



## School Entry Immunizations

Starting kindergarten? This is a great time to check immunizations.

School entry vaccines recommended at ages 4-6 include:

- **Tdap-IPV** protects against tetanus, diphtheria, whooping cough (pertussis) & polio
- **MMRV** protects against measles, mumps, rubella & chickenpox (varicella)

Contact your [local health unit](#) or health provider to book an appointment. You can check immunization records at [healthgateway.gov.bc.ca](http://healthgateway.gov.bc.ca) or upload records at [immunizationrecord.gov.bc.ca](http://immunizationrecord.gov.bc.ca).



[Vaccine Schedule \(0-18 years\)](#)

## Handwashing

Help stop the spread of germs. Teach children to wash hands:

- **Wet hands**
- **Add soap and scrub for 20 seconds**
- **Rinse hands**
- **Dry hands with a clean paper towel**

TIP: Sing "Happy Birthday" twice!



Wash hands often, especially before and after eating, and after using the bathroom, playing outside, touching pets and blowing their nose.

## Helping your Child with Kindergarten Drop-off Separation Anxiety

- Take care of the basics: sleep, nutrition, exercise
- Have adventures around the school a week before
- Understand their fears and talk about ways to cope
- Talk about fun things at school
- "Children see, children do" - model confidence



[Scan for more tips](#)

## Nutrition

- Eating breakfast provides energy to learn & play
- Offer a variety of options from the three [food groups](#) at mealtime and include culture and traditions important to your family
- When thirsty drink plain water
- Serve whole fruit instead of fruit juice
- Sit together and share meals - focus on connecting
- Talk about foods without judgment to [nurture confidence](#)

MEALTIME ROLES	
Caregiver :	<b>WHAT</b> 
School:	<b>WHEN</b>  <b>WHERE</b> 
Student:	<b>HOW MUCH</b>  



[Breakfast & Snack Ideas](#)



[Lunches to Go](#)

For more info: [Public Health Nutrition](#) | [Island Health](#)

## Sleep

Sleep is important for young minds and bodies to develop and function properly and to reduce risk of injury.

A regular bedtime routine is helpful and may include: turning off devices, bath, snack, brushing teeth, a goodnight story and time for a cuddle.

For more tips: [kelymentalhealth.ca/sleeping-well](http://kelymentalhealth.ca/sleeping-well)

**9-11 hours per night**

*Sleep needed by children 5-6 years old*

# Welcome to Kindergarten: Health Tips

A RESOURCE FOR PARENTS / CAREGIVERS

## Dental Health



**Brush to prevent cavities:** Help your child brush with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste 2x per day. Floss teeth daily.

**Dental visits:** Take your child to see a dentist at least once a year to have their teeth checked. Looking for a dentist? Visit [bcdental.org](http://bcdental.org).

**Play safe:** The B.C. Dental Association suggests wearing mouth guards for certain sports to prevent tooth damage and jaw injuries.

## Vision

Healthy eyes and good vision are an important part of your child's development.

- B.C. Doctors of Optometry suggest that children have their vision checked before starting kindergarten AND yearly exams while in school
- Childhood eye exams are covered by the B.C. Medical Service Plan (MSP), however some optometrists may charge an extra fee

To find a local optometrist: call 1-888-393-2226 or visit [bc.doctorsofptometry.ca](http://bc.doctorsofptometry.ca)

## Social & Emotional Development

Social and emotional learning (SEL) can take place at school, in community and even at home.



- Help your child name and manage big feelings by talking about your own emotions and practicing different ways to self-regulate
- Model kindness, empathy, and gratitude
- Encourage your child to embrace and celebrate their cultural and gender identities
- Try the school's SEL language & resources at home, if it fits with your family's values & cultures

For more info, visit [keltymentalhealth.ca/blog/social-and-emotional-learning-tips-families](http://keltymentalhealth.ca/blog/social-and-emotional-learning-tips-families)

## Speech & Language

Playing games, reading, talking and singing with young children builds closeness and helps develop their language skills, which sets them up for success in school.

If you have concerns about your child's speech / language development, please discuss with your school about having your child checked.



## Hearing

Hearing plays an important role in your child's ability to learn, talk and relate to others. Hearing checks are offered in Kindergarten.

### Your child's hearing should be checked if they:

- Use speech that other people can't understand
- Ask you to repeat things
- Have trouble hearing in noisy spaces
- Need to be close to hear you

If you have concerns about your child's hearing, caregivers may self-refer their child to Island Health's [Hearing Program](#).

## Financial Support is Available

[Healthy Kids Program](#) (HKP) assists families who have been approved for MSP supplementary benefits. HKP provides coverage for basic dental care, optical (eye) care and hearing support for children. For more info, call 1-866-866-0800.

Extra dental financial support may also be available from the [Canadian Dental Care Plan](#) for eligible families.

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## Active Play

Support children to get at least one hour of active play every day – more is better!



