

School Health Matters

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Fall 2014

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Peterborough County-City
HEALTH UNIT
...because health matters!

Electronic version available at: www.pcchu.ca

October is Walk to School Month!

Don't forget to encourage your students to walk or bike to school on:

International Walk to School Day
Wednesday, October 8, 2014

Walk to School Week
October 6 - 10, 2014
Or the full month of October!

Active transportation is a terrific way for kids to be physically active before and after school. International Walk to School Day is an annual global event where schools from around the world participate in this celebration of active living and alternative transportation.

Check out www.saferoutestoschool.ca/international-walk-school-daymonth to register your school or access some great resources such as the IWALK Flyer, IWALK Posters, and Activity Ideas that are linked to the Ontario curriculum.

Consider setting up a class or school-wide challenge to recognize the students that walk to and from school the most number of times that week or month. Also, consider signing your school up for **Car-Free School Days** to extend the active transportation challenge through the school year.



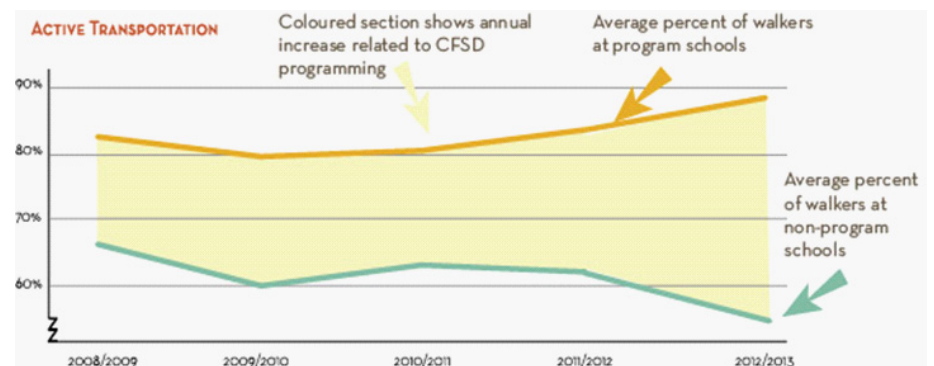
Car-Free School Days Boost Active Travel

Local principals and teachers are learning that a little encouragement goes a long way. At schools participating in the Car-Free School Days Challenge, school travel routines are beginning to shift, with walking and biking becoming the norm.

The Car-Free School Days Challenge encourages families to walk, bike and bus to school on the first Wednesday of every month. Schools promote the challenge and then record how students travel to school on challenge days. Classes compete against one another for the Golden Shoe Award each month, and schools compete to become the most active school and win great prizes.

The challenge has been running for over 5 years, and achieved some impressive results in that time. The graph below shows the direct impact of the challenge, with over 20% more students using their designated travel mode at Car-Free School Days schools. Even more encouraging is that these changes are not only observed on the first Wednesday of each month, but also on non-challenge days!

There are many personal and environmental benefits to this shift in school travel routines. Studies show that students who walk or bike to school are less stressed and more focused throughout the school day. Many families find that an active commute to school is an easy way to build physical activity into the day. As well, decreased vehicle congestion around the school creates a safer environment and improved local air quality. Local statistics show that many families still choose to drive to school: 27% of morning car trips in Peterborough are school-based. If you'd like to encourage a shift to active transportation in your school community, please contact Lindsay Stroud 705-745-3238 or lindsay.stroud@greenup.on.ca to register your school for Car-Free School Days this year.



The Pan and Parapan Am Games Are Coming!

The Pan and Parapan Am Games are coming up in July and August 2015 in Toronto and the GTA.

In anticipation for this exciting set of events, we encourage you to consider incorporating Pan Am themes into physical education class activities, DPA and intramurals. The games include a wide variety of sports that hopefully every student can identify at least one as something they really enjoy. These include soccer, baseball, gymnastics, swimming, cycling, karate and bowling.

Check out Opeha's site <http://Ontario.ca/PPAkids> for some great and inclusive activity ideas. A short video about Pan/Parapan Am Kids' Programs can also be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWp2L6i79Eg#t=17

All Pan Am sport listings can be found at www.toronto2015.org/sport



Pedal Power for Schools

Pedal Power is an in-school cycling skills course for Grade 5 students. Through on-bike drills led by qualified instructors, students learn how to be prepared, in control, aware and predictable on bicycles.



