immediate (i.e. a child feels hungry after refusing to eat what is offered for dinner or a child has to stay after school to catch up on work they missed when they were late for school).

Logical consequences are often established ahead of time and are related to the problem. They link your child's behaviour with consequences that make sense. An example would be, the parent sets the rule – no riding your bike without a helmet. If the child forgets to wear their helmet then the bike is taken away for a couple of days.



Sleep

Sleep helps our body and brain develop and grow. Sleep helps children with skills for academic success like attention, organization, creative thinking and efficiency.

How much sleep does my child need?

- 4 - 6 years: 10 - 12 hours per day
- 7 - 13 years: 10 - 11 hours per day

How do I know if my child needs more sleep?

- You may see some of the following:
 - Aggression
 - Defiance
 - Non-compliance
 - Oppositional behaviour
 - Acting out
 - Inattention

Good sleep is important for your child's health and well being. Things such as late-hour sports games or practices, homework, and TV and computers in the bedroom get in the way of a good night's sleep.

Sleep problems you may see with your child

Nightmares:

- A favourite stuffed animal or blanket may help.
- Glow in the dark stickers.
- Talk to your child about their fears and what might help them go away.

Frequently getting out of bed and/or asking for drinks:

- Firmly guide your child back to bed.
- Let your child read or listen to music, but no TV watching.

Sleep problems you may see with your child

Sleepwalking behaviours can range from harmless to dangerous (wandering outside). Causes can be such things as lack of sleep or fatigue, interrupted sleep, illness, stress.

To keep your sleepwalker safe:

- Do not try to wake them up; just gently guide them back to bed.
- Install safety gates at the top of any stairs.
- Lock windows and doors throughout your home; you may want to use child safety locks on doors.

Bed wetting

Most children can control their bowels by age 4 and stay dry at night by 10. Bed wetting can be caused by physical problems, infections and emotional problems. Keep a positive attitude and approach. Take your child to the doctor for a physical check up. Solutions may include limiting fluids after supper and getting the child up to use the toilet at midnight.

Tips on helping your child get more sleep

- Have a regular, consistent schedule and relaxing bedtime routine - a positive bedtime routine could include a snack, brushing teeth, bath, story, talking about the day, some relaxing music and hugs, ending up with your child being in their own bed.
- Make your child's room cool, dark and quiet.
- Leave on a hallway light and partly close the door instead of using a night light in their room.
- Keep TV and computers out of the bedroom.
- Limit the amount of caffeine your child consumes.
- Have your child fall asleep on their own, otherwise they become used to you being there when they fall asleep and if they wake up during the night they may feel afraid.
- Encourage physical activity during the day to help your child feel tired at night.

Using the bedroom as an area for a long time-out can result in children not wanting to sleep in their room at night.

For more information: www.sleepforkids.org



Physical Activity



Children should be physically active for 90 minutes each day. This includes at least 60 minutes of moderate activity (brisk walking, and bike riding) and 30 minutes of vigorous activity (running or soccer). Leave the car behind and walk to do errands or go to school when possible.

Why is physical activity good for my child?

- An active lifestyle helps improve concentration and memory. It also helps to decrease worry and anxiety. Increase physical activity by five to 10 minutes each day
- Kids who are active tend to still be active as adults
- It increases relaxation and enhances healthy growth and development
- Children and youth are spending many hours per day in front of screens. Start by cutting down screen time by 30 minutes at a time to help gradually decrease screen time.
- Obesity, which is a risk factor for diabetes, is becoming more of a concern for children
- Children are developing Type 2 diabetes at a younger age, which only used to be seen in adults

What can I do to encourage my child to be physically active?

- Play with them and be a role model. Children benefit from unstructured, non-competitive play. Organized sports programs can be stressful.
- Encourage and praise your child's participation rather than their achievement. Highlight positive attitudes, not competition. Have your child try different sports and activities; they may find something they enjoy. Bring your child's friends along on "active" outings.
- Encourage your child to try a new physical activity or sport every year or two. Remember, sports do not have to be organized. Try to organize a neighbourhood sports game like football or baseball. Adolescent girls are less active than adolescent boys, so help your girl find an activity that interests her and keeps her physically active.

Your school may be involved in one of the following events. If they aren't, maybe you could offer to help organize one of them.

- International Walk to School Day (IWALK)
 - Walk to School Wednesday's
 - Walking School Bus
 - Spring into Spring Challenge
 - Winter Walk Day
 - Biking events e.g. bike rodeos
- Finally, take care when you are being active. Be sure the activity is safe and that you stretch before and after. Wear proper shoes, clothing and any required safety gear.

To help you be more active in your every day life, consult Canada's Physical Activity Guides for children, youth, adults and older adults. Health Canada has published Physical Activity Guides for children ages 6 - 9 and youth ages 10 - 14. In addition, there are three magazines that supplement the Guides: "Gotta Move", "Family Guide to Physical Activity for Children," and "Let's Get Active." Canada's Physical Activity Guides and magazines can be ordered by calling 1-888-334-9769 or by visiting the Public Health Agency of Canada's website.

Check out Mothers in Motion - This is a website for women who want to lead healthy lifestyles and mentor their children to do the same. www.caaws.ca/mothersinmotion

Healthy Eating

Canada's Food Guide provides guidelines that families are encouraged to follow in order to ensure healthy eating.

- Meals should include three of the four food groups as often as possible
- Make at least half of your grain products whole grain
- Choose grain products that are lower in fat, sugar, or salt
- Drink skim, 1%, or 2% milk each day
- Satisfy your thirst with water
- Limit foods and beverages high in calories, fat, sugar and salt

Healthy eating provides energy and nutrients children need to grow, develop, stay healthy and be active. Learning healthy eating habits in the early years of life can encourage your child to keep these habits for their whole lives.

Be a good role model

- Eat healthy, well-balanced meals yourself
- Provide a variety of healthy foods
- Don't label food as "good" or "bad". There is room for all foods in a balanced diet.
- Take time to savour every bite

Parental perception of obesity

Many children have anxiety about their bodies and appearance. Girls as young as Grade 3 are expressing dissatisfaction with their bodies and think they need to diet. As a parent, you have an important role in helping your child to have a positive body image.

- Do you talk negatively about your body in front of your child?
- Are you critical of others' weight and appearance?
- Help your child understand they are much more than how they look

Parents don't always have a realistic view of their child's weight. A doctor or nurse practitioner can assess your child's weight.

- Your child may weigh more or less than other children of the same age.
- Your child should be weighed and measured between 4 – 6 years, and then once a year through elementary school and high school.
- As part of puberty, your child will gain weight. Girls gain fat tissue in their breasts, thighs, and hips. Boys gain muscle tissue. Reassure your child these changes are normal.
- Don't use food as a reward or punishment
- Help your child to learn to handle stress and difficulties in a positive way, without using food. Some tools for positive coping are writing in a diary, using deep breathing, relaxation, as well as sharing and expressing thoughts and feelings with others.

Remember: Canada's Food Guide is just a guide...allow your child's appetite to direct how much they eat. Teach your child to:

- Listen to their body
- Respond to natural hunger signs
- Know when they've had enough

How do I know what is a healthy portion size?

- Deck of cards = 3 ounces (75 grams) of meat
- Palm of hand = ½ cup (125 ml) of vegetables
- Closed fist = 1 cup (250 ml) of pasta
- Computer mouse = ½ medium sized potato
- Tennis ball = a medium piece of fruit
- Thumb tip = 1 teaspoon (5 ml) of butter or margarine

Be sure to choose low fat meats, vegetables, grains and dairy products more often.

Balanced School Day

- Balanced school day nutrition breaks offer students two breaks during the school day; at least 20 minutes in the morning and another 20 minutes in the afternoon. This allows children the time to sit and eat two mini-meals a day.
- Students on the Balanced School Day schedule need the same amount of food during the day as other students do. The difference is that they have 2 meal times.
- To keep hot food hot, preheat a thermal container before filling it. Reheat the food before it goes in the container. Your child may want to eat their hot food at the first break.
- To keep food cold, you can freeze a water bottle or juice box and put it in the lunch bag. This acts like a freezer pack to keep everything else in the lunch bag cold.

People who feel good about themselves and their bodies are more likely to have a healthy self-esteem and adopt healthy lifestyle attitudes and behaviours.

Need more information?

Visit these websites for more information:
www.eatrightontario.ca
www.niagararegion.ca



Sexuality and Puberty

Children are surrounded daily by messages about sexuality. Children get these messages from inside their homes and from the outside, yet parents often hesitate and fear talking about the issues with their children. The research available today suggests that if your child has not begun to ask questions about sexuality issues by four years of age, parents need to initiate the topic. Of teenagers polled the majority of them said they wished that their parents were their primary source of sexuality information. However, most often teens go to their friends for information. This is why it is so important for parents to discuss sexuality with their children starting from a young age.

