



SPRING 2012

HALDIMAND-NORFOLK HEALTH UNIT

# HEALTHY SCHOOLS



## Building Communities: One Child at a Time

I'm sure you've all heard the African proverb 'it takes a village to raise a child', which simply indicates the role the wider community has in supporting children and young people. All of us, especially younger people, need to connect with the wider community to feel a sense of belonging. Even at school, students who don't feel connected to their school environment or their community may show signs of loneliness, low self-esteem, intolerance of others, lack of motivation, or even negative behaviours, which can all affect child development.

Children who are able to identify adults in the community who know and care about them tend to experience a greater sense of personal well-being that can help them face challenges in other aspects of their

lives. In neighbourhoods where children and youth feel safe, valued, and have the opportunity to become meaningfully involved, the community thrives and this is a measure of a healthy community.

### What can you do to promote healthy and strong children?

- Develop caring friendships and social supports
- Support participation in extracurricular activities
- Recognise children and youth's achievements in school
- Promote acceptance of all groups, regardless of race, gender, ability, etc.

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- Encourage participation in community activities (e.g. volunteering)

The connections we have to those around us – family, friends, neighbours, etc. – influence how well we cope when things become difficult and improve our quality of life.

*Submitted by Torshie Sai, BSc, MPH, Health Promoter*

# Mental health & children



It is estimated that 1 in 5 kids under the age of 19 experiences a mental, behavioural or emotional issue severe enough to interfere with their everyday life. Early detection and treatment are key to better outcomes later in life. Parents are usually the first to notice changes in their children, so it is important to know what to look for if you suspect that your child may have a mental health issue.

The first step is to talk to your kids in an open and honest manner. You may try having a trusted adult, such as a coach or teacher, talk to them. Younger children (and some older children and adolescents) may not know how to talk about how they are feeling. The following may be a few signs to watch for:

- A sudden or marked drop in school performance; or failing grades despite trying very hard
- Severe worry or anxiety
- Avoiding activities they used to participate in (such as going to school)
- Persistent nightmares
- Persistent aggression or disobedience (longer than 6 months)
- Hyperactivity; constant fidgeting and movement

- Frequent physical complaints (such as stomach aches or headaches) with no cause
- Threats to run away
- Strange thoughts, beliefs, feelings, or unusual behaviour
- Marked changes in sleeping or eating habits

In adolescents and teenagers, you may also see:

- Sexual acting out
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Thoughts of self-harm or harming others
- Self-injury or self-destructive behaviour
- Skipping school, stealing or vandalism

It is important to remember that some of these behaviours may be seen normally in children and youth. They may be signs of a mental health issue if they are intense, persist over a long period of time, are inappropriate for the child's age, and if they interfere with the child's everyday life.

The Grand Erie District School Board and Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Boards have recently launched the Child and Youth Mental Health Strategy. This will help teachers more easily identify mental health behaviours in students, develop a plan to help these children

be successful in school, and know what resources are available to help students and their families. Talk to your school to learn more if you are concerned about your child. You can also see your health-care provider; call CONTACT Haldimand-Norfolk at 1-800-265-8087 ext. 350 or 519-587-2441 ext. 350, or call the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit at 519-426-6170 or 905-318-6623.

Children's Mental Health Ontario, 2011

Submitted by Leila Bulosan, RN, BScN, Family Health Team.

## Thank you Haldimand-Norfolk Parents!

On behalf of the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit, and all of the community partners involved, we would like to thank those of you who completed the Parenting Needs Assessment Survey. This survey was conducted to help recognize the needs of parents in Haldimand and Norfolk counties. We are always striving to better serve the parents in our community and really appreciate everyone who took the time to contribute to this valuable initiative. We are looking forward to reviewing your input and will be sharing our findings with the community in the fall 2012.





# Will Your Child Be Active for Life?

The benefits of physical activity are so important. Physical activity keeps kids healthy and helps them grow. Physical activity gives them energy, and builds strong muscles, bones, heart and lungs. Active play with their friends teaches social skills and how to solve problems.

Physical activity helps kids focus at school and improves creativity. Physical activity is also good for their mental health; it reduces anxiety and depression, it helps deal with stress and helps kids feel good about themselves.

## Physical literacy... what is it?

Children need to be taught how to read and write and they get better at it the more they practice. They also need to be taught how to walk, run, skip, jump, kick, catch and throw. These basic movement skills also get easier with practice. As children gain confidence in these skills, they then develop basic sport skills. Trying a lot of different sports helps to develop a wide range of skills and allows a child to

read what is going on around them in an activity and then react appropriately to the situation. This is physical literacy.

## Active for Life!

Developing these basic skills at an early age can set the stage for an active life. Consider your own lifestyle. Are you active? What activities or sports do you enjoy? If you aren't active, chances are you didn't learn the basic skills as a child and now you don't enjoy playing sports.

