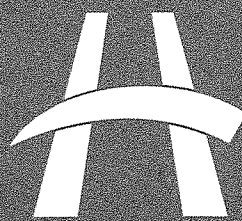


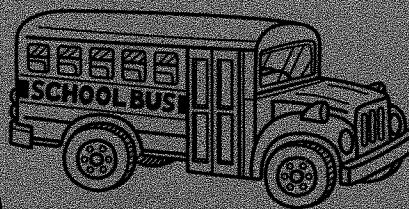
Back^{to} school

with



McMaster
Children's
Hospital

HAMILTON HEALTH SCIENCES



in partnership with



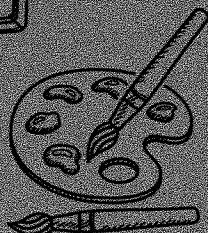
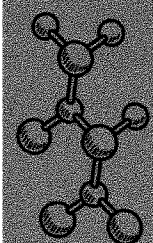
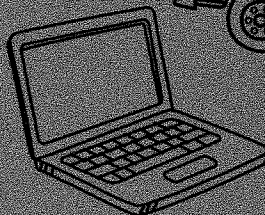
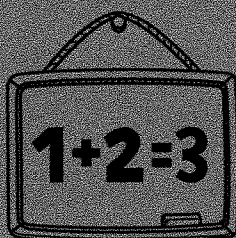
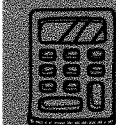
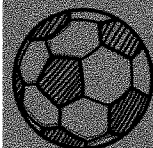
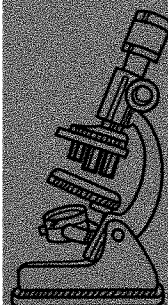
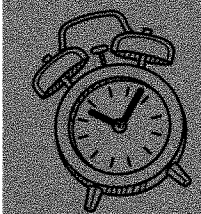
Hamilton



Hamilton-Wentworth
Catholic District School Board
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HAMILTON-
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BOARD



Healthy lunches

by **Heather Mileski**, registered dietitian,
McMaster Children's Hospital



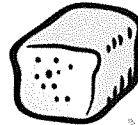
When kids are involved in making lunches, they're more likely to eat and enjoy what's in their bag. So you aren't scrambling every night, set aside time for family lunch preparation on the weekend and make enough to last through Friday. To further encourage healthy eating habits at school, model healthy eating at home by cooking and eating together. Here are some tips to simplify healthy school lunches:

Meat and alternatives

Hard boil a dozen eggs or make a batch of bean salad to provide protein for the week.

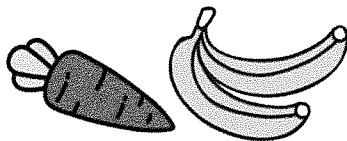
Whole grains

Choose healthier options like whole grain breads or brown rice.



Healthy snacks

Consider making unsalted popcorn or a trail mix of seeds and low-sugar cereal, like bit-sized shredded wheat.



Veggies and fruit

Cut plenty of fresh vegetables and fruit so you don't have to do this every day.

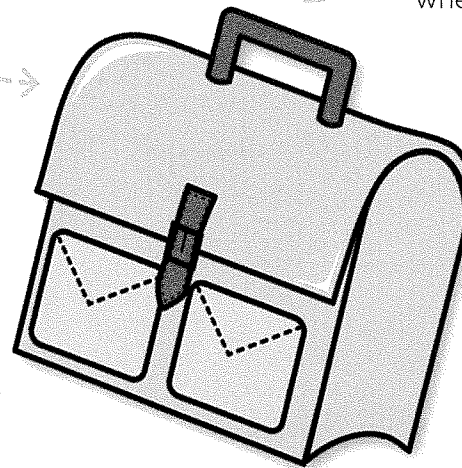
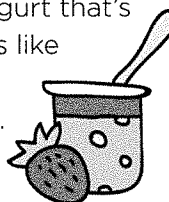


Hydration:

Juice boxes are convenient, but full of sugar. Instead pack a re-usable water bottle.

Dairy

Get in an extra serving of dairy with yogurt that's low in add-ins like sugar and preservatives.



Want more information about healthy eating habits? Visit www.unlockfood.ca

It is also important to pay attention to your kids' digestive health.

Diarrhea?

Try reducing added sugar from juice

Constipation?

Add more fibre

Reflux or bloating?

Cut back on high-fat and processed foods

Digestive issues can suggest a larger underlying problem.

If your child has ongoing digestive problems, talk to your family doctor.

