

Let's go to Kindergarten!

Information and tips to help prepare your child for Kindergarten!



KFL&A Public Health
221 Portsmouth Avenue, Kingston, ON K7M 1V5
613-549-1232 or 1-800-267-7875
kflaph.ca

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Getting started at school

Starting Kindergarten is an exciting time in your child's life. It is a place where children play, grow, and learn, socially, emotionally, and academically. It is normal for children and parents to have a mix of emotions about starting school.

How can I help my child prepare for Kindergarten?

Read the information and tips in this book.

Give your child opportunities to interact with other children in small and large groups.

Healthy routines of being active, eating well, and getting enough sleep will help make this transition easier.

Keep a positive attitude about starting school. Children who are excited about learning, generally do well in Kindergarten.



EarlyON

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

Helping children deal with stress

Starting Kindergarten can be a stressful time for some children and parents.

Help your child deal with stress and challenges:

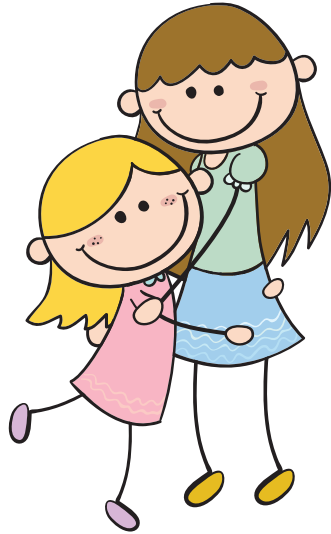
Listen to your child.

Respond to your child.

Connect with your child.

For tips on helping your child recognize and work through their emotions:

kflaph.ca/Parenting



Student mental health:

smho-smsso.ca/parents-and-caregivers

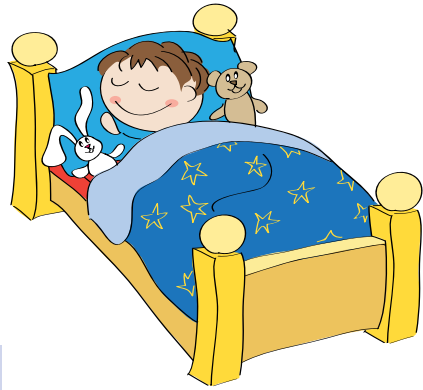
If you have questions or concerns about your child's emotional, social, or mental well being, reach out to:

Your health care provider or to Maltby Centre which provides assessments and consultations, counselling, and parenting supports free of charge. To request a confidential consultation with a counsellor, fill out a request form on their website.

maltbycentre.ca/mental-health-services or call 1-844-855-8340

What are good sleep habits?

Children who do not sleep well may have poor behaviour, be aggressive, or have short attention spans. Creating good sleep habits can help children get the sleep they need.



Bedtime tips:

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

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

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

Sleep guidelines:

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

Age in years	Hours of sleep
3 to 4	10 to 13
5 to 13	9 to 11

For more information:

Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth (5 to 17 years of age)
csepguidelines.ca/guidelines/children-youth

How do I get my child to move more?

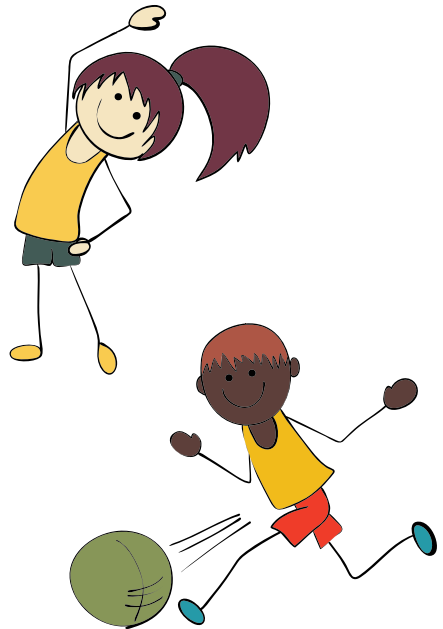
Children need to move their bodies. Spending more time being active and less time watching TV, playing on the computer, and riding in cars will help your child do better in school and be healthier—physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Ways for children 5 to 11 years of age to be more active:

No more than two hours a day of screen time (e.g., TV, video games, computer). Less is best!