Cycling as a life skill; early training will help produce more confident, safe, and courteous cyclists. Pedal Power, one of the first in-school cycling education programs in Ontario, is a partnership between BIKE and GreenUP. In just two years, the partnership has worked with teachers and students at King George, RF Downey, St. John, Monsignor O'Donoghue and St. Paul (Lakefield) schools to pilot and deliver Pedal Power. The course consists of five 75-minute lessons focusing on road safety and bicycle handling skills. Lessons take place in the schoolyard as well as on neighbourhood roads and trails whenever possible. With the help of community and funding partners, extra bikes and helmets can be provided to ensure everyone can participate.

Pedal Power aims to engage youth with their community and their environment. As they ride, they become more connected to the streets, sidewalks, trails and parks, connected to their neighborhoods and school communities. Supporting youth to cycle helps students build exercise into their daily routine, and to take environmental action by choosing a green transportation alternative. Students leave Pedal Power with a sense of pride and confidence.

To find out how to bring Pedal Power or other cycling education programs to your school, please contact Lindsay Stroud, Transportation Program Coordinator at 705-745-3238 or lindsay.stroud@greenup.on.ca.

Youth Leadership Workshops Hit The Road

The successful intramural/DPA youth leadership development workshop that the Health Unit has held in the past is ready to hit the road in a new format!

The same great content from the annual workshop has been developed into three modules that can be presented at your school. Workshops will be presented by Health Unit staff and Trent University Nursing students on placement with us. The three modules are:

- Leadership development
- Low organizational games and activities
- Putting it together in a plan

We've changed the format to make the leadership workshop more accessible to schools. You choose the date and time, find a space and recruit students to attend; we'll do the rest! We also provide student leaders and the teacher champion with great resources to keep.

For more information, or to book workshops for your school please contact Anne Gallant, School Health Liaison, 705-743-1000 ext. 314 or email agallant@pcchu.ca.

Changes to the Required Immunizations for School Attendance

Effective September 2014, there are changes to the Immunization of School Pupils Act. What does this mean for school-aged children?

- Children need to have proof of immunization against meningococcal disease, whooping cough and chickenpox to attend school. This is in addition to existing requirements for proof of immunization for diphtheria, polio, tetanus, measles, mumps, and rubella.
- The number of shots (doses) required for tetanus, diphtheria, polio and mumps has also been updated.
- Children who are not fully immunized may not be allowed to attend school.
- Parents are encouraged to check with their healthcare provider or the Peterborough County-City Health Unit, to ensure their children have all of the required vaccines to attend school.
- It is the responsibility of parents to report their child's updated immunization records to the Health Unit. This helps to avoid suspensions.
- Parents can download a free app to keep track of vaccination records, receive appointment reminders and get alerts about local outbreaks @ www.immunize.ca

For further information, contact the Peterborough County-City Health Unit at 705-743-1000, or visit www.pcchu.ca.



Teaching and the Mental Health Concerns that Arise

Dear "Health Matters",

I am a Grade 8 teacher and I have some questions that I'm hoping you can address. Every year I have students in my class with mental health concerns, some have actual diagnoses and some do not. I have to admit, I feel ill-equipped for working with some of these students. I'm wondering if you could provide me with some useful resources and "good" links to websites for teachers working with students who have mental health concerns?

Sincerely,

Mr. Teacher

Response

Dear "Mr. Teacher",

First of all, thank you for sharing and for raising your questions. I bet there are many school teachers who share your concerns. A positive classroom environment where all members feel welcomed, safe, accepted, and included IS IMPORTANT. Teachers are in a fundamental position to promote positive behaviours and interactions. Demonstrating respect, fairness, and kindness to one another is key.

Approximately one in five children in Ontario will struggle with mental health issues. The Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario (2010) document outlines some of the common challenges that students with mental illness may face:

- **Screening out environmental stimuli** – an inability to block out sounds, sights, or odours that interfere with focusing on tasks.
- **Sustaining concentration** – restlessness, shortened attention span, distractibility, difficulty remembering oral directions.
- **Maintaining stamina** - limited energy, leading to difficulty in putting in a full day at school and/or difficulty in combating drowsiness caused by medications.
- **Handling time pressures and multiple tasks** – difficulty managing assignments, meeting deadlines, and prioritizing tasks.
- **Interacting with others** – difficulty getting along, fitting in, chatting with fellow students, and reading social cues.
- **Responding to negative feedback** – low self-esteem, leading to difficulty in understanding and interpreting criticism and/or poor grades, and difficulty knowing what to do to improve or how to initiate changes.
- **Responding to change** – difficulty coping with unexpected changes in coursework, such as changes in assignments, due dates, or instructors.

