

# The Health Unit's Guide to a Healthy KINDERGARTENER

Starting school is a very exciting step. With encouragement and understanding, the transition to this new stage in life will be a fulfilling adventure. When children are well nourished, get 10-12 hours of sleep per night, are physically active and live in a smoke-free home they are better able to learn and excel in their day-to-day activities. The Thunder Bay District Health Unit website at [tbdhu.com](http://tbdhu.com) has lots of information that will help to make your child's start to school a healthy and rewarding time. You can also call the TBDHU at 807-625-5900 to speak to a staff member.



**Eat Healthy:** Involve your kids in making their lunches and this may increase the chance they will eat them and let you see their likes and dislikes.

- Peanut free lunches and snacks: <https://www.tbdhu.com/sites/default/files/files/resource/2019-05/Peanut%20Free%20Lunches%20Snacks.pdf>
- Balanced Day Lunch Ideas: <https://www.tbdhu.com/resource/balanced-school-day-lunches>
- Canada Food Guide: <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>



**Be Active:** Unstructured play time together is a wonderful way to increase physical activity and spend quality time with your child. Learn more about physical literacy at: <https://www.tbdhu.com/physlit>

- Active Bingo Card: <https://www.tbdhu.com/resource/kindergarten-active-bingo-ca>



**Get Enough Sleep:** Sleep is an essential part of child development. Generally, kids at age four need a total of about 10 to 12 hours of sleep each night. <https://www.tbdhu.com/health-topics/physical-activity/sleep>



**Encourage Good Handwashing/Sneezing/Coughing Practices:** Handwashing when done correctly, is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of germs that can cause illness. Encourage children to sneeze and cough into their sleeve and not on their hands.

- Don't forget to wash your hands: <https://www.tbdhu.com/sites/default/files/files/resource/2016-02/Hand%20washing-Covering%20Coughs%20%26%20Sneezes.pdf>
- Hand Hygiene Activity Booklet: <https://www.tbdhu.com/sites/default/files/files/basic/2020-09/2018Hand%20Hygiene%20Activity%20Book%20JK-SK.pdf>
- Handwashing for young children: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCBoDZrTncg>



**Submit Your Child's Immunization Record:** TBDHU needs your child's immunization records before they start school so please submit them through ICON, Ontario's secure online record system. This information is requested under Ontario's Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) which requires children attending school in Ontario be immunized against specific diseases unless they have a valid exemption. If you do not have an ICON account and would like to register, please call 625-5900, toll free at 1-888-294-6630 or email [icon@tbdhu.com](mailto:icon@tbdhu.com).

- For more information on ICON: <https://www.tbdhu.com/immunizations>



**Breathe Clean Air:** A smoke-free environment is essential for keeping your children healthy. Smoking in the home increases your children's risk of getting colds, ear infections, bronchitis, asthma and pneumonia. <https://www.tbdhu.com/health-topics/smoking-vaping-tobacco>



**Encourage smiles and Healthy Teeth:** Oral hygiene or taking care of your mouth is an important part of your child's daily routine. <https://www.tbdhu.com/health-topics/oral-health>



**Choose a safe and environmentally-friendly way to get to school:** Walking to school increases physical activity and helps to lesson traffic congestion at the school, which improves safety conditions for children. <https://www.tbdhu.com/activeschooltravel>



**Monitor your Child's Visual Health:** Proper vision is important for a child's movement and coordination, independence, play and learning. Children and youth (0 - 19 years old) are eligible for a free exam by an eye doctor every 12 months with an Ontario health card. School-based vision screening through the TBDHU is offered in Senior Kindergarten and does not replace a comprehensive exam by an eye doctor as it only looks only for signs of potential vision problems.

For more information on children's visual health:

- <https://www.tbdhu.com/health-topics/vision/healthy-eyes-for-life>

Children born in 2016 and in junior kindergarten are eligible for one free pair of eye glasses through the Eye See...Eye Learn Program.

- [www.optom.on.ca](http://www.optom.on.ca)



**Monitor your Child's Oral (Dental) Health:** Good oral health is important for good overall health. TBDHU offers a variety of programs and services to help children and youth 17 and under achieve a healthy mouth.

Healthy Smiles Ontario is a government-funded dental program that provides free preventive, routine, and emergency dental services for children and youth 17 years old and under from low-income households without dental health insurance coverage.

- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/get-dental-care>
- call 625-5900 (toll-free at 1-888-294-6630)

Free dental hygienist services (education, cleanings, fluoride and sealant applications) are available for eligible children and youth 17 and under at TBDHU's onsite clinic.

- <https://www.tbdhu.com/health-topics/oral-health/dental-clinic>