Spend less time riding in cars, and more time walking.

Spend more time outside, and less time sitting.



For activity ideas, visit:

ParticipACTION
participaction.com

Kingston Gets Active - ActivKids
kingstongetsactive.ca/activ-kids

Why is breakfast important?

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

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

Try these quick and easy breakfast ideas:

A breakfast wrap with chopped vegetables and scrambled eggs.

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

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

Eggs with whole wheat toast, orange slices, and a glass of milk.



For vegetables and fruit at wholesale prices, contact:

Good Food Box Kingston
613-530-2239
goodfoodbox@kchc.ca

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

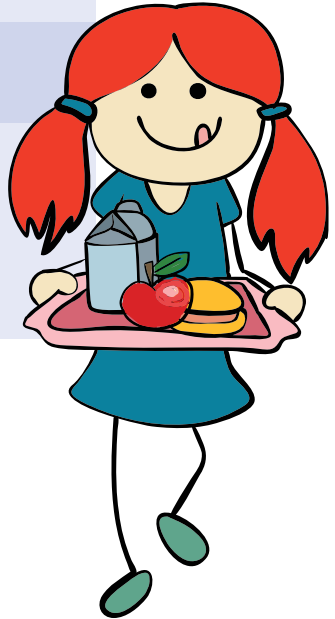
A positive relationship with food is important for both mental and physical health. There are many ways to help your child develop a positive relationship with food:

Whenever it works for your family, sit down, and eat together.

Try serving dessert alongside meals and snacks. Over time, this can make dessert less distracting during mealtime and help teach children that there are not “good” and “bad” foods.

Let your children see you enjoying a variety of foods.

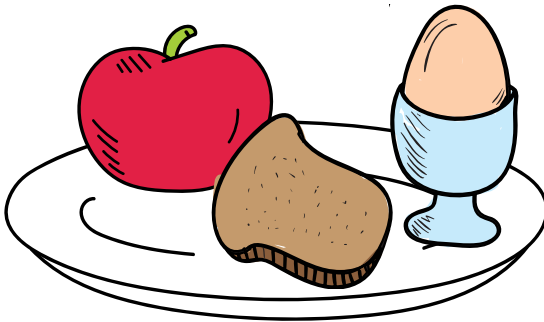
Create a pressure-free eating environment. When introducing children to a new food, serve it alongside a food you know they like. If they choose not to try it, they will still have something familiar to enjoy.



Invite children to help with age-appropriate tasks in the kitchen.

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

Consider how you talk about food. Avoid using words like “cheat day”, “bad food”, “good food”, or “reward”. You can replace these words with neutral, matter-of-fact statements that describe foods. For example, “I like the taste of these candies, but when I eat a lot of them, they make me feel so tired” or “veggies make me feel full and strong”.



For more ideas on planning family meals, contact:

Supporting Healthy Schools

613-549-1232 or 1-800-267-7875, ext. 1102

healthy.schools@kflaph.ca

How do I learn about my child's development?

The Looksee Checklist is a short list of questions to help you monitor your child's development. Free and available in a variety of languages. Visit lookseechecklist.com

The Early Years Check-In tool identifies needs or concerns you may have about your child, including social, emotional, language, movement, thinking, and learning skills. Visit eyci.healthhq.ca.

The Play&Learn site has activities to do with your child to help them develop their skills. Visit playandlearn.healthhq.ca

The My Growing Child email newsletters have activities you can do with your child at home to help them improve their skills. To sign up visit <https://bit.ly/3yodf42>

The SmartStart Hub can help you explore your child's strengths, needs, and connect you to helpful services. Visit kidsinclusive.ca or email KidsInclusive@kingstonhsc.ca.

For more information
contact Parenting in KFL&A

613-549-1154 or
1-800-272-7875, ext. 1555.

Parenting@kflaph.ca



How can I help my child with reading and writing?

Reading aloud to your child is the best way to help them become interested in reading.



Try reading every day with your child.

Choose the book together.

Enjoy the same book over and over again.

Read a lot of different kinds of books, such as story, fact, poetry, and rhyming books.

Interact with your child while you read the book. Talk about the pictures and ask questions.

How can you help your child learn to write?

Have paper, pencils and pens, and blank books on hand.