Recognizing that not all students who demonstrate these behaviours suffer from a mental illness, trust your good judgement, be mindful, and never be afraid to reach out. A team approach involving parents, other teachers, school support staff and health professionals is the best option in providing optimal assistance for some students.

The Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario (2010) document also outlines some strategies you can use in your teaching practice:

- taking steps to inform yourself about mental illness;
- be approachable and supportive;
- make the time to listen to your students, to build their trust, and to try to understand their needs;
- reach out and connect with parents to build relationships and to learn more about the students' home life;
- work with both students and parents to determine plans together;
- encourage peer support and friendships; and
- encourage and model practices that support wellness and a balanced life.

Don't forget about caring for yourself! In any caring profession, burnout is always a possibility. This is known as compassion fatigue. Have a look at this resource for some suggestions on how to find the balance: www.cca-ace.ca/education-canada/article/caring-without-tiring

Thank you, to you and to all teachers for the fabulous work you do for students and the community!

Sincerely,

"Public Health Nurse"

Check Out These Useful Mental Health Resources:

The Hinks-Dellcrest Centre: The ABCs of Mental Health, Teacher Resource. www.hincksdellcrest.org/ABC/Teacher-Resource/Mental-Health-for-All-Children-and-Youth.aspx

Supporting Minds: And Educator's Guide to Promoting Students' Mental Health and Well-Being. www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/SupportingMinds.pdf

Talking About Mental Illness: Teacher's Resource. www.camh.ca/en/education/teachers_school_programs/resources_for_teachers_and_schools/talking_about_mental_illness/Pages/tami_teachersresource.aspx

Canadian Psychiatric Research Foundation. When Something's Wrong – Strategies For Teachers. www.kidsmentalhealth.ca/documents/res-cprf-teachers-2007.pdf

Nutrition Matters

FOOD FOR KIDS



Breakfast programs for ALL:

Ever raised an eyebrow when a student, who you know can afford to eat well, reaches for yet another helping from the snack bin? It's OK! School Nutrition Programs are meant for everyone; they allow all children to enjoy healthy food, free from stigma and judgment by their peers. Kids arrive at school hungry for many reasons: long bus rides, hurried morning routine, or no food at home. Encouraging all students to enjoy healthy foods from the breakfast program or from the classroom bin ensures that those that need it most get it, instead of going hungry with fear that taking food will identify them as needy.

How can you support these programs?

- Encourage all of your students to participate in breakfast and snack programs and give them time to eat;
- Recruit older students to help with food preparation and delivery to classrooms; and
- Ask students to make a donation to the breakfast program instead of teacher gifts.

Contact your school coordinator or visit www.pcchu.ca/ffk.

Students who have a breakfast program at school have a reduced risk for disease, and are more likely to:

- come to school and participate in class;
- be better behaved;
- have better test scores; and
- graduate.



Everybody wins!

School Nutrition Resources

Intermediate Teachers – this one's **NEW** for you!

Power 2B Me is a free intermediate-level, cross-curricular program that enables students to identify personal reasons to eat well. Through the use of in-class activities, videos, and online technology, including photo-journaling, polls, and food factoids, Grade 7 and 8 students explore personal healthy eating challenges and consider relevant solutions to make better food choices in various situations.



The program meets curriculum expectations for Health and Physical Education, and has connections to Math and Language.

Visit www.teachnutrition.org to find out more.

Like Local!



“Local” food at school is good for everyone!

- Students enjoy healthy and delicious local foods like vegetables and fruit and milk products;
- Students develop a better understanding of where their food comes from;
- Our farmers and agricultural economy benefit from local business; and
- The environment benefits from fewer greenhouse gas emissions as a result of less distance travelled by our food.



Want to “Like Local” in your classroom? Here are some ideas...

Classroom Connections:

- As part of a Greenbelt-funded pilot program, local farmers will be visiting select Grade 3 classes this Fall showcasing a “day in their life”, with cross-curricular links to Health and Physical Education, Science and Technology, and Social Studies. Students will learn about who grows our food, how it grows, and where it comes from. Find out how you can do this with your class in our spring newsletter.
- Build food literacy by preparing a recipe with local, seasonal vegetables and fruits with your students.
- Plan a class trip to a farmers’ market to meet some farmers and taste their wares.



School Connections:

- Order local food for your school events! Use the online Find Local Food tool at www.farmsatwork.ca to connect with farmers in and around your community.
- Encourage your breakfast and snack program to order a JustFood School Box, a box full of locally grown vegetables and fruit, delivered to your school. Easy and affordable!
- It's harvest time! Head out to your school garden and let students explore how our food grows. Don't have a garden? Start one!