Food allergies in children



by **Dr. Susan Waserman**, *allergist,
McMaster Children's Hospital*

Food allergies are a growing concern in Canada. Common ones include peanuts, tree nuts, eggs, milk, seafood, sesame, soy, mustard, and wheat. Food generally doesn't cause an allergic reaction unless it's ingested, meaning it gets inside the body. However, ingesting even very small amounts can cause an allergic reaction. The severity of the reaction can differ each time, so it's best to avoid the food entirely.

If you think your child is allergic to a food, it's important to be properly diagnosed by an allergist.

Guidelines for children:

- Only eat food that you brought from home or that is approved by parents
- Avoid sharing utensils or containers
- Do not place food directly on a desk or table
- Wash hands before and after eating
- Have your EpiPen with you at school
- Practice with your auto-injector training device
- Know your allergic reaction symptoms
- Tell a teacher if you think you're having an allergic reaction

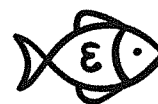
Additional precautions for parents:

- Discuss your child's allergy with their teacher and school principal
- Ensure your child's EpiPen is up to date
- Have your child practice with an auto-injector training device
- Prepare your child for situations that may arise at school
- Ensure your child wears medical identification

GAME TIME!

Draw a line to match the word with the picture.

peanuts •
tree nuts •
eggs •
milk •
seafood •
sesame •
soy •
mustard •
wheat •



Screen time and social media

by **Ashley Legate**, *psychologist,
McMaster Children's Hospital*

Technology is a great resource. It can provide connection, information and entertainment at the touch of a button. But, as with all things, it should be enjoyed in moderation.

Children who spend too much time on screens are at greater risk of:

- Becoming overweight
- Having difficulty sleeping
- Being less prepared for school
- Becoming inattentive, aggressive, and less able to self-soothe

How much time should you spend on screens?

The Canadian Pediatric Society recommends zero screen time for children under age two, and less than one hour each day for children ages two to five. For school-aged children, screen time should be limited and monitored, and should focus on learning activities. All screens should be put away a few hours before bed—exposure to artificial light can make it difficult to sleep.

Talk about screen use as a family and create a family media plan for everyone to follow. You can download a template at HealthyChildren.org/MediaUsePlan. As parents, be sure to not only follow the plan, but also model good habits by minimizing your screen use in front of the kids and putting devices away during family activities.

Positive screen use

- Helps support goals like making new friends and learning new skills
- Is a fun family activity that encourages conversation
- Stays within the limits of your family media plan

Negative screen use

- Makes kids lose interest in other activities
- Overpowers important activities like school work and physical activity
- Causes stress and frustration over online interactions

Social media

As a parent, it's your responsibility to keep your kids safe online. Use parental control settings to prevent your kids from accessing inappropriate content. Have regular conversations with your kids about social media so they feel comfortable coming to you if they stumble across something they shouldn't.

Look out for negative signs of social media use such as:

- Too much focus on gaining approval through likes, comments, etc.
- Using technology to avoid difficult face to face interactions
- Secrecy around social media use

If you suspect your child is being bullied online, ask them about it, and talk to their teacher if the problem continues.

**Trouble managing
screen time?**

**Talk to your family
doctor or call your local
Contact agency.**

**Contact Hamilton:
905.570.8888**

contacthamilton.ca

Anxiety

by **Dr. Paulo Pires**, *psychologist,
McMaster Children's Hospital*

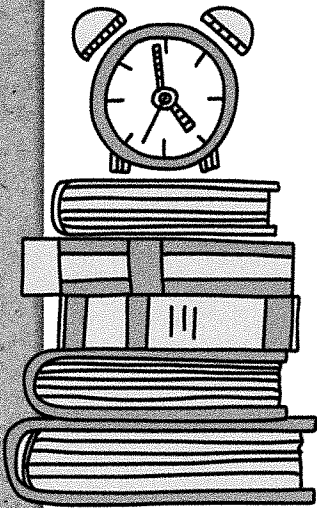


The start of school can be a stressful time for everyone. It's natural for children of all ages to experience some anxiety. Contributing factors can include separation from parents, worry over making friends, and concern for academic performance.

Anxiety is our body's natural response to perceived danger or risk. Sometimes it's a positive thing, pushing us to do our best. Other times it can be overwhelming. It doesn't always look the same, so pay close attention for signs of anxiety in your child, such as:

- Avoiding school or saying they're too sick to attend
- Increases in acting out or misbehaving
- Being overly focused on schoolwork and, despite experiencing extreme anxiety, still excelling

Anxiety can result in physical symptoms like an upset stomach, dizziness and shortness of breath. If you suspect your child is anxious, be sure to first rule out other possible causes of the symptoms.