When many people hear the word “sexuality”, they often only hear the word “sex”. Sexuality includes everything that defines us as male and female and how we relate to others of the opposite sex and the same sex. It is an integral part of our self-esteem and our body image. We teach our children about sexuality from the first time we hold them. Through our role modeling, children learn how we behave and interact with people we love or how we react to sexist or aggressive comments. Talking about sexuality is more than describing anatomy and reproduction. It involves relationships, families, responsible decision-making, values and attitudes that are shaped by our culture and family beliefs. When you teach your child about sexuality, you are giving them the skills they need to develop healthy relationships throughout their lives.

Where do I start?

Talking and role modelling are key factors that allow parents to effectively communicate their own values, provide accurate information, nurture self-esteem and influence healthy, responsible decision-making around sexuality. Our children are getting sex education just from living in this world. Let's make sure it is one enhanced by the people who care the most about their well-being.

1. Begin early

- As a parent you have a great opportunity to talk with your child about sexuality issues first, before others can confuse your child with incorrect information.
- Start conversations with your child – some children never ask about sexuality. Everyday opportunities such as a friend's pregnancy may be a good way to begin. You may ask questions to get it started, such as “What do you think about that?”
- Prepare them for the next stage of development to help lessen fears as their bodies continue to develop.

2. Just the facts

- Answer questions honestly. Tell them what they want to know using words they can understand.
- Provide correct information. If you don't know an answer, find out the facts together.

3. Communicate your values

- Share what you believe in and what is important to you.
- Practice what you preach. Be a good role model.

4. Talk about expectations

- Let children and teens know what you expect of them.
- Support them in being aware of the consequences and the need to take responsibility for their decisions and actions.
- Help them develop skills to resist pressure and to follow through with their decisions even when friends disagree.

5. Remember your child's self-esteem

- Be encouraging – help your children feel good about themselves, their changing bodies and emotions.
- Allow them to explore and share their thoughts and feelings about sexuality.
- Create an open environment in which your children can ask any questions freely.
- Treat them with respect and keep the lines of communication open.

The “P” word

It is important that parents talk to their children about puberty before puberty actually begins. Puberty usually starts somewhere between the ages of 8 and 16. Girls can start as early as age 7 but the average is around 9 years of age, and boys as early as nine with the average age being 11 years old. Not all children will start at the same time nor will these changes of puberty be easy to see. Puberty will begin when your child’s body is ready. Once your child’s body decides it is ready, the pituitary gland will start to release special hormones that will start the internal changes (the ones we can’t see) and the external changes, which we can see.

There are many changes that are common to both boys and girls:

- Their bodies will grow taller and broader
- They will start producing another type of sweat that can cause body odour, especially if the child is not bathing and changing their clothes regularly
- Their hair and skin becomes more oily
- Pimples may develop
- Hair starts to grow under the arms, on the legs more, and in the pubic area
- Emotions become more intense and can fluctuate easily from happy to sad, or from tears to laughter in a matter of minutes
- May start having romantic feelings directed toward the opposite or same sex
- They may masturbate to orgasm

Boys

Some of the internal changes that occur in boys happen when the pituitary gland releases hormones that start the testicles to produce testosterone. Testosterone is responsible for many of the changes that happen to boys over the next few years, such as chest and facial hair and the voice deepening. Their penises and testicles will grow larger and the testicles will start producing sperm. During this time it is not uncommon for boys to experience nocturnal emissions or “wet dreams.” This is when the penis ejaculates sperm while the boy is sleeping. During puberty, boys can also experience spontaneous erections, when their penis fills with blood and becomes hard, for no apparent reason. It is very important to let our sons know that this is normal and all part of growing up.

Did you know?

For healthy sperm production, the testicles need to be cooler than body temperature which is why they are in the scrotum on the outside of the body!

Girls

Some of the internal changes that occur in girls happen when the pituitary gland releases hormones that start the ovaries to produce estrogen and progesterone. Some changes you will notice will be her body shape changing to a more hourglass shape, her breasts developing, and development of a clear or whitish discharge from her vagina that will be noticeable in her underwear. Inside, her body is getting ready to start menstruating, or “having periods.” Once the ovaries and uterus have matured enough, the hormones will signal one egg in one ovary to ripen or mature. This egg, when mature, will be released into a fallopian tube and travel down into the uterus. As the egg is maturing, the uterus will start producing a thick lining of blood and tissue which will be needed to nourish the egg if it becomes fertilized. When an unfertilized egg reaches the uterus, it will start to dissolve, sending out more hormonal messages that the lining will not be needed and then the lining

and tissue will start to break down. That fluid will leave through an opening in the cervix out of the body through the vagina. This is what is called a “period” and can last anywhere from three to seven days. The amount of fluid that a girl loses can vary, but it is usually between ¼-½ of a cup. This usually occurs every 28 days, but can be anywhere between 21 days and 35 days. When your daughter first starts her period, they will most likely be irregular. It may take a few years for her body to settle down into a more regular cycle that is her own.

Did you know?

When a girl is born she has all the eggs she'll need, about 400,000 eggs in her ovaries!

Important Things to Remember:

- Keep the lines of communication open. Having already started talking with children about their bodies and sexuality, it should be a little easier. Make sure your child knows there is no such thing as a silly question.
- Good hygiene is very important as children go through puberty. With the increased production of oils, the hair and skin can get oily fast and worsen pimples. Emphasize to your child that daily baths or showers are important since it is difficult to smell your own body odour.
- Make sure your child is getting adequate sleep, exercise and good nutrition as their bodies are growing quite rapidly during this time. Some girls become concerned about their weight gain during puberty and it's important for parents to let them know that this is very normal and with good nutrition and daily physical activity they will be keeping their bodies healthy. It's important to watch for the start of eating disorders in both genders as the pressure for the “perfect” body is very strong in the media.
- Talk with your children about the importance of not sharing personal items (i.e. razors, toothbrushes, makeup, brushes, combs, hats, shoes) which could lead to sharing diseases, eye infections, head lice, and athlete's foot.

When in doubt, check it out. There are many resources available to parents to help them talk to their children and open the lines of communication. For accurate information go to: www.sexualityandu.ca

Did You Know?

Research has shown that young people, whose parents discuss sexuality with them, tend to delay becoming sexually active.

Smoke-Free Living



As parents, you can influence whether or not your children smoke. Although you can't always control your children or be there to make decisions for them, you can help guide them by letting them know what behaviour is acceptable to you and what is not.

Research shows that if you talk with your kids about smoking, they are much less likely to smoke than if you ignore the subject.

Tips for talking to your child about smoking

- Talking about smoking with a pre-teen can be difficult. Share your feelings about smoking honestly.
- Keep the conversation as calm as possible.
- Talk about personal stories, such as a family member with a smoking-related illness and their attempts to quit smoking.
- Ask questions about their school environment and friends' behaviours in a non-threatening way.
- Provide some facts that may make them think twice about smoking by relating the information to something in your environment or your life, such as:
 - On average, there are 45,000 deaths from smoking every year in Canada; this equals about 1/3 of the population of St. Catharines.
 - On average, there are 12,000 deaths every year from second-hand smoke in Canada
 - On average, people who smoke die 15 years earlier than those who don't smoke.

You are a role model for your child. Your actions show what you value.

Second-hand smoke is smoke from the burning end of the lit cigarette as well as the smoke the smoker blows out into the air. Second-hand smoke is harmful to children. Exposing children to second-hand smoke increases your child's risk of getting colds, ear infections, bronchitis and pneumonia.

How can I protect my family from second-hand smoke?

- Ask a smoker to take it outside.
- Don't smoke in the car. As of January 1, 2009, the Smoke Free Vehicles Law came into effect. This law prohibits smoking in vehicles when children under the age of 16 are present.
- Visit only smoke-free places.
- Find smoke-free childcare.

Smoking on School Property – smoking is prohibited in all public and private schools 365 days a year! (including the playground and parking lots).

Third-hand Smoke – Third-hand smoke is residual tobacco smoke contamination that remains after the cigarette is extinguished. These toxic gases and particles linger on smokers and furniture. Third-hand smoke is especially dangerous to children because they breathe near, crawl and play on, touch, and mouth contaminated surfaces.

Information Adapted from: "Talk it out; A Parent's Guide to Kids and Smoking" & "Smoke-free homes" from the Government of Ontario.

Are you looking to quit smoking? The good news is that many people quit every day. For help and a plan to quit, call the Smokers' Helpline at 1-877-513-5333.

Substance Misuse



A drug is a substance other than food that changes the way you think, act or feel. Some drugs are required to treat conditions or illnesses and are prescribed by a physician.

Parents need to be aware of who their children hang around with and what they are doing with their free time. It is common for children to test the boundaries and experiment with drugs like tobacco and alcohol before reaching high school. Drug use can have serious consequences on the health and future of young people.

Why would a young person use drugs?

- To relax and have fun with friends.
- To express opposition to authority.
- As a symbol of being “mature” or “cool”.
- To increase personal confidence.
- As a general coping mechanism.
- As a way of joining a peer group.

Are elementary school students misusing drugs?