Home Connections:

- Send home a recipe that uses local food in season for students to try at home with their families.

Opening Up About Mental Health: From the Voices of Families

Educators know and see students every day; what might not be seen or fully understood are the struggles that families experience, and the ways that educators can be part of a circle of care. "Opening Up" is a ten minute video for educators where four Ontario parents talk about their struggles and hopes in raising their children and youth with mental illness. To view the video click [here](#) or go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBBQ8eNHv2U. The "Do's and Don'ts" chart below is taken from the Opening Up User's Guide. Click [here](#) to access the User's Guide or go to www.pcmh.ca/documents/Opening%20Up%20User%20Guide%20MB%20SC.pdf.

From Families ... Do's And Don'ts For Educators

DO

Have understanding and compassion. We need you to understand the stress that we may be dealing with, or the uncertainty that we are faced with.

Recognize that we as families are "experts" in our child's care. No one knows our children as well as we do.

We need your help to navigate the system, and to find the proper supports for our child.

Follow through on what you say you are going to do. We depend on you keeping your appointments, making those phone calls, or following through on those next steps.

Look at our work together as an equal partnership. Listen to our needs, goals, and desires, and work to achieve them together.

Include strategies to strengthen the whole child/family.

DON'T

Blame our child's difficulties on our lack of parenting skills or make assumptions about home situations based on stigma, or prejudice.

Assume that because you have education and training in mental health that you know best for our child.

Dwell on the worst case scenario, or make it seem unlikely that our child will be unable to contribute to their community.

Change appointments, don't call us when you say you are going to, or don't call other agencies/professionals when those were part of our next steps. We are quickly turned off when we feel neglected or ignored.

Make decisions without us, or assume you know what's best. Don't discount our experiences and the benefits they can offer.

Be stuck in only utilizing clinical therapy and what outcomes are suggested through academic evidence.

Education is Linked to Positive Outcomes

In 2013, the Health Unit completed a family poverty community assessment. The findings of this assessment emphasize the important role that school communities have in supporting vulnerable families, and influencing system-wide poverty reduction efforts. Based on this local assessment, ten areas, including education, were identified as the greatest factors affecting child and family poverty in our community.

Education is Linked to Positive Outcomes

- Parents with limited formal education face barriers to furthering their education, such as tuition costs, not being academically ready for post-secondary or trade schools and lack of timely, affordable child care.
- Children who have parents with post-secondary education tend to perform better in school.
- When children stay in school they are more likely to experience better long-term socioeconomic outcomes.

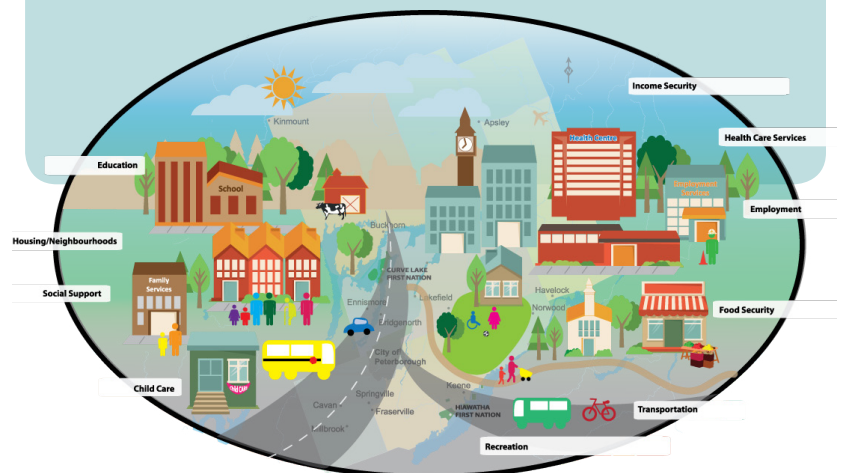
The Bigger Change We'd Like to See

For each of the ten factors, Health Unit staff identified goals that reflect the change we'd like to see in our community.

For education, **the bigger changes we'd like to see are:**

- Vulnerable children staying in school and having opportunities for post-secondary education.
- More training, retraining and academic upgrading opportunities.
- A systematic approach to support adult education that includes childcare, transportation, etc.
- School environments that utilize the Foundations for a Healthy School framework and support health and wellbeing for all families.

To learn about the other nine factors influencing child and family poverty, click the image or go to www.pcchu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Factors-Influencing-Poverty.pdf.



Curriculum Corner

Brain Breaks

These are great to use any time your students are feeling restless and are struggling to pay attention. The activities will only take a few minutes, and then you can get back to the lesson with your students ready to focus.