So, how much is too much?

"Normal" anxiety varies and changes with age. As kids get older, they'll experience less anxiety about being away from their parents, but more anxiety about social situations. Serious anxiety can affect sleep, appetite, concentration, and relationships. Your child may be experiencing too much anxiety if it:

- Happens frequently
- Feels very intense
- Stops them from doing fun and/or important things

Tips to help your child manage anxiety

- **Be aware of how you react to stress and manage your own feelings** – Your behaviour directly impacts your child
- **Take care of yourself and seek your own supports** – You can't be at your best when your stress levels are high
- **Plan ahead** – Calmly explain new situations in advance
- **Be an active listener and don't jump to fixing things** – Problem solving builds their confidence and self-esteem
- **Acknowledge and empathize with their feelings, and remind them of the facts** – e.g., "most times it goes better than you think": "We're here to support you through it"
- **Do not focus on outburst/anxious behavior** – Instead reward their brave behaviours
- **Build routines** – Feeling more organized helps lower stress
- **Teach your child some relaxation techniques** – Listening to music, playing with a pet, reading, writing, going for a walk, etc.

We offer workshops and courses for parents, caregivers, and kids on a variety of topics including child development, anxiety, stress, and difficult behaviour. Visit www.mchcommunityed.ca

If you suspect that your child is suffering from serious anxiety, talk to your family doctor about the options that are available.



Hamilton



Vaccinations

by **Dr. Ninh Tran**, *associate medical officer of health,
City of Hamilton*

Schools are an important setting to promote and protect the health of children. Vaccines protect children from many serious infections that can cause severe illness or even death. Also, many of these diseases can easily spread among children who are not vaccinated. Immunizations work by stimulating the body's immune system to protect itself against these infections. You will be immune without the risks of getting the disease.

Are your child's vaccine records up to date?

It's important to notify public health each time your child receives a vaccine. By law, children must have some vaccines before going to daycare or school in Canada. Students are required to be vaccinated against measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, polio, meningitis, whooping cough, and chickenpox. Public Health keeps track of student vaccine records to ensure the health of the community. In the event of increased disease risk in the community, we can ensure everyone is protected from diseases that are preventable by vaccine.

If your child requires an exemption for a medical (or another) reason contact the City of Hamilton Vaccine Program at 905.540.5250.

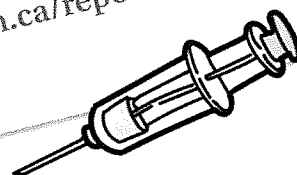
Grade 7 Student Vaccines

Each year, Public Health offers clinics in schools for all Grade 7 students to receive their Hepatitis B, HPV, and Meningococcal (meningitis) vaccines. These vaccines are free of charge and given by a public health nurse in the school.

Visit www.hamilton.ca/vaccines to see when Public Health will be visiting your child's school.



Did you know?
You can report and track
your child's vaccines online.
Visit the convenient and
easy to use portal,
www.hamilton.ca/reportingvaccines





How **germs** spread

by **Dr. Jeff Pernica**, *infectious disease specialist,*
McMaster Children's Hospital

Germs are tiny living things that exist everywhere in the world. They're on the inside and outside of our bodies, in the water, on animals, and in the soil. They can be both good and bad for us. When germs inside our bodies are not supposed to be there, we become ill.

Germs spread through the air in sneezes, coughs, or even breaths. They can also be passed from person to person by touching each other or common objects and surfaces. School is an ideal environment for germs to spread and multiply because there are lots of people together in the same place.

Since children's bodies aren't fully mature, they're not able to fight off germs like adults and can be more vulnerable to illnesses caused by germs. This is especially true for babies, who are at highest risk.

Follow these tips to prevent the spread of germs:

Always
sneeze or cough
into your
elbow

**Clean
and disinfect**
common surfaces
and objects,
including bathroom and
kitchen counters
and toys.

**Get all
recommended
vaccines,**
especially the flu
vaccine every
year.

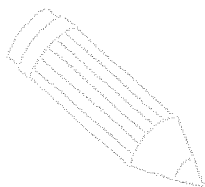
Avoid
touching your
eyes, nose and
mouth

Wash
often with
soap and water,
especially after
using the
toilet.

Stay home
if you're sick so
you don't bring
germs to work
or school.

GAMETIME!