The answer to that is yes, some of them are. Every two years the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health conducts an anonymous in-class survey called the Ontario Student Drug Use Survey with students from Grade 7 to Grade 12.

What does the 2009 survey say?

- Alcohol is the students’ drug of choice (58% reported drinking more than few sips over past 12 months).
- One quarter reported binge drinking at least once during the month prior to the survey.
- Cannabis is the second most common drug (26% reported using at least once in the past year).
- The use of prescription opioid pain reliever (Percocet, Tylenol No.3) at least once in the past year reported by 18% of students.
- Cigarette smoking during the past year reported by about 12% of the students.

How could I tell if my child is using drugs?

- Suspicious objects around the house, or in their back pack (lighter, cups).
- Changes in behaviour.
- Changes in appearance.
- Changes in mood.
- Hanging out with new friends.
- Decreased athletic ability.
- Poor grades.
- It may be difficult to tell the difference between the behaviour of a typical teenager and that of one using drugs.
- Remember to talk and listen to your child especially when you suspect there is a problem.

What do I do if I suspect a problem?

- Choose an appropriate time and place to talk with your child about your concerns.
- Remember the 4 C's: Cool, Calm, Collected and Concerned.
- Treat your child with respect.
- Get the facts and don't jump to conclusions.
- Discuss rules, expectations and consequences.
- If the problem continues, get outside help.

Age specific tips:

Ages 4 and 5

- When you talk about alcohol, or other drugs using statements that make it seem that using these substances are necessary or especially fun e.g. "After the day I just had, I need a strong drink", you are sending the wrong message to your child.
- Always offer plenty of non-alcoholic options when you entertain at home. Show your child that grown ups don't need alcohol to have fun.

Ages 6 – 9

- When kids ask why they can't have alcohol or other drugs simply say "they're not good for growing bodies and brains".
- Don't laugh at or glorify the behaviour of people who are intoxicated.

Ages 10 – 13

- Help your child make a list of reasons for refusing alcohol and other drugs so that your child will be better prepared should they be offered them. One reason might be "I'll get into trouble with my parents".
- Tell your child you will always provide a "no-questions-asked-at-the-time" ride home if they end up at a party where there is alcohol and other drugs.
- If your child's friends bring out negative feelings or behaviours in your child try inviting them to do things with you and your child so you can have a positive influence on the relationship.

To continue your learning, check out these websites:

www.ncys.ca

www.contactniagara.org

www.madd.ca

www.stupid.ca

www.osaid.org

www.parentactionondrugs.org

http://www.camh.net/Research/Areas_of_research/Population_Life_Course_Studies/eBulletins/ebv10n4_DrugHighlights_2009OSDUHS.pdf

You might be surprised to know that...

87% of teenagers think that their parents are credible sources of information about illegal drugs. Teenagers who feel connected to their families are more likely to avoid the dangers of using drugs.

Prescription Drugs

Are prescription drugs a problem?

Yes, young people are misusing prescription drugs to get high. These include painkillers, depressants (sleeping pills, anti-anxiety drugs), and stimulants (those prescribed for ADHD). Many young people believe that prescription drugs provide a safe way to get high, and therefore those who would not normally use illicit drugs might use prescription drugs for non-medical purposes.

What can you do to prevent prescription drug abuse?

Follow these tips to help keep your child safe and to help prevent them from abusing prescription drugs:

- Monitor quantities and lock away all medications.
- Make it clear to your child that it is not safe to share prescribed medications, and they should always follow the instructions and advise of the prescribing doctor.
- Be a good role model by not misusing or sharing your prescription drugs
- Properly dispose of old or unused prescription drugs by returning them to your pharmacy.
- Advise friends and family to follow these same tips for prescription drugs.
- Talk with your child about the dangers of abusing prescription drugs and make it clear that they can be just as dangerous as illicit drugs.



Sun Safety

The sun's rays are strongest between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. or when the UV index is 3 or more. It is essential that children are properly protected from sun damage every day of the year.

Tips on how to protect your child's skin from sun damage:

- Reduce sun exposure when the sun is strongest
- Wearing a wide-brimmed hat or baseball cap is recommended
- Sunscreen with an SPF 30 or higher is recommended. Be sure to check the expiry date. Choose sunscreen that protects your children from both UVA and UVB rays. Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outside. Reapply every 2-3 hours or after swimming or sweating a lot. Apply generously to dry, clean skin.
- Don't forget to apply sunscreen to ears, nose, back of legs and back of neck
- Apply SPF 15 sunscreen lip balm to your child's lips and reapply every hour
- Encourage them to wear sunglasses with UVA and UVB protection. Choose glasses with medium to dark lenses.
- Encourage them to wear clothing to protect as much skin as possible
- Encourage your child to play in the shade when possible
- Be a sun-safe role model and follow these guidelines yourself

Sunscreen and Medications

Some medications can make your skin more sensitive to light. This is called photosensitivity. Check with your doctor or pharmacist to see if any of your medications might cause you to be extra sensitive to the sun.

Tanning under Lights

If you think going to a tanning salon is a safe way to tan, think again. UV rays from tanning beds have the same effects as UV from the sun. In fact, lights from tanning beds may give off five times as much UVA as the sun. Going to a tanning bed to get a 'base tan' before you go away in the winter will not protect your skin.

Bullying



What Is Bullying?

- A planned act of hostility by a person or group of people who use their power to cause harm and distress to another person.
- The victim feels powerless to defend themselves

Forms of Bullying

Physical – an open assault on another person.

Some of the forms it may take are: hitting, pushing, stealing another's belongings, making obscene gestures, and threatening a person with a weapon.

Verbal – harming another person through words.

Some of the forms it may take are: name calling, laughing at, mimicking, bossing and making rude noises.

Social/Relational – bullying involving groups.

Some of the forms it may take are: group dares, group blaming, making a person the object of group jokes, gossiping, exclusion, and setting someone up to take the blame.

Cyber – the use of newer technology such as email, cell phone text-messaging and personal web sites used to send insulting, harassing, and threatening messages about another person, to damage reputation and friendships.

Some of the reasons why children don't tell about bullying

- Fear that the bullying will get worse
 - Don't want to be called a "tattletale" or "cry baby"
 - Feel ashamed and embarrassed
 - Have tried to tell adults before and was given advice that wasn't helpful
 - Fear of reprisal from the bully
 - Fear of not being believed by adults
 - Don't believe that anyone can stop the bullying
- Teachers, adults, and principals sometimes express intolerance at the person being bullied and their inability to sort out their own problems

The Bully, The Bullied and The Bystander...by Barbara Coloroso.

	What you might notice...	What you can do...
Do you suspect your child is being bullied?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looks sad or upset before or after school • Complain of headaches, stomach aches • Have few or no friends – doesn't visit or have friends over • Says negative things about him/herself • Suddenly sleeps poorly, nightmares • Comes home with torn clothes, unexplained bruises or injuries • Starts to do poorly in school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you suspect that your child is being bullied, ask him/her directly • Believe what children say, listen, try to understand their feelings • Contact the school to talk specifically about what is happening and to make a plan together to be sure they are safe (principals and teachers can't deal with problems they don't know about) • Spend extra time with your child. Let him/her know they are valued by you • Try to get specifics about bullying episode • Connect your child with friends who share similar interests
Do you suspect your child is bullying?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is easily angered or frustrated playing with others • Is hostile with people or animals • Has unexplained new belongings or amounts of money • Uses bullying behaviours with brothers/ sisters/ parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let your child know by your words and actions that bullying is not okay • Teach children to act in ways that show they respect themselves and others • Acknowledge what is happening and accept help if needed • Contact the school to talk about the situation
Do you suspect your child has seen bullying?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looks sad or upset before or after school • Fearful of being alone at home or to walk to school • Changing their usual route to school • Complains of headaches, stomach aches • Experiencing sleeplessness, Nightmares • Afraid to go to school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to your child and listen to what he/she thinks and feels • Encourage your child to tell an adult. If he/she is unsure they can do this by themselves, encourage him/her to get a group of friends to go with him/her • Encourage your child to make an anonymous report to the school staff if it's too hard to speak out publicly • Encourage your child not to stand around and watch, this supports the bully • Practice or role-play what children should do or say if they see bullying • Encourage your child to invite the student being targeted to leave with them • Encourage your child to stand up for those being targeted and practice what they could say to do this

Help your child to develop protective skills by:

- Role playing assertiveness skills
- Teaching positive relationship skills
- Teaching your child to stand up straight, look people in the eye, speak confidently
- Teaching your child to run away if in physical danger
- Teaching your child that safety is more important than belongings, so let the bully take the knapsack etc; instead of getting beaten up over it
- Encouraging your child to have friends over and involving them in your family activities
- Role modeling appropriate ways to resolve conflicts
- Limiting your child's exposure to violence in the media
- Encourage your child to develop the skill and courage to report bullying to a parent, teacher or coach, and that reporting is done to help keep someone safe
- Showing your child where to go for help when something goes wrong at school and what action to expect
- Making a commitment to model a rejection of violent and aggressive behavior

Want to learn more about bullying? Visit the following websites:

www.bullying.org

www.lfcc.on.ca

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Internet and Media Use



For parents who have grown up with television, raising today's Internet generation can be daunting. Kids know more about the technology and they use the Internet differently from adults, so it is not surprising that parents often feel at a disadvantage.

