



# Contact



Vol. 26#1

Spring 2014

For all people interested in the health of preschoolers

Writing a spring newsletter in the depths of winter can be challenging. The bright yellow sun promises to bring milder temperatures and warmer winds. We believe that change is possible because the seasons have changed in the past.

Just like the seasons, people can also change. If you, or someone you know, has a problem with alcohol, other drugs or gambling, you may wonder what to do. The good news is that alcohol, drug and gambling problems are treatable. When you or someone you know decides it is time to deal with an addiction problem, help is available. You can contact your local addiction services office Monday to Friday (during office hours), or phone the 24-hour Addiction Helpline at 1-866-332-2322 (Alberta only). *Change is possible!* Visit [www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca) for more information.

Over half of preschool aged children in Alberta spend time in a child care setting. Child care settings can have a big impact on children's eating habits – what they eat, when they eat, why they eat, and how they eat.

*Healthy Eating Starts Here* is committed to help child care staff create healthy environments, where healthy food is offered in ways that promote healthy growth, positive views toward food and healthy eating habits for life. Visit [www.HealthyEatingStartsHere.ca](http://www.HealthyEatingStartsHere.ca) for information about menu planning, recipes, food allergies, staff training and more!

Hope you have a safe and happy spring!



## Inside this Issue

Resource: Healthy Parents, Healthy Children .....	Page 2
CDC: Kindergarten Booster .....	Page 3
Speech and Language: Screen Time .....	Page 4
Nature of Children: Children and Sleep .....	Page 5
Occupational Therapy: Give it a Squeeze .....	Page 6
Nutrition Month: Healthy Meals .....	Page 7
Dental Health: Weaning from the Bottle.....	Page 8
Poison & Drug Information (PADIS).....	Page 9
Registration: Alberta Early Years Conference .....	Page 10

**Contact** is a publication of Public Health – Edmonton Zone, Alberta Health Services. Information in this newsletter can be freely reproduced for educational non-profit purposes by any childcare centre in Edmonton area.

**Contact** is edited by Pam Todd. Phone: 780-342-1284 Fax: 780-484-9156

The information provided in this resource is not to be used for consultation during an emergency, to make or confirm a diagnosis or to treat people, as a substitute for obtaining medical advice or for seeking treatment from a qualified doctor.

[www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca)



## Healthy Parents, Healthy Children: A Practical Guide to Pregnancy and Being a Parent

### The Early Years

We all know that children change quickly and learn more during the early years than at any other time in their lives. As a parent or caregiver, you can help a child grow, learn, explore and be healthy.

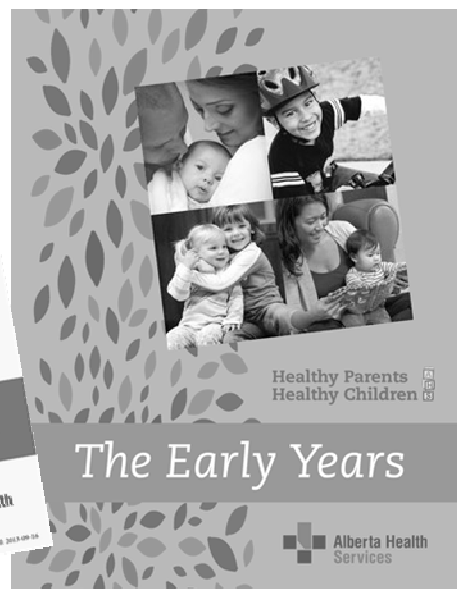
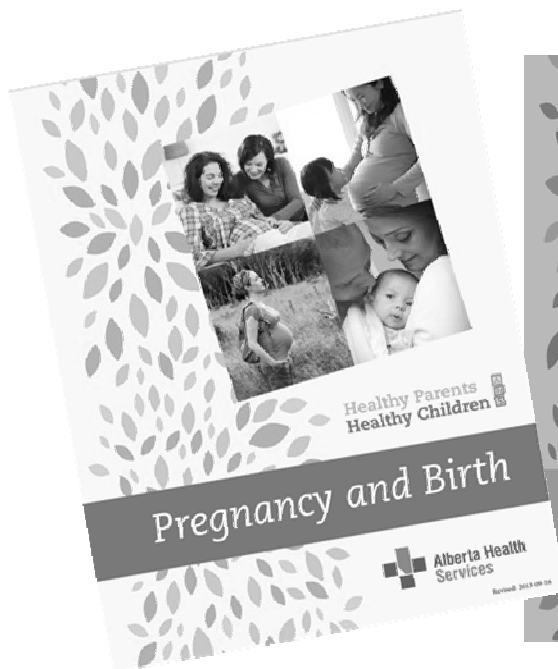
Healthy Parents, Healthy Children is your place to go for current, reliable information based on today's best knowledge, evidence and practices. Use this information yourself, or share it with your family and friends.