Help children strengthen their muscles used to write by playing with playdough, cutting paper with scissors, or playing ball.

Encourage your child to draw, scribble, copy shapes, and print.

For speech and language resources, contact:

kidsinclusive.ca or email KidsInclusive@kingstonhsc.ca

Should I be worried about my child's speech and language?

It is important for your child to develop strong speech and language skills to do well in school, make and keep friends, and to feel comfortable in Kindergarten.

Early Expressions can help your child if you have any concerns or questions about:

articulation (speech sounds),

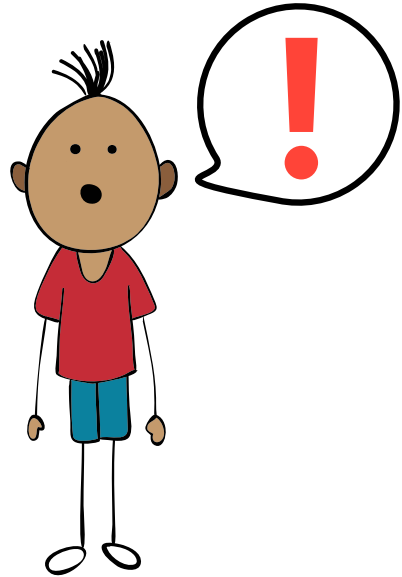
talking,

listening and understanding,

social interactions,

stuttering, or

early writing and reading skills.



If you have concerns about your child's speech and language development:

Ask your doctor for a referral to have your child's hearing tested.

Refer your child to Early Expressions Speech and Language program by calling 613-546-3854.

How can my child get to school?

Walking, cycling, or taking the school bus are all great ways to get to school. Getting to school in an active way helps your child get more physical activity, arrive to school more alert and ready to learn, and have fun getting to school.

Walking safety:

Always look both ways before crossing the street.

Walk on the sidewalk where there is one.

Follow crossing guard signals.

Use crosswalks. Do not cross the street mid-block.

Keeping the school area safe:

If your family needs to drive, keep your car away from the school during drop-off and pick up times.

Park one or two blocks away from the school and walk.

Bike safety:

Wear a bike helmet.

Learn hand signals.

Children under the age of 10 need someone with them.

School bus safety:

Be sure the driver can see you.

Take 10 giant steps in front of the bus before crossing the street.

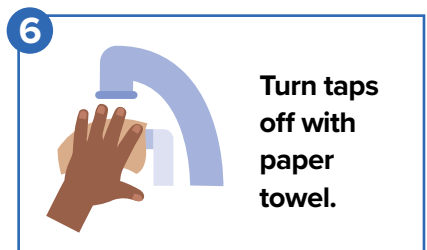
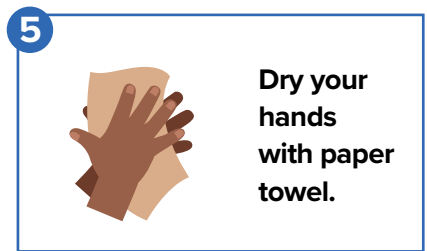
Always listen to the bus driver.

For more information about Active School Travel visit:

kflaph.ca/AST

How important is hand washing?

Teaching your child how to wash their hands is one of the most important ways to keep them healthy.



Teach your child to wash their hands:

Before making food

After handling garbage

Before eating food

After playing outside

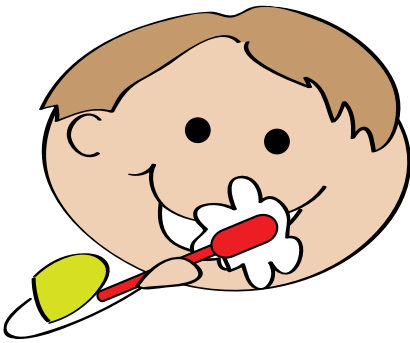
After using the toilet

After touching pets

After sneezing, blowing, or wiping their nose

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

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



Brush teeth twice a day for at least two minutes.

Children need help brushing until their hand coordination is more developed.

Use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste with fluoride.

Brush in small circles along the gum line.

Floss your child's teeth every day.

Lift the lip often and look for any white or brown lines or spots along the gum line or between teeth.

These may be the start of cavities and you should see a dental provider.