While it can be intimidating, parents' involvement in their kids' online lives is essential. They may be miles ahead of us technically, but kids still need adults to help them develop good judgment and critical thinking skills to deal with situations, information and people they encounter online.

A good starting point for parents is to become familiar with how their kids are using the Internet. Most of us don't have a clue what our kids are up to when there are multiple windows open on the computer screen and their hands are flying over the keyboard at breakneck speed. This section will help you take the first step towards becoming more aware and involved by explaining the different technologies that kids use and the activities they like.

Web sites

The Web is different from other media in that it offers kids the ability to create their own content. Young people use the Web to explore and display their creativity in very exciting ways - creating online movies, music, Web sites, e-zines (magazines) and blogs or online diaries.

However, the Web has its downside. When surfing it's easy to come across sites containing pornography, hate, violence and illegal and dangerous content and activities. Children's privacy can be at risk both from commercial sites that ask for personal information, and when kids themselves post contact information or photos on their own Web sites. Children should be mindful that photos may be viewed by many people other than those intended to see them!

With millions of pages already published, and thousands more being posted every day, finding accurate online information can be an intimidating task. Since anyone can publish their views online, the Web contains a great deal of inaccurate and misleading information. Studies show that young people tend to believe that "if it's on a computer it must be true," so it's important to teach your kids to question what they read online.

If your kids have their own Web sites, be aware of what they are posting. Teach them to respect copyright by not stealing from other sites and to never post anything mean or threatening about another person.

Cell Phones



A new generation of cell phones has Internet and text messaging capabilities and can take digital photos and videos. These phones are challenging the ability of adults to monitor online activities because unlike a computer placed in a public area of a home or school, cell phones are private, connected and always accessible.

Text messaging, also known as SMS, for short message system is popular with kids because it's cheaper to send a text message than to make a phone call and they can send their message out to many people at the same time.

It's called short message system because cell phone screens are so small they can only display a limited amount of words. Kids use an SMS language, based on short forms and acronyms that is also popular in chat rooms and with instant messaging. Cryptic conversations written in SMS lingo baffle most adults.

For example, here's a short conversation in SMS: how wz d pRT last nyt? Did U hav :)? Got 2 go, c U l8r Translation: How was the party last night? Did you have fun? Got to go, see you later.

As with the Internet, parents and kids use cell phones differently. Most parents see cell phones as tools, while kids view them as an integral part of their social and entertainment lives. Unlike parents, who find cell phones intrusive at times and turn them on and off as necessary, kids have their phones turned on all the time so they can always be reached - by their friends that is, not necessarily by their parents!

An increasing number of kids are using their text messaging and camera-enabled cell phones to bully and harass peers. Because kids tend to keep their phones on at all times, bullies can relentlessly harass victims at school, at home or even in their own rooms. If your child is bullied through a cell phone, report the problem immediately to your phone service provider. If it's a persistent problem you can change the phone number.



Common Safety Tips for Children



- Keep internet-connected computers in an open area where you can easily monitor your child's activities.
- Create a list of Internet house rules with input from your child.
- Use child friendly search engines or search engines with parental controls.
- Talk with your child about their online friends and activities just as you would about their other activities.
- Encourage them to come to you if they encounter material or messages that make them feel uncomfortable or threatened stay calm. If you "freak-out" they won't turn to you when they need to.

Age specific tips:

5-7 year olds

Five- to seven-year-old children have a positive outlook and an accepting nature. They take pride in their new reading and counting skills and love to converse and share ideas. They are eager to behave well; they are trusting; and they don't question authority.

Kids at this age may be very capable at using computers, i.e. following commands, using the mouse, and playing computer games. They are, however, highly dependent on adults or older children to help them find Web sites, interpret online information or send e-mail.

5-7 year old children:

- Will accept media content at face value
- Don't have the critical thinking skills to be online alone
- May be frightened by media images, both real and fictional
- May be frightened by realistic portrayals of violence, threats or dangers
- Are vulnerable to online marketers who encourage them to give out personal information through surveys, contests and registration forms
- Risk moving from appropriate to inappropriate sites through hyperlinks
- May be exposed to search results that link to inappropriate Web sites

Safety tips for 5-7 year olds

- Always sit with your kids at this age when they are online.
- Use kid-friendly search engines or ones with parental controls.
- Start teaching kids about privacy. Tell them never to give out information about themselves or their family when online.
- Have your kids use an online nickname if a site encourages them to submit their names to "personalize" the Web content.
- Don't let your kids use instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or message boards at this age.

8-10 year olds

Eight- to ten-year-old kids have a strong sense of family. They are interested in the activities of older kids in their lives; they are starting to develop a sense of their own moral and gender identity; and they tend to be trusting and not to question authority. Surfing for fun and playing interactive games are favourite online pastimes at this age. They are using e-mail and may also experiment with instant messaging, chat rooms and message boards (online forums).

8-10 year old children:

- Are curious and interested in discovering new information
- Lack the critical thinking skills to be online alone
- Are vulnerable to online marketers who encourage them to give out personal information through surveys, contests and registration forms
- May be frightened by realistic portrayals of violence, threats or dangers
- Begin to communicate with online acquaintances they may have not met in real life
- May be influenced by media images and personalities, especially those that appear "cool" or desirable
- May be exposed to search results with links to inappropriate Web sites
- Are vulnerable to online predators when using chat rooms, message boards or instant messaging.

Safety tips for 8-10 year olds

- Teach your kids to always come to you before giving out information through e-mail, chat rooms, message boards, registration forms, personal profiles and online contests.
- Don't allow instant messaging at this age.
- Only allow your kids to use monitored chat rooms and message boards on reputable kids' sites.
- Talk to your kids about their online friends and activities just as you would about their other activities.
- Talk to them about healthy sexuality because kids can easily come across online pornography.



11-13-Year Olds

From pre-teen to teen, is a time of rapid change in kids' lives. Although at this age they are still quite dependent on their families, they want more independence. Also, relationships with friends become more important and they start to take an interest in the world around them.

Kids in this age group use the Internet to research school projects. They also download music, use e-mail, play online games, and vote for their favourite pop stars on fan sites. Their favourite way to communicate with friends is by instant messaging.

11-13 year old children:

- feel in control when it comes to technology
- are intrigued by subcultures beyond the world of their parents
- lack the critical thinking skills to judge the accuracy of online information
- accept entertainment and games uncritically
- are vulnerable to online marketers who encourage them to give out personal information through surveys, contests and registration forms
- are at a sensitive time in their sexual development; particularly boys, who may look for porn sites at this age
- are interested in building relationships (especially girls) with online acquaintances
- may be bullied or they may be bullying others online

Safety tips for 11-13 year olds

- Talk to your kids about online pornography and direct them to good sites about health and sexuality.
- Insist on access to your kids' e-mail and instant messaging accounts to make sure that they're not talking to strangers.
- Teach your kids responsible online behaviour. File-sharing and taking text, images or artwork from the Web may infringe on copyright laws.
- Talk to them about ethical behaviour. They should not be using the Internet to spread gossip, bully or make threats against others.
- Only allow your kids to use monitored chat rooms on reputable kids' sites.

Taken from: <http://www.bewebaware.ca/english/default.html>

Home Alone



After school care and children being home alone until a parent gets home from work have become issues for today's working parents. Age alone does not determine whether a child can look after himself or herself properly.

Is your child ready to be left alone?

- Does your child know her/his full name, address and phone number including area code?
- Does your child know where to call for help, who is “on call” if parents are unavailable?
- Does your child know what number to call in case of an emergency?
- Does your child know how to use public transportation or does he/she know what to do if someone other than you is picking him/her up?
- Does your child know how to answer the telephone when you are away, without revealing he/she is alone?
E.g. “My mom’s in the yard” or “My dad is busy now and will call you back.”
- Does your child know not to answer the doorbell?
- Does your child know to go straight home and lock the door behind him/her and never go to someone else’s house without your permission?
- Does your child know where to find and use the household fire extinguisher and the first aid kit?
- Does your child know what appliances they can use, and does he/she know how to use them safely?

If you answered “yes” to all of the above questions, these are a few additional points to consider:

- Discuss and set firm written rules, with clear do’s and don’ts. e.g. if friends can come over, what snacks are allowed
- Prepare your child to deal with situations that may arise
- Specify how his or her time is to be spent
- Keep in touch – if you’re hard to reach, get a cell phone or pager
- Limit the time you leave your child at home alone and call your child if you are going to be late

Short test runs may help you assess whether your child is ready to stay home alone. Go out for just a few minutes. When you return, talk to your child about the experience. Increase the amount of time you are out, leaving specific instructions to follow. After a few trials answer these questions:

- Does your child feel comfortable about being on his or her own?
- Do you feel comfortable about your child being at home alone?
- Can your child follow rules responsibly?
- Do they understand and remember instructions, whether written or oral?
- Do they find constructive things to do without getting into mischief?
- Can your child handle normal and unexpected situations?
- Are you able to communicate readily with them when you are not at home?
- Can your child always reach someone to help in case of emergency?