This *made-in-Alberta* information will give you suggestions for everyday care and activities. It will take you from the early stages of looking after your new baby, through to the thrill of first steps and words, all the way to the first days of school.

- Healthy Parents, Healthy Children can be accessed on your tablet, smart phone or computer at: [www.healthyparentshealthychildren.ca](http://www.healthyparentshealthychildren.ca)



- You can also download the Healthy Parents, Healthy Children e-book onto your e-reader.





## Kindergarten Immunization

Immunizations protect your child from serious childhood diseases. Diseases can spread more easily when children are together in groups. Protect your child by having his or her immunization boosters before starting kindergarten this fall. The vaccines are given by Public Health Nurses anytime after a child's fourth birthday (at no charge).

Call Health Link Alberta at 780-408-LINK (5465) to:

- Book an immunization appointment for your child.
- Ask questions about immunization, or about your child's immunization schedule.

**You can also get more information by visiting any of these reliable websites:**

[www.Albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.Albertahealthservices.ca)

[www.HealthyParentsHealthyChildren.ca](http://www.HealthyParentsHealthyChildren.ca)

[www.MyHealth.Alberta.ca](http://www.MyHealth.Alberta.ca)

[www.health.alberta.ca/health-info/immunization.html](http://www.health.alberta.ca/health-info/immunization.html)

Immunize Canada - [www.immunize.cpha.ca/en/default.aspx](http://www.immunize.cpha.ca/en/default.aspx)

Canadian Pediatric Society - [www.caringforkids.cps.ca](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca)



Healthy Parents Healthy Children





## Screen Time: How Much Is Too Much?

### What is “screen time”?

- Screen time is any exposure to an electronic screen such as television, smart phones, hand held video game player, computer or tablet.
- Screen time can be in the foreground (the child is watching a screen directly) or in the background (the parent is viewing a screen with the child playing in the same room).
- Both of these situations can lead to consequences and challenges with communication development.

Screen time affects children’s health and development. Limit screen time and engage your child in other activities (e.g., playing with toys, reading, drawing, crafts, or dress-up play). While a child is more physically active, he/she is developing social skills and improving behavior, attention and language skills.

### Consequences of too much screen time:

- Studies have shown that screen time affects the number of words children know by Grade 1.
- For every hour of passive (non-interactive) screen time, children understand and use fewer and fewer words.
- Less time for quality caregiver-child interaction and talk time.
- Decreased quality of speech and language models the children hears.
- Less classroom engagement once the child is in school.
- Health consequences such as obesity, sleep disturbances, and gross motor delays.

The Canadian Paediatric Society suggests the following screen time limits:

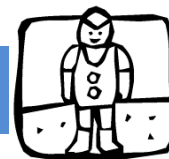
- None for children under 2 years.
- Less than 1 hour per day for children between 2 and 4 years old.
- Less than 2 hours per day for older preschool children.

Here are suggestions to reduce the amount of screen time for your family.

- Keep TVs and computers:
  - In a central place where the whole family can see and use them.
  - Out of your child’s bedroom.
- Choose programs that are educational. Watch and talk about these programs with your child.
- Remember that your child watches and copies you. Limit the amount of time you spend on the phone, on the computer, watching TV or on other electronic devices.
- Spend more time outdoors and less time sitting indoors.
- Turn off screens during mealtime.
- Set a limit and stick to it.