This is why it's so important to make sure your children learn these skills when they are young. There's a really great website: [www.activeforlife.ca](http://www.activeforlife.ca) that shows you all the basic movement skills you need to play a variety of sports.

Check out the website and then go play with your kids. Kick, run, skip and throw. Keep it fun and it'll keep them moving and active for life!

Submitted by: Michele Crowley, BPE, BSCH, Physical Activity Promoter

## Body Image

It is important to remember that there is no ideal body weight. A body weight that is right for you is one that allows you to feel strong and energetic and lets you lead a healthy life.

A person with a positive body image:

- Feels comfortable and confident in their body
- Can appreciate their strengths and weaknesses
- Relaxes and enjoys the unique characteristics they have to offer
- Is critical of messages that focus on the "ideal" body
- Understands that one's physical appearance says little about one's character and value as a person
- Refuses to spend unreasonable amounts of time and energy worrying about weight, food and calories

A poor body image can go hand in hand with low self-esteem. Self-esteem is the confidence or satisfaction that you feel about yourself that comes from inside you. Having a negative view of yourself can affect your behaviour in many unhelpful ways such as:

- Avoiding social situations
- Not speaking your mind
- Not feeling confident to express your uniqueness through styles of clothing or hair
- Avoiding activities and/or sports that expose your body

## Believe in yourself

- Remember that you are more than your appearance
- Identify your strengths and abilities and build on them
- Take care of your body, mind and spirit
- Avoid self-critical thoughts by turning them into positive thoughts
- Be yourself when you are choosing clothes and accessories-people will admire you for expressing the real you
- Accept compliments without debating the issue or dismissing the comment-just say "Thank-you"

Adapted from "Every Body is Different" produced by the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit. Submitted by Angela Swick, BScN, RN, Family Health Team.

## Reporting Your Child's Immunizations to the Health Unit

According to the "Day Nurseries Act" and "The Immunization of School Pupils Act" children attending day care or school in Ontario must be vaccinated and up-to-date with their vaccinations against six vaccine preventable diseases. These diseases are diphtheria, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps and rubella. It is important to have your child's immunizations up to date before he/she starts day care or preschool. It is equally important to report the vaccines your child has received from their doctor or health care provider to the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit (HNHU).

When a child starts kindergarten, parents receive an Immunization Questionnaire. The completed form provides the HNHU with the status of immunized children. If there is an outbreak, unimmunized children will be excluded from school to protect them from exposure to the disease.

Schools do not share immunization information with the HNHU due to privacy matters. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure the record is provided to the HNHU. When your child goes to university or college an immunization record may be required. If your doctor retires or moves away you may request a copy of your child's immunization record from the HNHU.

To report your child's immunizations to the HNHU, you may call a member of the Vaccine Preventable Disease Program at 905-318-6623 or 519-426-6170. You may drop off the record in person at one of our office locations or report it online at [www.hnhu.org](http://www.hnhu.org), click on the "Online Immunization Reporting" button and follow the instructions.

It only takes a minute to submit this information to the HNHU and know that it is safe and available if you ever require an immunization record for your child.

*Submitted by: Rose Huyge PHN, CCHN(C) Vaccine Preventable Disease Program.*

**Water Sports Safety**  
Swimming skills alone aren't always enough to save a life – but wearing a life jacket can. Swimming skills combined with safety knowledge **SAVES LIVES!**



## Quinoa greek salad



### BONUS

This recipe includes all four of the food groups which means it is a complete, balanced meal and can be served as is for lunch or supper.

Quinoa – pronounced "keen-wah" is an ancient grain packed with protein, fibre and lots of vitamins and minerals. It cooks up fast and is a great substitute for rice or potatoes in any dish. It can be served warm or cold and is great for lunches. Find it at your local grocery store in the grains, organic or bulk section. Don't have quinoa on hand? You can use rice or pasta instead.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup quinoa, rinsed
- 2 cups low sodium vegetable broth
- 1 can lentils, drained and rinsed
- 1 yellow, red or green bell pepper, diced
- ½ English cucumber, diced
- 1 tomato, diced
- ½ cup crumbled light feta cheese
- ½ cup sliced black olives (*not pits*)
- 2-3 tbsp Greek salad dressing (*oil & vinegar based, not creamy*)

### DIRECTIONS

**(Tip:** This dish can be made up to 2 days ahead and stored covered in the refrigerator)

1. In saucepan, bring quinoa and broth to a boil. Reduce heat to a gentle simmer; cover and cook for about 15 minutes or until broth is absorbed and quinoa is soft. Let stand covered for 5 minutes.
2. In a large bowl, combine lentils, pepper, cucumber, tomatoes, olives and feta.
3. Fluff quinoa with fork and add to bowl. Drizzle with salad dressing and toss well to mix.

*Preparation Time: 15 minutes*

*Cook Time: 15 minutes. Makes 8 cups or 2 L.  
Enough for eight 1 cup (250 mL) servings*



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