To prepare children for the responsibilities of self care, the Canada Safety Council has published a booklet entitled “At Home On My Own”. To obtain a copy go to www.safety-council.org. It is also recommended that children take a First Aid and Babysitting courses.

“On your Own” - Home Safety Checklist

Telephone

- List important number, where your child can reach you or an adult to seek help or reassurance at any time. Have these numbers beside each telephone and/or program them into the phone.
- Equip your phone with an answering device or service so it can take messages.
- Buy a phone with caller I.D. Tell your child to answer the phone only for specific callers. Let the phone take a message for all others.

Security

- Make sure your home is safe and secure. Provide secure locks for all doors and windows.
- Store matches, lighters, medications, household cleaners and other toxic substances in a safe place. Make sure they are clearly labelled and in their original containers. Teach children to recognize hazard symbols.
- Check furnace, hot water heater and appliances are in good working order.
- Lock up alcoholic beverages and check to make sure they do not mysteriously disappear. Lock up medications.
- Use light timers so your child doesn't come home to a dark house.

Fire Safety

- You must have a working smoke alarm on each level of the house (or homes on one level, near the kitchen and all bedrooms). Test them regularly to make sure they all work.
- Replace any broken electrical cords and use no more than two plugs per outlet.
- Keep your hot water heater below 54 C to prevent scalding.

First Aid

- Assemble a basic kit with your child, explaining what each item is and how to use it. Include:
 - a box of different-sized bandages for small cuts
 - sterile gauze pad for larger cuts, with adhesive tape to hold it and small scissors to cut the tape
 - tweezers to remove slivers
 - peroxide to clean cuts and cotton balls to apply it
 - digital thermometer to check for fever
 - keep a cold pack in the freezer
- Power Outages
 - keep a flashlight or two (and extra batteries) handy
 - provide a few items that can run on batteries, e.g. radio, clock, electronic game

Living with Anaphylaxis



Anaphylaxis = life threatening allergies

Anaphylaxis is the most severe type of allergic reaction and must be treated as a medical emergency as it can be fatal. Anaphylaxis can be caused by allergens – foods, insect stings, medication, and latex and sometimes triggered by exercise. Eight foods are responsible for most allergic reactions: peanuts, tree nuts (cashews, pistachios, walnuts, almonds, etc), milk, eggs, fish, shellfish (crab, shrimp, and lobster), soy and wheat. Anaphylaxis is most often diagnosed in childhood, though it can also develop later in life.

There is no cure for food allergies at this time. The danger of an anaphylactic reaction goes everywhere the child goes; school, playground, relatives, etc. The only way to stay safe is to completely avoid the smallest amount of that food.

Important Rules and Routines to Help Keep Allergic Children Safe

Everyone involved in your child's life (family, friends, school staff, etc) should know:

- About your child's allergy
- How to recognize the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction
- How to use your child's epinephrine auto-injector and that it must be given within minutes of an allergic reaction (lifesaving medication)
- How to reduce risk to keep your child safe
- How to respond to an allergic reaction: A.C.T.

Administer epinephrine auto-injector (i.e. epi pen twinject)

Call 9-1-1

Transfer care to emergency responders (ambulance) and hospital staff

Children should learn the symptoms of a reaction and know to tell others immediately if they think they might be having an allergic reaction. Since children with asthma can be at risk for a more severe reaction, it is important to keep their asthma well controlled.

To save precious minutes trying to locate an auto-injector, it is critical that everyone knows where the auto-injector is and can get hold of it easily. As soon as possible (age 6-7), a child should carry their auto-injector on them. A main factor in whether anaphylactic reactions have been fatal has been whether or not the person was carrying their auto-injector with them. It is also very important that a second auto-injector is available, close at hand, since a second anaphylactic reaction may occur within 5-15 minutes.

Children with food allergies should:

- Eat only food from home - if in doubt, do without
- Avoid putting food directly on surfaces - Use a napkin or place mat
- Always have their auto-injector available
- Wear medical alert identification (www.medicalert.ca)
- Wash hands before and after eating
- Not share or trade food, utensils or food containers

To provide a safe learning environment for all students, many schools are becoming “allergen aware” and are requesting that parents do not send lunches or snacks with anything containing allergens. There are still plenty of healthy tasty protein foods to choose from.

For more information visit:

Niagara Anaphylaxis Support and Knowledge www.nask.ca
 Anaphylaxis Canada www.anaphylaxis.org
 EpiPen www.epipen.ca

Peanut Butter-less Lunches

As of January 1, 2006, schools in Ontario are required to prepare safety plans for students with fatal allergies as part of Sabrina’s Law, named after a Pembroke teen who died of severe allergic shock in her high school. The law requires school principals to prepare individual plans for students with life threatening allergies, and for school staff to be trained on how to recognize and aid students suffering from anaphylactic shock.

This means that your children, even if they don’t have food allergies, may not be allowed to bring peanuts or peanut butter in their school lunches or snacks. This can make packing lunches and snacks a little more challenging, but don’t worry there are plenty of other healthy and tasty high-protein options.

The following foods have approximately the same amount of protein as in two tablespoons of peanut butter:

- 30 g (1 oz) lean meat, poultry or fish (roast beef, ham, chicken, turkey, tuna, salmon, etc.)
- 2 eggs
- 175 mL (3/4 cup) chickpeas, lentils or kidney beans
- 250 mL (1cup) milk or chocolate milk
- 175 mL (3/4 cup) yogurt
- 30 g (1 oz) cheddar cheese
- 125 mL (1/2 cup) hummus
- 250 mL (1 cup) split pea or beef soup
- 125 mL (1/2 cup) chilli

One large bagel (136 g) has about the same amount of protein as two tablespoons of peanut butter.

Hygiene

There are times when it seems children are always sick, catching every bug at school or at daycare. There are a few simple things you can do to help your child stay healthy and avoid those bugs. One is to teach your child how to properly wash their hands which is the most effective way to prevent the spread of germs, resulting in healthier children. Children often are in too much of a hurry to do a proper job of hand washing and need reminders to wash up properly.

They need to be taught when to wash their hands:

- Before eating
- After blowing their nose
- After using the washroom
- After playing with pets
- After coughing and sneezing on hands
- Anytime hands are dirty

Most importantly they need to be taught how to properly wash their hands. It is important that children use warm water and soap, and wash all surfaces of their hands, top, bottom, fingertips and in between fingers. They also need to wash them for about 20 seconds, about the length of time it takes to sing the alphabet or the birthday song.

Hand sanitizers are a good second choice when soap and water are not available. Hand sanitizers are effective and are convenient to use when there is no visible dirt on the hands. When using a hand sanitizer, use an amount the size of a quarter and apply to hands, rub for at least 20 seconds making sure to clean the tops of the hands, between the fingers and the finger tips until hands are dry. Although hand sanitizers contain alcohol they are safe to use since all the alcohol evaporates once the sanitizer has dried but caution should be taken so that children don't swallow any. Children should be supervised when using hand sanitizers.

Children need to be taught to cover their cough or sneeze into their elbow or upper sleeve of their shirts. Coughing or sneezing into your hand just catches the germs and then you can spread those germs to other objects when you touch them. Parents need to teach children that just because they can't see the germs, doesn't mean they are not there and can't make you sick. If coughing or sneezing in a tissue, teach them to throw the used tissue in the garbage right away and to wash their hands or use a hand sanitizer to clean their hands.

Clean your Hands

with soap and warm water...clean for at least 15 seconds



Wet hands and wrists.

Step 1



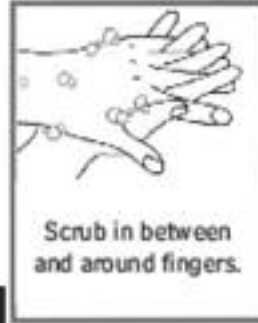
Use a sufficient amount of soap - one squirt of the pump.

Step 2



Lather soap and scrub hands well, palm to palm.

Step 3



Scrub in between and around fingers.

Step 4



Scrub back of each hand with palm of other hand.

Step 5



Scrub fingertips of each hand in opposite palm.

Step 6



Scrub each thumb clasped in opposite hand.

Step 7



Scrub each wrist clasped in opposite hand.

Step 8



Rinse thoroughly under running water.

Step 9



Wipe and dry hands well with paper towel.

Step 10



Turn off water using paper towel.