[Active for Life](#)

### Tips to promote activity:

- Do active things together as a family like taking a walk or spending time in nature
- Limit screen time to less than two hours a day

## Financial Support for Sports Activities

Sometimes, families need financial help to get their kids into a sport or physical activity. Grants are available through: [KidSportBC](#) | [RISE](#) | [Jumpstart](#)

## Safety on the Road

### Keep your children safe in the car:

- It is the law in B.C. that children must ride in a child car seat and then booster seat until they are 145 cm (4'9") or 9 years old
- The seat must be used as per the manufacturer
- Correctly using child car seats can reduce the risk of death by 71% and serious injury by 67%

Child car seat safety information is available online:

[ICBC](#) | [BCAA](#) | [Transport Canada](#)

### Teach your child to be a safe pedestrian:

When using a crosswalk do not assume vehicles will stop



- **Look left, right & listen:** Check every lane of traffic before and as you cross the road - Is it clear? Have cars fully stopped?
- Check for drivers turning left or right through the crosswalk
- Wear bright, reflective clothes and use lights after dark
- Be a role model to your child

For more pedestrian safety tips: [ICBC](#) | [Parachute](#)

## Adventurous Play

Unstructured play (child-led free play) is crucial for child development, health, resilience and problem-solving skills.

### Keep your child “as safe as necessary”

- Give your child freedom to play and explore based on their age & abilities
- Be ready to step in when a child’s play is becoming a serious danger to themselves or others
- Use supportive words to encourage your child to confidently assess and manage challenges in their play



**Unstructured play does not mean ignoring evidence-based safety measures**, such as helmets and life jackets.



Bike helmets reduce the risk of serious head injury by 60%. In B.C., everyone who rides a bike must wear a helmet. Helmets are also a good idea for many sports and recreation activities.

[parachute.ca/en/injury-topic/helmets/](https://parachute.ca/en/injury-topic/helmets/)

### For playground safety tips, visit:

[healthlinkbc.ca/healthwise/playground-safety](https://healthlinkbc.ca/healthwise/playground-safety)

## Reduce Smoke and Vapour Exposure

Children who are exposed to smoke or vapour may be at increased risk of developing health problems.

### Reduce the risk of exposure to children by:

- Reducing how often you smoke/vape
- Create a smoke- and vape-free home and vehicle
- Smoke/vape outdoors away from open windows, doorways or intakes
- Wash your hands and change into a “smoke-free” shirt after smoking or vaping to reduce the transfer of chemicals to your child

Need help to reduce or quit?

[QuitNow.ca](https://quitnow.ca) | [TalkTobacco.ca](https://talktobacco.ca)

# Welcome to Kindergarten: Health Tips

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## Sick child: when to stay at home?



To prevent the spread of illness, students should not come to school if they are unwell and unable to participate fully in routine activities OR as advised by a health provider.

### Children can attend school if:

- Symptoms have improved
- They feel well enough to return to regular activities
- Health provider has not advised they stay home for longer

If you are concerned about your child's symptoms, connect with your health care provider or call 8-1-1.

For more info on specific illnesses: [A Quick Guide to Common Childhood Diseases](#)



## Head Lice



The facts:

- Head lice are common
- Anyone who has hair can get lice
- Head lice do not spread any diseases
- Head lice are transmitted by direct head-to-head contact

### Recommendations for caregivers:

- Learn the wet combing method to check for and get rid of head lice
- Conduct weekly wet combing checks
- Treat family members with live lice



For more info: [healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/head-lice](https://healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/head-lice) or contact your local health unit.



If you have any feedback regarding this resource, please feel free to contact [healthyschools@islandhealth.ca](mailto:healthyschools@islandhealth.ca).

## Dear Parents & Caregivers,



Getting your child ready for kindergarten and managing other responsibilities can be stressful at times. We invite you to be kind to yourself.

Visit the [Kelty Centre](#) to explore mindful parenting practices. Taking care of your wellbeing can benefit you & your family.



## Right Care, Right Place

Services are available to help manage your family's health depending on the nature of the health need. Visit [islandhealth.ca/find-care](https://islandhealth.ca/find-care).

If you don't have a family doctor/nurse practitioner, register on [healthlinkbc.ca/health-connect-registry](https://healthlinkbc.ca/health-connect-registry).

Visit [HealthLinkBC.ca](https://HealthLinkBC.ca) or call 8-1-1 for health info (24/7) and to be connected with a registered nurse, registered dietitian, exercise professional or pharmacist.

## Local Public Health Units

To find the health unit locations closest to you, please visit:

[islandhealth.ca/our-locations/health-unit-locations](https://islandhealth.ca/our-locations/health-unit-locations)

Questions?  
Speak with a Public Health Nurse



### ADDITIONAL CLINICAL RESOURCES:

#### Nursing Support Services (NSS)

For assisting children with medical complexities/health needs, referrals to [NSS](#) are required by a B.C.-licensed physician or nurse practitioner

#### Child & Youth Mental Health

- MCFD [Child & Youth Mental Health Intake Clinics](#)
- For referrals/info- [Island Health Intake](#) or 250-519-6720