

# The H-N REACH EarlyON at Home

FAMILY NEWSLETTER



## TRANSITIONING TO SCHOOL

Going off to kindergarten is an exciting time for children and their families, but it can also be a time of anxiety and nervousness. Being prepared will help ease some of those feelings and make the transition easier for you and your child. Here are a few tips to make the experience a positive one:

- **Get familiar with the school.** Walk by, talk about the playground and what they will do at school. Build positive thoughts about going to school.
- **Foster independence.** Practice dressing and undressing, opening lunch containers, and using the washroom on their own. Talk about asking the teacher or a friend for help when they need it.
- **Establish a morning routine.** Get up when you would on a school day and rehearse the steps for getting out the door.
- **Read books about starting kindergarten.** This is a great way to start conversations about how they're feeling about going to school. Let them ask questions and answer them honestly.

## ARE THEY "READY" FOR KINDERGARTEN?

Kindergarten is a place to learn and grow. Being "ready" can't simply be measured by whether they know their ABC's and 123's. Hard skills like being able to print, use scissors, and recognize their name are all great things to practice in preparation for kindergarten, but their soft skills like being able to communicate with others, follow directions, and problem solve are just as important. These social-emotional skills play a crucial role in their learning in kindergarten, and their overall success in school!

# LEARNING IN THE OUTDOORS

*"Nature is not just good for kids' health; it improves their ability to learn."*

*- Ming Kuo*

## 6 Benefits to providing children time in nature:

- Playing, taking a walk or even a view of nature restores children's attention.
- Nature relieves children's stress and helps them recover from stressful events.
- Nature helps children develop self discipline.
- Children are more engaged and interested even when they come back indoors.
- Children are more physically active.
- Getting outdoors can enhance relationships with others.

**All these are skills and qualities easily transferred to school**

For further reading on this research access Ming Kuo, Greater Good Magazine, a free e-publication of the Greater Good Science Center at University of California, Berkeley.

**Nature provides a rich assortment of free 'loose parts'- sticks, stones, mud & leaves that encourage exploration, creativity, imagination and problem solving.**



*Try this fun activity*

### **Ice cube Painting**

Painting with ice cubes is a great way to strengthen those fine motor skills needed to tie shoe laces, hold a pencil or open a lunch box.

What do children play when they can't play on a phone?

**Bored games!!!**

# EMOTIONAL WELL BEING - SIGNS AND SIGNALS



Young children may not have the words or emotional intelligence to verbalize their needs. However, they can communicate their needs in other subtle ways.

When it comes to emotional needs, each one of us has a LOVE language that we speak. Dr Gary Chapman identifies this in his book 'The 5 Love Languages'.

## Books to read to help prepare for school

**The Kissing Hand**  
by Audrey Penn

**The Pout Pout Fish Goes to School**  
by Deborah Diesen

**Pete the Cat: Rocking in My School Shoes**  
by Eric Litwin

**Llama Llama Misses Mama**  
by Anna Dewdney

1. **"Cuddle me! Chase me!" (physical touch)** If your child looks for lots of cuddles or likes to be chased they may be yearning for physical touch. Though a hug might say "I love you" to all kids, for ones who adore physical touch, it shouts, "I LOVE YOU!" To fill this need offer lots of cuddles, kisses, lap time and high fives.
2. **"Presents, please!" (receiving gifts)** Children who feel loved when they receive gifts aren't just seeking more stuff they see the gift as a symbol of your love. Stickers and small gifts such as a smooth stone are a concrete way to make this child feel valued.
3. **"Talk to me!" (words of affirmation)** For kids who listen intently and speak sweetly, your loving words matter most. Little notes in their lunch box, texts and jewellery/trinkets with special words can mean the world to these kids.
4. **"You do it for me!" (acts of service)** These children appreciate thoughtful gestures. Support your child while introducing and learning new processes and skills.
5. **"Come here! Look at this!" (quality time)** These children feel most valued when you choose to spend quality time with them.

**Understanding your child's needs strengthens your connection and builds their confidence.**

## School nutrition break hints

Generally there are two 20 minute nutrition breaks in school.

Rehearse a 20 minute break to eat lunch.

Help your child make the most of the time by peeling their fruit ahead of time and cutting foods into bite size pieces, or let them practice this over the summer.

Allow the child to practice opening/closing containers & lunch pails.



# RECIPE OF THE MONTH

For children that prefer a hot meal over a sandwich in their school lunch: soups, chilis, and pastas like this one can be easily heated in the morning, placed into a thermos, and enjoyed warm at lunch time.

## Skillet Beef and Macaroni

### Ingredients

- 1-1/2 pound ground beef
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 2 cans (8 ounces each) tomato sauce
- 1 cup water
- 1 package (7 ounces) macaroni
- 1/2 cup chopped green pepper
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper

### Directions

1. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, cook beef and onion until the meat is no longer pink; drain.
2. Stir in the remaining ingredients; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, covered, until macaroni is tender, stirring occasionally, 20-25 minutes. Add more water if needed.



## Mother's Day Song

Replace "mommy" with the name of any special caregiver in your child's life!

(Tune: Frere Jacques)

I love Mommy, I love Mommy,

Yes I do, yes I do

All I want to say

Is "Happy Mother's Day"

I love you, I love you!

## WE ARE STILL HERE FOR YOU!

Yes, things have changed a lot over the past year, but we are still here to help! Haldimand-Norfolk REACH is considered an essential service, and we are working to stay connected with everyone, and to help those in need during these turbulent times.

**If you or your child are in crisis, our Child and Youth Crisis Line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 1-866-327-3224**

**Find us on Facebook** - we are the Haldimand-Norfolk REACH EarlyON Child and Family Centre! We're always posting schedules of activities, activity ideas, circle time videos and stories, and tips to stay healthy at home.

**Join us on Zoom** - We host a variety of Zoom activities Monday through Saturday, like Circle Time, Music and Movement, Parent Connection, and Baby Play with a Health Nurse.

**Connect through email** - Have an idea you'd like to see us try? Want more information about our Zoom programs? Email us at [earlyon@hnreach.on.ca](mailto:earlyon@hnreach.on.ca)



Haldimand-Norfolk  
**REACH**

*supporting children, families, communities*



**EarlyON**

Child and Family Centre