Step 11

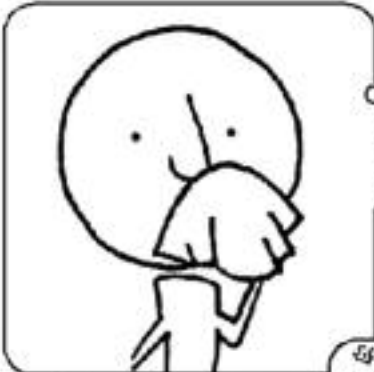
Clean hands:

- before preparing meals
- before eating
- after using the washroom
- after coughing or sneezing
- after blowing your nose
- after playing with pets
- after playing outdoors

Graphics & text adapted with permission from Queen's Printer for Ontario 2009/10

Stop the spread of germs that make you and others sick!

Cover your Cough



Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.



Put your used tissue in the waste basket.



Clean your Hands

after coughing or sneezing.



Wash hands with soap and warm water

or clean with alcohol-based hand cleaner.



109-1-10

Head Lice

Head Lice



Adult Louse

Don't be embarrassed or surprised if your child arrives home from day care, school or camp with head lice. Anyone can get head lice. It happens because head lice have crawled from someone's head to your child's head, not because your child or home is unclean.

What are head lice?

Head lice are tiny grey/brown insects that live only on the scalp of human beings. They crawl quickly but cannot fly or jump. They are not found on household pets. Having head lice does not mean you are unclean. They do not spread disease. The saliva from head lice when feeding can cause itching. Scratching may cause sores, which can get infected.

Adult female lice glue eggs on the hair shaft close to the scalp. Live eggs are oval and dark in colour similar to the hair colour. They are stuck to the hair and do not fall off if you touch them. Even after the eggs hatch (7-10 days), the white shells (nits) stay on the hair shaft. Baby lice start at pencil-dot size and mature in 7-14 days molting three times.

How are lice spread?

Anyone can get head lice. They spread by head to head contact. When children play their heads often touch and lice crawl from one child to another and then on to family members. Head lice may also spread by sharing brushes, combs and anything that is worn or used on the head – remind children not to share these items. Tie long hair back (e.g. in a pony tail). Check children's heads weekly.

How do I check for lice?



Use a bright light. Use a magnifying glass if you have one. Part the hair in small sections and look near the scalp. Lice crawl very fast so they are difficult to see. Look for dark eggs glued on the hair close to the scalp. These have been laid recently. They are often found in warm spots such as the hair behind the ears or back of the neck.



Look for open sores and scabs on the head. Check all the people that live in your house.

What do I do if someone in my family has head lice?

If you find lice, tell anyone in close contact such as family members, friends and classmates so they can be checked for lice. Everyone in the house who has head lice will need to be treated at the same time to control the spread. Treatment products are to be used only on people who have head lice. They do not prevent head lice.

How do I get rid of head lice?

There are many head lice treatment products. New products are available for people who do not want to use traditional insecticides and you can use the Wet Combing Method (instruction sheet available). Talk to a health professional about the best product for you. Read all instructions carefully and follow them step by step so that the product will work effectively. Wash and rinse hair in the sink, not in the bath or shower. **No lice product kills all of the eggs.**

Remove all the eggs or within 7-10 days some will hatch and you will see baby lice which will grow and spread to others. A new infestation is more easily recognized if you remove all the eggs. **A second treatment 7-10 days after the first treatment is suggested to kill any newly hatched lice from eggs you have missed.** Limit use of regular shampoo and hair products until a few days after first and second treatment to allow head lice product to work most effectively. Check every week to make sure lice are gone.

Precautions - Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you use any product if:

- Anyone has allergies especially to chrysanthemums, ragweed
- Anyone has a seizure disorder
- You are pregnant or breastfeeding and you need treatment or you need to treat other people. (Contact Motherisk at 416-813-6780)
- Your child is under 2 years old
- The skin of the scalp is cut or infected
- Head lice are found after first treatment, or head lice continue to reoccur

Some parents have reported success with methods using olive oil, mineral oil, tea tree oil, melaleuca oil, and hair gel. Since these methods have not been scientifically tested, they are not considered reliable or safe treatments for head lice.

How do I get rid of all of the eggs?

Removing eggs after the treatment can end your head lice problems.

- Start by using a head lice comb. You may need to remove the smaller eggs by hand.
- Sit under a bright light or in sunlight
- Have your child watch television, a video or read to keep still. Work for 10-15 minutes at a time. Work with a small section of hair (clip the rest out of the way)
- Slide each egg off the hair strands using your thumbnail and fingernail. Drop the eggs into a bag.
- Continue section by section until you remove all the eggs.
- Check the hair 2 times a week for 4 weeks to make sure all the eggs have been removed.



Do I need to wash or clean anything else?

Soak combs, brushes in hot water and head lice product for 5 - 10 minutes. Wash clothes, hats, towels and bedding used in the past three days, in hot soapy water and dry in a dryer for 20 minutes after the first and second treatment. Vacuuming is helpful, but special sprays are not needed on furniture or floors. Lice live only a short time away from the head.

Who do I call if I have questions?

- Niagara Region Public Health – School Health Elementary Program: 905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7379
- Head Lice Hotline: 905-688-8248 ext. 7371

WET COMBING

Detect & Remove Head Lice

What is WET COMBING?

A way to find and remove head lice by carefully combing through wet hair soaked with conditioner, using a fine-tooth comb.

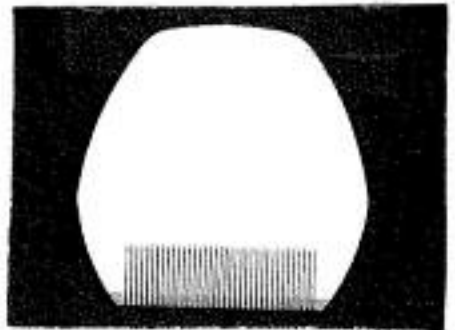
Why do WET COMBING?

- Saves money, no harmful chemicals, environmentally friendly.
- Makes finding lice easier because they remain still when wet.
- Puts an END to your head lice problems – Using wet combing in a scheduled way (see page 2), removes lice before they are mature enough to lay eggs.

The WET COMBING method:

You need - regular shampoo (*not 2 in 1*)

- regular conditioner
- a wide-tooth comb
- * Important - a plastic head lice comb or other comb, (like a pet flea comb), with very small spaces between the teeth
- a large towel
- paper towels and garbage bag



1. Wash hair with the shampoo. Rinse. Leave hair dripping wet.
2. Drape the towel around child's shoulders.
3. Using lots of conditioner, soak hair thoroughly down to the scalp. Leave conditioner in the hair.
4. Sit the child in a location with good lighting, by a sink if possible.
5. Untangle and straighten hair using the wide-tooth comb.



6.
 - a) Switch to the head lice or fine-tooth comb.
 - b) Work with small sections of hair. Place the teeth of the lice comb at the roots of the hair, touching the scalp.
 - c) Comb through each section of hair from roots to ends, several times.
 - d) Pay special attention when combing around the ears and back of the neck.
 - e) Check the comb for lice (baby to adult size), after each stroke, and remove them by wiping the comb on paper towels or rinsing under the tap. This is what you are looking for:

* * * * * (life size)



- f) Continue until you have combed the whole head and no more lice are found. Keep hair wet.
7. Rinse out the conditioner, and leave the hair dripping wet. Repeat steps 5 & 6 to find any lice you might have missed.

WET COMBING-How often?

- Wet combing to remove all lice and break the lifecycle can be done as often as every two days for 2 weeks, but the following pattern has proven very successful:
Repeat the steps on page 1 for a total of 4 times in 2 weeks, wet combing every 4th day
- Use the calendar below to keep track of the wet combing days, by inserting the date in the boxes.

Found lice - Wet Combing	1	2	3	Wet Combing 4	1	2
3	Wet Combing 4	1	2	3	Wet Combing 4	

If done correctly, all the live head lice should be removed in the first session you do wet combing. Any live eggs still present on the hair will hatch in 7-10 days and baby lice do not leave the head. You will remove those baby lice in the next combing sessions, so make sure you continue wet combing for the full 2 weeks. (Many people like to work at removing as many eggs as possible so there will be fewer lice hatching).

If you see large lice any time after the first wet combing session, it is likely that head lice have travelled from someone else. They may have also had a chance to lay eggs. So, add 3 more sessions of wet combing every 4th day.

If you choose to use a head lice treatment product, it is still important to do wet combing 5 days after treatment and again 12 days after treatment to be sure all lice are gone.

Even when you think you are rid of the head lice, it is wise to continue wet combing as part of your weekly routine.

Follow-up Advice

Check everyone living in your home and treat everyone who has head lice the same day so lice are not passed back and forth. Caregivers should do the wet combing on themselves after helping the rest of the family.

Inform anyone who could have been in head to head contact with the child who had lice so they can do a head lice check.

The presence of nits (empty harmless egg shells which remain glued to the hair) can be embarrassing for a child, so manually remove them.

Your usual thorough vacuuming, and washing clothes and towels are important, but there is no need for sprays. Lice infest people not homes!

