Suggested Newsletter Inserts for Elementary Schools

Growth and Development - Parenting

**Your child’s stress behaviours**

Many challenging behaviours, like arguing and tantrums, are actually a sign of too much stress.

When your child “misbehaves”, ask “why?” and “why now?” Look for stressors that may be causing the behaviour. Too much screen time, not enough physical activity, and lack of sleep are “hidden stressors” for some kids.

Stress relieving ideas:

* Create spaces where your child can go to feel calm and relaxed, when needed.
* Encourage outdoor play every day.
* Spend time with your child, being attentive, calm, and affectionate.
* Come together for mealtimes to socialize and build healthy eating habits.

For more tips visit School Mental Health Ontario (<https://smho-smso.ca/>).

Or call *Health Connection* at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/).

**Tips for a smooth start back to school:**

* Routines help: pack lunches together, pick clothes the night before, relax before bed without screens.
* Encourage a positive outlook by asking about what they enjoy about school and what they can look forward to.
* It is normal for there to be back to school worries. Validate their feelings and help them to think of ways to manage situations. Offer reassurance and remind them that there are adults at school to help.
* Spending time together, being outdoors, learning ways to relax, support our wellbeing.
* Talk about road safety and routes to school. For younger children, practice to route to school (or bus) together.

For more information, call *Health Connection* at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/).

**Parent Self Care**

As parents and caregivers, it is important that we take time to check in with ourselves.

When you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed, take time for yourself, even if it is just a few minutes. Working through your own feelings will make it easier for you to support and reassure your child.

Self-care does not need to be complicated. Take a few minutes to do something you enjoy, connect with a friend, or move your body. It is not selfish – it is self-preservation!

For more information, call *Health Connection* at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/).

**Anxiety – a normal part of life**

Looking for ways to meet the needs of a child who is trying to cope with feelings of anxiety? One of the most powerful ways you can support your child is by trying to understand how they are feeling. Parents and caregivers can:

* Take time to listen and understand their fears and worries.
* Let them know that it is OK to have these feelings.
* Reassure them that you will get through this together.
* Role model good coping strategies for your child, for instance by facing your own fears.
* If your child's anxiety seems excessive or is worsening, talk to your health care provider.

For more information Call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-5720 to speak with a public health nurse or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org). You can also visit: https://strongmindsstrongkids.org and https://smho-smso.ca/.

**Challenging Behaviour?**

Kids fighting, arguing, or struggling with social situations? Kids generally are trying to do the best they can with the skills they have. You can help your child to build coping skills:

* Learn mindfulness strategies and practice them together.
* Help your child to identify situations that are frustrating or difficult for them.

Once you understand their point of view, you will be better able to help them to find solutions.

For more information Call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-5720 to speak with a public health nurse or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org). You can also visit: https://strongmindsstrongkids.org and https://smho-smso.ca/.

**Stressful Mornings?**

Try these tips to help get the whole family out the door on time:

1. Plan: try packing lunches and picking clothes out the night before.
2. Go to bed at a reasonable hour so you wake up rested and ready for the day.
3. Wake up and get yourself ready, before your child.
4. Keep the TV and electronics off. These can be distracting first thing in the morning.
5. Give clear instructions and be realistic about what your child can do for themselves. Praise them when they do something well to help them learn new skills.

Finally, remember to have patience. Your child learns from watching you! In time your child will learn to plan ahead, be organized, and develop patience too.

For more tips, call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-5720 to speak with a public health nurse or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/) or

[www.triplep-parenting.ca](http://www.triplep-parenting.ca)

**Importance of Consistency**

Attachment is the emotional bond between you and your child. It can make a world of difference in your child’s life. By giving your child your consistent attention, and affection, your child will feel safe, secure, and able to:

* Believe in themselves and their self-value.
* Have a sense of identity and belonging.
* Trust and feel safe to trust others.
* Make, and keep friends.
* Eventually learn to become more independent.

For more information, call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-5720 to speak with a public health nurse or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org).

**They Learn by Watching You!**

Helping children develop a healthy lifestyle, including healthy eating habits and physical activity, begins at home but can be reinforced in every setting. Caregivers, parents, teachers, and coaches can help children to be active and make smart food choices by modeling healthy behaviours themselves. Remember… children are watching!

For more information call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/).

**Quality Time Doesn’t Have to be Long**

By spending quality time with your child:

* Paying attention when your child wants to show you something.
* Showing affection with hugs, cuddles, high fives, and being close to them.
* Giving praise when they do something well.
* Teaching new skills and finding opportunities to practice.