Draw your own germs in
the magnifying glass.





Back to school for kids with **special needs**

by **Elizabeth McAllister**, *clinical coordinator,
School Support Program, McMaster Children's Hospital*

Change and transition can be hard for anyone, including children with special education needs. Re-establishing routines and building familiarity when it's time to go back to school helps all children succeed.

It is important for you to:

- Participate in any meetings with teachers and school staff
- Describe the specific strengths, needs, and interests of your child
- Share information about your child, including any reports or relevant medical information

Focus on opportunities

As the school year begins, take time to think about your child's unique abilities and needs. Help yourself plan ahead: try to anticipate opportunities for success, and areas where your child may face challenges.

Keep the lines of communication open! Teachers and school administrators are an important resource. Talk to them regularly about your child's progress, strengths, and requirements. If your child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), it may be helpful to review it at the start of the school year, and talk to your child's teacher about new or ongoing goals. If you have them, provide the school with any professional reports that can help them understand how your child learns best.

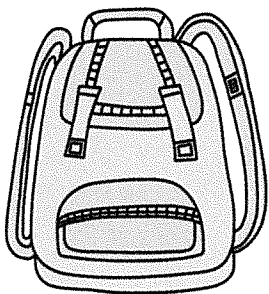
Discuss resources or accommodations that can support your child's learning needs. For example, some children may have a difficult time with verbal explanations but respond very well to visual ones.

Help your child play an active role

During the return to school, children, including those with special needs, may feel a loss of control, and that can be stressful. Providing them with choices can give them a sense of control. For example, they could choose their back-to-school materials or pick out a healthy snack for break time.

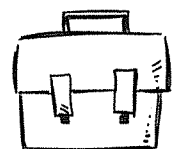
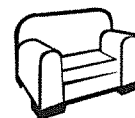
Throughout the school year, help them build a positive relationship with their school and classmates. Try:

- Reading stories about school
- Arranging playdates with classmates or other children
- Practicing skills for school at home like packing a backpack or walking to the bus stop



GAME TIME!

Circle the objects that
you should bring to
school with you in your
backpack

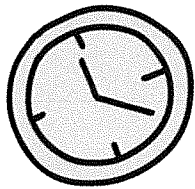




Medications and your child's school routine

by Tracy Akitt, *child life specialist,*
McMaster Children's Hospital

Taking medication is often an important part of treatment. For some children, that means taking a dose or two during the school day. Schools have an effective process for delivering medications to their students, but you as a parent can help too!



To set your child up for success:

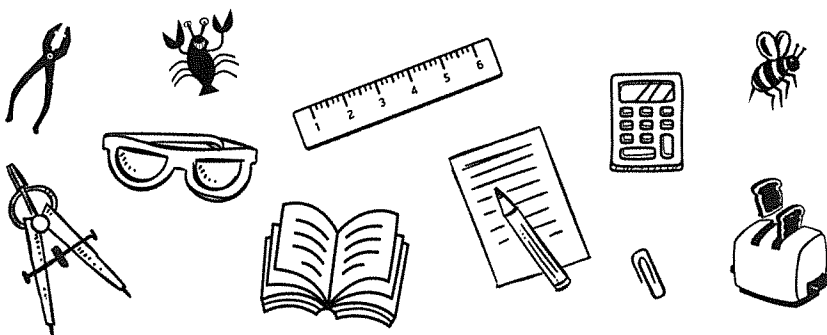
- Keep your child's home medication routine as similar as possible to their school medication routine.
- If your child has difficulty swallowing pills, try to teach them before school starts, or ensure that there is a liquid form of the medication at school.
- When possible, schedule doses so timing doesn't interfere with classes or activities.
- Always send the medication in the original prescription bottle and clearly identify any storage requirements, like refrigeration.
- Prepare your child to answer questions from peers. Offer them a script to use if needed. For example, if your child has type 1 diabetes, they could say; "I need to take insulin to help my body use my food for energy."

Does your child have trouble swallowing pills?

Try teaching them with this helpful method.

1. Find a candy that's the same size as the pill they need to swallow. Find three more candies that get gradually smaller in size.
2. Start with water. Have them take a small sip and swallow it without letting the water fill their cheeks.
3. Place your smallest candy on their tongue, have them take a sip of water and swallow with the same technique.
4. Repeat with each larger candy until they have mastered them. Finally, try with the largest candy.

Visit this website for a video on how to use this method with your child:
www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/share/swallow-pills/.



Talk to your child's teacher or principal if you have questions about medication delivery at school.