For more information call Niagara Region Public Health – School Health Elementary Program at 905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7379

Pictures courtesy of Community Hygiene Concern
Bug Buster Kit Combs

What is ADHD?

ADHD stands for Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. **ADHD** is a common disorder of the brain which appears in childhood and is diagnosed by a medical professional. The main symptoms include hyperactivity, impulsivity and inattention which are not appropriate for the person's stage of development and interfere with relationships and performance in daily life.

ADHD:

- Is a way of being
- Is a learning style
- Is managed - not fixed
- Can last into adulthood
- Can affect success at school or work

It can cause problems in making and keeping friends and in making poor choices such as: dropping out of school and substance misuse. Treatment and understanding can help prevent these problems and help develop feelings of acceptance and belonging.

Children with ADHD are often:

- Smart
- Energetic
- Caring
- Humorous
- Happy and enthusiastic
- Sensitive and compassionate
- Imaginative and creative

Parents of children with ADHD can receive support and guidance from a family support group called Helping Others Parent Effectively (HOPE). This group meets in various locations across the region to provide parents with a safe and sharing environment. You can access the schedule of the HOPE groups at:

http://www.niagararegion.ca/living/health_wellness/healthyschools/hope-meetings.aspx

West Nile Virus: Protect Yourself and Your Family

The West Nile Virus (WNV) is a disease that mosquitoes carry. This disease can be serious. Some types of mosquitoes bite birds, humans and other animals and can spread the infection. It was first found in Ontario in 2001, the WNV has since spread across most of Canada and is now believed to be a seasonal epidemic in North America which flares up in the summer and continues into the fall.

Below are some steps you can take to reduce your risk of infection from WNV.

- Wear shoes, socks, a hat, long pants and a long sleeved shirt when outdoors for a long time.
- Wear light coloured clothing.
- Use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors and to protect infants when outdoors (e.g. cover strollers).
- Apply mosquito repellent containing DEET (refer to application guidelines below) to exposed skin when at risk of mosquito contact. Use only personal insect repellents that are registered in Canada. They have a registration number granted under the Pest Control Products Act and are labelled as insect repellents for use on humans.
- For more information about other options visit: www.niagararegion.ca

Children between 2-12 years of age

- The least concentrated product (10% DEET or less) should be used.
- Do not apply more than three times per day.
- Prolonged use should be avoided.

Children and Traffic



Children under the age of nine usually are not ready to make safe judgments about traffic. They may not be able to decide whether a situation is safe or react safely in an emergency, especially when nervous or scared. Even when they have been taught safety rules, they can easily be distracted and may respond suddenly. Whenever possible, children should be encouraged to cross with a crossing guard.

Did you know?

- Young children can not see out of the corner of their eyes as well as adults.
- The direction of sounds (i.e. horn, siren) is often difficult to determine.
- Children's sense of perception is different.
- Young children's brains can not pull together all pieces of information they have been taught, or put in the right sequence to be able to act safely in an emergency.
- Children lack a sense of reality (i.e. that a car can kill them)
- Children have difficulty judging how fast a vehicle is coming or how far away it is.
- Children like to keep moving; they have trouble waiting for lights to change.
- Children tend to focus on the things that are most interesting at the time.
- Children believe that adults will look out for them. They think an adult driving a car toward them will see them because they see the adult.

(Safe Kids Canada)

Steps to Safely Crossing the Street

1. Stop
2. Look all ways – twice
3. Listen for cars
4. Wait until the street is clear and all cars have stopped
5. Make eye contact with the drivers
6. Walk across the street

Teach your child to...

- Obey crossing signals but don't rely on them
- Always check for traffic in all directions every time they cross
- Stop at all driveways, alleys and areas without curbs and check for cars before crossing
- Be extra alert at intersections without lights. Drivers don't always pay attention and because children are small, drivers do not always see them
- Teach children to watch for things like parked cars and signs, which can block the view of the child and can make it impossible for drivers to see them
- Teach your child to cross the street at corners, pedestrian crosswalks, or with the crossing guard as much as possible
- In areas without sidewalks, teach your child to walk as far away from the road as they can and to walk facing oncoming traffic

Prepare your child by practicing these scenarios:

1. What if your ball rolls out onto the road? What do you do?
For younger child, the first option is to get an adult to help.
2. Where is the best place to cross the road?
For younger children they need to cross at the lights or with a crossing guard.

There are basic safety rules, but as children grow and become more independent thinkers, you will need to be aware of the need to teach your children how to think and respond safely when there are situations that necessitate exceptions to the rules.

For other suggestions and more information visit: www.safekidscanada.ca

Wheel Safety

Teaching your child to use safety equipment every time they use their “wheels” (bikes, blades, boards) will help to prevent most injuries.

What is proper safety equipment?**Helmet**

- ✓ An approved helmet is the law when children are riding their bikes.
- ✓ It is also an absolute must when using other wheels such as roller blades, skate boards and scooters.
- ✓ Be sure your child uses the right helmet for the type of activity they are doing.
- ✓ The helmet must fit properly and be worn at all times.
- ✓ Have a “no helmet, no wheels” family rule.

Footwear

- ✓ Closed-toe shoes provide the best foot protection.

Wrist braces, elbow and knee-pads

- ✓ Use these for blading and boarding, where falls are more frequent.

Staying safe and healthy begins with the right safety gear, but it doesn't end there. There are some other basic safety tips that everyone should keep in mind, especially at the beginning of spring.

- Make sure all the parts such as brakes, reflective gear, wheels and lights work properly
- Be sure that moving parts move freely
- Review safe riding practices
- Discuss rules of the road for bikes, blades, boards and scooters with your kids
- By age 10, a child is considered to have adequate balance to be able to ride on the road
- Review how to brake, stop and turn before moving on to other skills
- Remind your child to avoid traffic, steep hills, unfamiliar terrain and riding at night as much as possible
- Remind your child to steer away from oil, sand and gravel – the natural enemy of wheels
- Ride on bike trails together. Practice hand signals for turns

Train Safety

whether a situation is safe or react safely in an emergency, especially when nervous or scared. Even when they have been taught safety rules, they can easily be distracted and may respond suddenly. Whenever possible, children should be encouraged to cross with a crossing guard.

Teach your child that...

- Railway tracks are for trains.
- Playing games at railway crossings or around trains is dangerous.
- The only safe way to cross a railway track is to use designated rail crossings.

Driving and What Your Child is Learning

Yes, your child is too young to learn to drive. But, they are not too young to observe your driving habits and begin to learn about driving. Your child is learning right now how to drive by watching what you do. Keep your eyes and mind on the road. If their behaviour is distracting you, pull over and deal with the situation.

As your child grows:

- Be clear about your rules for riding with other drivers
 - State that seatbelts must always be worn
 - Teach them to never accept a ride with a driver who is under the influence of alcohol or other drugs
- Let your children know they can rely on you to pick them up anywhere anytime



Car Seats, Booster Seats and Seatbelts

Car crash injuries are the number one cause of death for children between the ages of 1 and 9. This is mostly due to children not having their seatbelt on and not sitting in a properly installed seat. Properly installing a car seat can reduce the chance of injury by up to 75%.

Car Seats:

- Check the car seat instructions, and your vehicle owner's manual ("child restraint systems").
- Send in the warranty card
- Remember the "kids" zone is in the backseat
- Remove loose objects from the car
- Must have CMVSS label (Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards)
- Check the age of the seat (should be less than 10 years old)
- Know the history of the car seat, it should have never been in a collision

Booster Seats:

- They weigh at least 40 lbs (18kg)
- They meet the booster seat's height and weight requirements
- The top of the child's ears should be below the top of the vehicle seat or the top of the booster seat

Ontario law states that children must stay in a booster seat until they meet one of the following benchmarks: 8 years of age or older or 80 lbs (36 kg), or 4 feet 9 inches (145cm). The safest choice is to keep your child in a booster seat until all three criteria are met.

Children wearing adult seat belts before they are ready are 3.5 times more likely to be injured during a collision than those in booster seats. Booster seats are designed for children over 40 pounds. Children under 40 pounds should be in a forward-facing car seat with a harness, not in a booster seat.

Public health recommends focusing more on the height and weight requirements, keeping children in booster seats until the adult seat belts fit properly.

- ✓ The lap belt rests across the upper thighs
- ✓ The shoulder belt is centered on the shoulder and chest
- ✓ When sitting back, the child's knees bend comfortably over the edge of the vehicle seat.

Parents need to be firm with older children who may view sitting in a booster seat as being "just for babies". Explain that the seat raises them up so the seatbelt is positioned properly and helps keep them safe. It also makes it easier to see their surroundings better when they're sitting higher in the car.

It is recommended that children under 13 years of age are safer in the back seat.

Install the booster seat correctly by following these steps:

- Remove harness straps (if it is a convertible seat)
- The seat belt secures both the seat and the child in the vehicle – there's no “installation”
- A booster seat should not be tethered (although some newer models may require them to).
- Always read the car seat manual to check requirements

A final safety tip: Always keep the booster seat buckled, even when empty

Your child has graduated, from Booster seat to Seatbelt...now what??