Your child will be more likely to show the same caring qualities to others.

Look after yourself too! It is more difficult to be a calm, relaxed parent when you are stressed.

For more information call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-5720 to speak with a public health nurse or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) or [www.triplep-parenting.ca](http://www.triplep-parenting.ca).

**Shopping with Children**

Shopping with children is a great opportunity to teach them how to behave responsibly. Try these few tips and plan a series of short practice shopping trips to help make shopping with your children more rewarding:

* Discuss shopping rules ahead of time, e.g., stay close.
* Tell your child where you will be going, what you will be buying and when you will be home.
* Involve rewards for good behaviour.

For more information call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/) or [www.triplep-parenting.ca](http://www.triplep-parenting.ca) for more information.

**Is Social Media Affecting Your Child?**

In a busy world, it can be tough to balance everything! Research shows that kids feel their parents pay too much attention to their smartphones, and not enough to them. You can help your child feel important by setting time aside to be present with them. Spend time together face to face and use eye contact when chatting. You can also agree on times for everyone in the family to put phones and electronics away, like mealtimes, bedtime and family events.

Looking for more information? Call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-5720 to speak with a public health nurse or visit [https://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](https://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/)

**Sleep**

Help your child to get a good night’s sleep:

* Set a consistent bedtime and wake-time for your child (even on weekends). Children aged 5 -13 need at least 9-11 hours of uninterrupted sleep each night.
* Encourage your child to establish a relaxing bedtime routine that includes reading, taking a bath or listening to music.
* Set up a sleeping space with your child that is cool, dark, and quiet.
* Keep technology out of your child’s bedroom – they interfere with natural sleep cycles.
* Discourage caffeinated products as they may interfere with your child’s ability to fall asleep.
* Role model, by making sleep a priority in your own life!

Looking for more information? Call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-5720 to speak with a public health nurse or visit [https://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](https://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/).

Suggested Newsletter Inserts for Secondary Schools

Growth and Development - Parenting

**Developing A Sense of Self**

As teens create their own identity, and contemplate who they are, they may find that their opinions become different than their parents. Be prepared to discuss and explore new ideas with your teen, show interest in what your teen is doing and keep communication open. Be a role model and set a good example about how to respect one another.

For more information, call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 and talk to a public health nurse or visit <https://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org> or [www.triplep-parenting.ca](http://www.triplep-parenting.ca).

**Sleep**

Help your teen get the sleep they need by encouraging:

* A consistent bedtime and wake-time (even on weekends) that allows for at least 8-10 hours of uninterrupted sleep each night.
* A relaxing bedtime routine – showering, music, getting ready for the next day.
* A sleeping space that is cool, dark and quiet.
* To put away technology in the hour before bed, as they interfere with natural sleep cycles.
* To limit their daily intake of caffeine as it may interfere the ability to fall asleep.

For more information, call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-5720 to speak with a public health nurse or visit <www.simcoemuskokahealth.org>.

**Raising Teens: Focus on the Positives**

We all want our teens to be happy and to grow up to be successful adults. One of the best ways to do this is to focus on the positives:

* Give your teen lots of support and approval, especially when they are trying something new or going through a change in their lives.
* Get active: play sports, exercise, or do something together as a family.
* Laugh and have fun! Laughter and physical activity relieve stress.
* Show love with words, hugs, and kisses.
* Talk openly about issues as they come up and show each other support.

For more information, call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/).

**The Importance of an Open Door**

Teens who have positive communication with their parents and caregivers feel better about themselves and do better at school, and in life in general:

* Ask your teen about what’s going on in their lives, and how they feel about things.
* Allow them to express their worries and fears without being judged.
* Try to see things from their perspective.
* When your teen confides in you, tell them you appreciate their trust.
* Work together to find solutions to problems, letting them decide what they feel would work best for them.

For more information, call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/).

**It’s All About Connection**

Young people are more likely to experience successes in life when they have close connections with supportive adults. Here are some ways to help keep your relationship with your child strong:

* *Show me that I matter to you.* Encourage my efforts and believe in me.
* *Push me to keep getting better.* Expect my best, while helping me learn from mistakes.
* *Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.* Stand up for me when I need it.
* *Treat me with respect and give me a say.* Take me seriously and treat me fairly.
* *Connect me with people and places that broaden my world.* Inspire me about my future.

For more information, call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/) or the <https://www.search-institute.org/>.