Vision and hearing health

by **Carrie Peddle**, audiologist, McMaster Children's Hospital and
Teresa Warren, orthoptist, McMaster Children's Hospital

Trouble hearing or seeing can have a big effect on kids, especially on school performance. Sometimes these problems are mistaken for learning disabilities or behavioural issues. That's why it's important to identify them early.

Signs of difficulty hearing include:

- Speech or language delays
- Difficulty understanding directions, zoning out or "ignoring" conversation
- Getting easily frustrated and acting out
- Being exhausted from spending too much energy trying to hear and understand

Keeping hearing healthy: consider giving your child ear muffs or ear plugs to wear during concerts or loud events. Avoid headphones, which make it difficult to monitor the volume your child is being exposed to.

Pay attention for these signs and talk to your family doctor if you think hearing might be a cause. Look out for ear infections as well. They are common in kids, and can block or muffle sound.

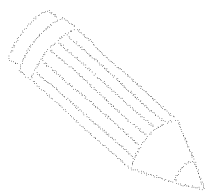
Signs of difficulty seeing include:

- Squinting often or tilting their head
- Wanting to sit closer to "see better"
- Complaining of headaches or tired eyes
- Difficulty performing in school, such as seeing the lesson and reading instructions

If you suspect a vision problem, talk to your family doctor as soon as possible. Kids should have their eyes checked before starting school (age 3) and then once a year, even if they see normally.

Keeping vision healthy: Protect your child's eyes from sunlight by using sunglasses or a brimmed hat. Also limit screen time and schedule frequent breaks.

Children up to age 19 can get their eyes checked for free with an Ontario Health Card.



GAME TIME!

Can you connect the dots?





Walking and wheeling to school

by **Dr. Karen Bailey**, *pediatric surgeon, McMaster Children's Hospital*

Physical activity helps to keep our kids healthy. It plays an important role in heart health, and bone and muscle growth. It also helps kids maintain a healthy body weight.

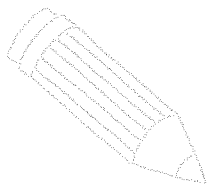
What many people don't realize is that regular daily physical activity also supports healthy brain development. It helps children focus in school, which makes it easier to learn new things. It also helps children manage stress and increases their self-esteem.

The official Canadian guidelines recommend children age five to 17 get at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day. Sadly, only 35 per cent of kids are meeting this recommendation, which means we need to do a better job of helping our kids get active.

Walking or wheeling to and from school is a great form of physical activity when steps are taken to keep our kids safe!

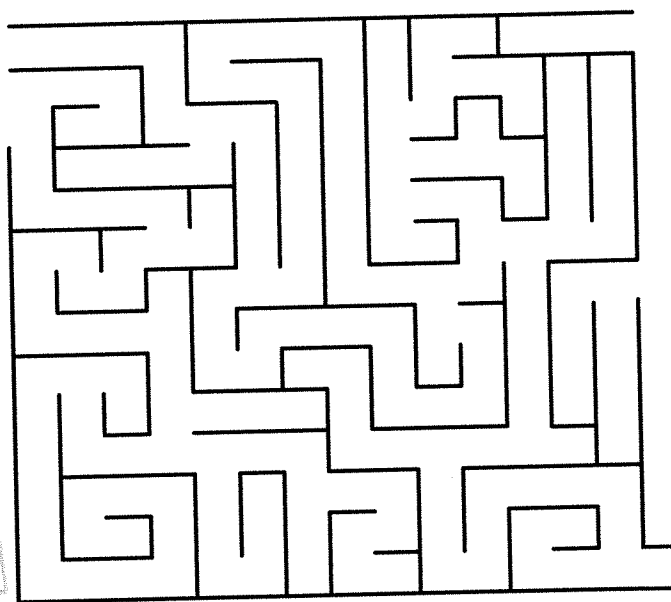
Active school travel safety tips

- Plan and practice your child's travel route with them ahead of time
- Make sure your child wears a properly fitted helmet and closed toe shoes when biking
- Put away electronic devices and headphones
- Teach your child how to read and obey traffic signs
- Ensure that your child knows to stop and look before crossing an intersection
- Only cross roads and railway tracks at designated crossings
- Ensure your child is visible
 - Wear bright colours or reflective gear
 - Avoid shortcuts around parked cars



GAME TIME!

Find the route to school.



The City of Hamilton's Active & Sustainable School Travel initiative is working with school boards to make our neighbourhoods safer for students to walk and wheel to school. For more information visit smartcommute.ca/hamilton/schools