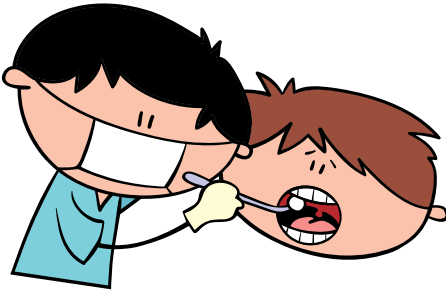
Limit sugary foods and drinks.

Snacks like raisins, granola bars, fruit leather, and juice are sweet and sticky. The longer and more often sugar is on teeth, the higher the chance of developing tooth decay. **Choose water to drink.** Water helps to rinse sugar and acids from teeth.

kflaph.ca/Dental

Is there dental screening in school?

Each year, children in Kindergarten and Grade 2 receive dental screening by the KFL&A Public Health dental team. The screening includes a quick look into the mouth with a sterilized mouth mirror using all appropriate infection control practices. A screening card is sent home with the dental findings noted on the card.



Can't afford dental care?

Healthy Smiles Ontario will cover the cost of preventive care, basic treatment and urgent care for eligible children.

Sometimes a child has an urgent dental need that must be seen by a dentist right away. Dental care is available for children 17 and under, whose families can't afford to pay for this care.

For information about no cost dental care, or to schedule a screening appointment, contact:

**KFL&A Public Health
Dental Program**
613-549-1232 or
1-800-267-7875, ext. 1218
kflaph.ca/HSO

Call for information about dental coverage, or to schedule a screening appointment.

Does your child need glasses?

Take your child for a free eye exam.

Yearly eye exams with an eye doctor (optometrist) are free for children with an Ontario health card.



Children in kindergarten can get free glasses. To find out more, visit **EyeSeeEyeLearn.ca** or call your eye doctor.

For more information about healthy vision, contact:

**KFL&A Public Health
Parenting in KFL&A
613-549-1154 or
1-800-267-7875, ext. 1555
kflaph.ca/Vision**

How do I report my child's immunizations?

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

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

Most children are due for ISPA immunizations at the age of four.

Keep your immunization record in a safe place.

Have your child's immunization record reviewed with your health care provider to ensure they are up-to-date.

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

Parents and guardians are responsible for reporting their child's immunizations to KFL&A Public Health.

Online

kflaph.ca/ImmunizationReporting

Mail

KFL&A Public Health Immunization Team
221 Portsmouth Avenue, Kingston, ON K7M 1V5

Phone

613-549-1232 or 1-800-267-7875

Fax

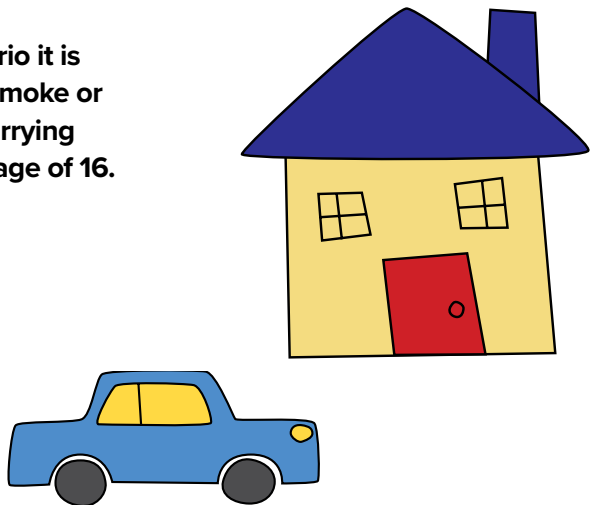
613-549-0985

Does second-hand smoke affect my child's learning?

Children exposed to second-hand smoke are at greater risk of getting sick and missing school.

No amount of second-hand smoke is safe. Make your home and vehicle smoke-free!

Remember, in Ontario it is against the law to smoke or vape in a vehicle carrying children under the age of 16.



For help quitting or cutting back on smoking, contact:

Tobacco Information Line

613-549-1232 or 1-800-267-7875, ext. 1333

til@kflaph.ca

Contact Supporting Healthy Schools:

613-549-1232 or 1-800-267-7875, ext. 1102

healthy.schools@kflaph.ca