You can continue to ensure your child's safety by making sure that:

- The lap belt rests across your child's upper thighs
- The shoulder belt is centered on both the shoulder and chest
- Your child is sitting upright, with their back against the vehicle seat
- Legs are long enough to bend over the front of the vehicle seat

For more information:

Niagara Region Public Health has developed a number of resources to help Niagara residents keep their children safe.

At www.niagararegion.ca you'll find:

- Information on choosing and using child car seats and booster seats
- A video about installing a child car seat, and checklists that teach you how to thoroughly inspect your own car seat
- A list of dates and locations for free classes offered on how to safely install a child car seat

Do you have questions about car seat laws or the latest safety information? Call Niagara Region Public Health at 905-688-8248 or 1-800-505-6074 ext.7362. For information on car seat recalls visit www.healthycanadians.gc.ca

Keep your children secure on every journey! Let your child know you will stop the car if they get out of their booster seat or seatbelt and be prepared to follow through. Remember, there is a fine and demerit points for each unsecured child.

Immunizations for Elementary School Children

Immunization begins in early infancy and continues throughout life. Your child will receive the majority of his/her immunizations between the ages of 2 months and 6 years of age.

Please take a moment to check your child's Immunization Record (yellow card) to be sure his/her immunizations are up-to-date. Immunizations work best when given on time.

What immunizations are recommended for my child?

School-entry (4 - 6 yrs old):

- Booster dose of diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus and polio (DPTP/Quadracel) between the ages of 4 and 6.
- Second dose of the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine.

All Grade 7 students (offered through school-based immunization clinics):

- Hepatitis B vaccine.
- Meningococcal Quadrivalent Conjugate (A,C,Y,W-135) vaccine - Menactra®.

All Grade 8 female students (offered through school-based immunization clinics):

- Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine - Gardasil®.

All elementary school students:

- Influenza vaccination (seasonal and H1N1).

For more information about childhood immunizations, school-based immunization clinics, and/or the Recommended Immunization Schedule (shows vaccines recommended at different ages), visit www.niagararegion.ca or call the Vaccine Preventable Disease Program at 905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7425 to speak to a public health nurse.

Did you know?

Niagara Region Public Health is required by law to have immunization information on file for every child attending a school in the Niagara region. The importance of having this up-to-date information on file helps us to protect all children in case of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease in the community.

Please report your child's immunization(s) to Niagara Region Public Health using ONE of the following:

INTERNET: www.niagararegion.ca

TELEPHONE (Immunization Report Line): 905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7459

FAX (a copy of your child's Immunization Record): 905-688-8225

How Long Must My Child Stay Home When Sick?



Keep your child at home and away from others if he or she has any of these symptoms:

- * Fever
- * Diarrhea
- * Rash
- * Vomiting
- * Frequent coughing or sneezing
- * Yellow or green discharge from the nose, ears, or eyes.
- * Sore throat

Contact your family doctor for a diagnosis. Your doctor will advise you about care and treatment if a communicable disease is diagnosed.

Chickenpox	For mild illness (low fever, less than 30 spots) – no exclusion as long as your child is well enough to participate normally in all activities; for moderate to severe illness (fever over 38.5°C and/or many new spots) – until five days after onset of rash.
Diarrhea	Until 24 hours after diarrhea stops. This may vary depending on cause of illness and the way the disease is spread.
Fifth's disease "Slapped Cheek"	Until your child is feeling well enough to participate normally in all activities (no need to stay away from others).
Hand/Foot/Mouth disease	Until your child is feeling well enough to participate normally in all activities. Those with mouth sores or oozing lesions should stay away from others.
Impetigo	Until the antibiotic prescribed by a doctor has been taken for at least one full day.
Measles	For at least four days after the rash appears.
Pink-eye	Until the antibiotic prescribed by a doctor has been taken for at least one full day.
Rubella (German Measles)	Until at least seven days after the rash first appears.
Strep Throat	Until the antibiotic prescribed by a doctor has been taken for at least one full day.
Whooping Cough (Pertussis)	Until antibiotic treatment has been taken for at least five days. If no treatment is given, wait three weeks from when the cough began.

For more information, please contact the Infectious Disease Program at 905-688-8248, ext. 7330 or 1-888-505-6074. www.niagararegion.ca

Transitioning to High School



At the beginning of this manual we shared some tips with you about your child's transition to junior kindergarten. Since that time, they have grown and developed in many ways. Now your child is ready to begin their transition to high school.

High schools are large and confusing places. If your child has academic or social challenges; it can add an extra layer of challenge. Support your child as they prepare for this event by:

- Attending the Open House (January/February of the Grade 8 year).
- Attending registration to help your child organize locker, time tables, etc.
- Learning the names of the key people i.e. principal, guidance/special services staff and classroom teachers.
- Meeting your child's teachers – tell them you want to be kept up to date on your child' progress, especially if problems arise.
- Letting the school know if you will be bringing a support person along with you to any meetings or case conferences.
- Finding out what other staff might help your child such as a child and youth worker and school nurse.
- Encouraging your child to use a day organizer and develop a routine for completing homework and long term assignments.
- Encouraging your child to join groups at school.
- Continuing to be an advocate for your child, while supporting them as they learn to advocate for themselves.
- Reminding them of the importance of going to school daily, eating well, getting a good night's sleep and taking any prescribed medicine ~ all of these practices will help your child succeed during this next phase of their life.

“Parents who stay involved in the learning process of their child create a climate of success which serves as a springboard for future achievement.” Robert W. Smith

Taking Care of Yourself as a Parent

To be the great parent you want to be you must take good care of yourself! If you don't take care of yourself, you may find that you have trouble looking after anyone else.

Develop your personal action plan for day self-care.

- Eat a healthy diet – limit alcohol, caffeine, sugar, fats and tobacco.
- Balance your life.
- Get enough sleep and rest.
- Become more physically active - regular exercise is a real stress buster. It also helps you sleep better and builds stamina for facing everyday demands.
- Try to lower your overall stress level – learn relaxation techniques – deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation.
- Identify and express your feelings in a healthy way.
- Learn time management and organizational skills, set limits.
- Educate yourself on topics that interest you.
- Find someone you can talk with and enjoy being with, an individual, support group or an old or new friend.
- Work at building your self-esteem – YOU ARE GREAT!
- Recognize and deal with anxiety, stress and depression.
- Take steps needed to deal with stress at work
- Recognize and reduce negative self talk – NOBODY IS PERFECT!
- Seek out a health care professional, do not self-medicate.
- Have some fun and always keep your sense of humour.
- Share the responsibilities of your children with your partner or family.
- Do not smoke.
- Use a day planner or a 'to do' list
- Have a hobby you can spend a few minutes on a day.
- Set aside time away from your kids for an activity you enjoy.
- Divide time and tasks into categories:
 - Must do now
 - Important, but can wait
 - Not important

**For more information on coping with stress, contact the Heart and Stroke Foundation at:
905-938-8800 or at their website: <http://www.heartandstroke.com>**

**Or the Canadian Mental Health Association at 905-641-5222 or at their website:
<http://www.camh.net>**

Resource List



Niagara Region Public Health

Parent Talk Information Line (PTL)

Speak to a public health nurse about any parenting concern.

905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7555

www.niagararegion.ca

Canadian Mental Health Association

Fort Erie 905-994-1905
Niagara Falls 905-354-4576
Port Colborne 905-834-3629
St. Catharines 905-641-5222
Welland 905-735-3256

Canadian Paediatric Society

www.cps.ca

Child and Adolescent Crisis Service - 24 hr

1-800-263-4944

College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario

(for assistance in securing a family doctor)

www.cpsso.org

Contact Niagara

1-800-933-3617

Distress Centre Niagara

905-688-5124

Eat Right Ontario

1-877-510-5102

www.eatrightontario.ca

Health Canada, Product Safety

1-866-662-0666

Information Niagara

Dial 211

Kids Help Line

1-888-668-6868

www.kidshelpphone.ca

NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

905-378-4647 ext. 46573

Niagara Child and Youth Services (NCYS)

1-800-563-0122

Niagara Region Sexual Assault Centre (Carsa)

905-682-4584

Ontario Poison Centre

1-800-268-9017

Safe Kids Canada

1-888-723-3847

www.safekidscanada.ca

Speech Services Niagara

905-688-3550 or 1-800-896-5496

Smokers' Helpline

1-877-513-5333

Telehealth Ontario

1-866-797-0000

Women's Resource Centre

905-563-5910

OTHER AVAILABLE
PARENTING RESOURCE GUIDES



Getting Ready for Parenting



Birth-12 Months



18 Months-3 Years



14-19 Years



2201 St. David's Rd., Campbell East, Thorold, ON
Tel: 905-688-3762 Toll Free: 1-800-263-7248 Fax: 905-682-3901
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1052, Station Main, Thorold, ON L2V 0A2

www.niagararegion.ca
www.beagreatparent.ca