1. **5-4-3-2-1.** In this simple game, students stand up and the teacher (or leader) has them do five different movements in descending order. For example the teacher would say: "Do five jumping jacks, spin around four times, hop on one foot three times, walk all the way around the classroom two times, give your neighbour one high-five (pausing in between each task for students to do it).
2. **Trading Places.** Have students stand behind their pushed-in chairs. Call out a trait and everyone who has that trait must change places with someone else (students who do not have the trait stay where they are). Examples: "Everyone with curly hair." "Everyone who ate cereal for breakfast." "Everyone who is wearing stripes."
3. **Six Spots.** Number six spots around your room from 1-6. Ask each student to move to a spot of their choice. Choose a student to roll a die (if you can use a big one out of foam, it adds to the fun). All the students at the number rolled must go back to their seats. Students that are left go to a new spot and the die is rolled again. Continue until only a few students are left.
4. **Mingle, Mingle, Group!** In this game students mill about the classroom saying, "mingle, mingle, mingle" in soft voices until the teacher says "Groups of 5," at which point the students must quickly group themselves into groups with the correct number of people. Students who are left over must do three jumping jacks before the next round starts. The teacher can call out any number for the group size.

For more brain break ideas click on www.minds-in-bloom.com/2012/04/20-three-minute-brain-breaks.html



Get Dancing!

Dance is an important component of the Health and Physical Education (H&PE) curriculum. Dance allows students to develop their physical literacy by exploring developmentally appropriate movement skills, concepts, and principles. Participating in dance also provides the opportunity to develop, improve and maintain physical fitness outside of game and sport activities – with the added bonus of letting students (and teachers) show their creative side!

The Ophea Instructional Dance DVD (available in English and French) includes:

- Three elementary model classroom videos;
- downloadable lesson plans that include warm up, minds on, action, consolidation and cool down;
- teacher assessment tools; and
- teaching tips!

There are three options to access the DVD:

1. find the hard copy that Ophea sent to your school in Spring 2014;
2. borrow a hard copy of the DVD from the Health Unit resource library; or
3. stream videos for free from Ophea's YouTube Channel at www.youtube.com/watch?v=21qNICIZv30.

For more information about this resource contact curriculum@ophea.net.



Ophea's Instructional Dance DVD - English Elementary

We want to hear from you!

The School Health Matters newsletter is published twice a year by the Peterborough County-City Health Unit. If you have questions, suggestions, or stories to share please contact our School Health Liaison at 705-743-1000, ext. 314.

Resource Corner



Triple P Positive Parenting Program

Are parents in your school community looking for ideas on how to build positive relationships with their children? Triple P - Positive Parenting Program two hour seminars can be provided in your school location one at a time, or in a series of three.

Topics are:

- The Power of Positive Parenting
- Raising Confident, Competent Children
- Raising Resilient Children

If parents at your school would like any of the above seminars, please contact Jennifer Lesurf, Public Health Nurse at 705-743-1000, ext. 235, or email at jglesurf@pcchu.ca.

Early Learning Resource from Ophea



Ophea's Early Learning Resource is a free online resource that assists kindergarten teachers, early childhood educators, and early-learning teams with the implementation of the Health and Physical Activity learning area of the Full-Day Early-Learning Kindergarten Program. This resource is available in French and English and includes high quality, easy-to-implement activities using everyday materials/equipment as well as information on safety, learning goals, and curriculum links.

Click <http://earlylearning.ophea.net/> to download the resource.

Influenza Resources for Teachers:

Is it a Cold or the Flu?

This factsheet provides plain-language information on complications associated with the flu.

Flu Facts

This factsheet encourages uptake of the seasonal flu vaccine by communicating facts about its safety and efficacy.

General Poster

The poster promotes influenza immunization with a focus on protecting yourself and others who are at risk of serious complications from the flu.

Children 5 and Under Tear Pad (for Daycare Centres)

The tear pad (50 sheets each) communicates the increased risk of serious complications due to flu in children under 5 years of age. It encourages parents to immunize themselves and their children to prevent the spread of the flu.

Ordering Details:

These FREE printed products can be ordered by visiting www.fightflu.ca, by email at publications@hc-sc.gc.ca or by calling 1-866-225-0709.

FLU PREVENTION BEGINS WITH YOU

The seasonal influenza vaccine (flu shot) is safe and effective and can benefit people of all ages.

Talk to your doctor, nurse, pharmacist or public health office about getting this year's flu shot.

To find out more, visit fightflu.ca and immunize.ca