Reference: Healthy Parents, Healthy Children  
Special thanks to Christie Shipper – SLP, Alberta Health Services, Preschool Speech Language Services.





## Bedtime for Toddlers

A predictable bedtime routine helps you and your toddler rest well every night. End your days with a regular routine (e.g., quiet playtime after supper, a bath, brushing teeth, a bedtime song or story). When your child knows what will happen next she'll feel more secure and ready for bed.

When you and your partner take turns putting your child to bed, she learns the routine is the same even with different people. This also makes it much easier for a family member, friend or babysitter to put her to sleep while you take a break or go out.

You show confidence that your toddler can settle herself when you calmly say goodnight, give her a hug and leave the room. Toddlers are often afraid of being separated from their parents. Let your child know where you'll be and that you will see her in the morning. A nightlight may help. Be patient – it may take time for her to learn to go to sleep on her own.

Your older toddler may talk, sing, look at books or play quietly before she falls asleep. She will drift off to sleep when she's ready. She may find extra comfort and security from special objects (e.g., blanket, cuddly stuffed toy). If she is still in a crib, keep it free of things she can climb on so she doesn't get up and over the crib rails. Nearly half of all crib-related injuries every year are due to falls.

- **Getting ready for sleep**

TVs and electronic devices tell the brain it's time to be awake.

Limit electronics for several hours before bedtime to help your child calm down and get ready for sleep.

Most toddlers need to sleep about 11-12 hours a night. You can often tell if your toddler is sleeping enough by the way she acts during the day. If she's cranky or falls asleep outside her regular nap time she may need more sleep at night.

- **Naps**

Younger toddlers usually stop their morning nap between 1 and 2 years old.

Most older toddlers have a 1-2 hour nap in the

afternoon. If your child naps for more than 2 hours at a time, she may have trouble sleeping at night.

If your older toddler doesn't want to nap but is fussy later in the day, try having quiet time in the afternoon – time spent on her own in her room with a quiet activity (e.g., reading books, playing with stuffed toys).

Most toddlers will try to come out of their room when they have been put to bed. Your older toddler can learn that she needs to stay in bed so that she can go to sleep.

She may want to get out for all kinds of reasons (e.g., she's more independent, wants more control of her life, anxious about being away from you). She may beg to stay up, refuse to lie down or even have a temper tantrum. Stay calm – especially if she is not.

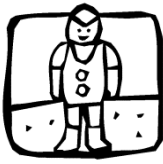
You can promote peaceful bedtimes by providing warmth and structure.

- Provide **warmth**.
  - Realize that many children find moving to a bed both exciting and scary.
  - Reassure your child that you are near and will keep her safe.
- Provide **structure**.
  - Keep bedtime calm and quite.
  - Close her door, but don't lock it. Most fire departments recommend closing all bedroom doors at night to protect your family from fire and smoke. Locking her door can frighten her and can be dangerous.
  - If she comes out of the bedroom after you've put her to bed, take her hand, walk her back to her room, remind her that it's bedtime and tuck her in.
  - Avoid arguing. Simply say "It's time for bed". You may have to do this many times for several nights before she accepts it.
  - Be kind and firm. By being kind, you let her know you understand she would rather stay awake. By being firm, you let her know that it really is bedtime.

**Information taken directly from**

Healthy Parents, Healthy Children - The Early Years.  
Alberta Health Services - 2013.

[www.healthyparentshealthychildren.ca](http://www.healthyparentshealthychildren.ca)

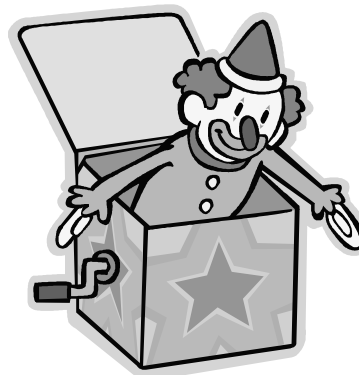
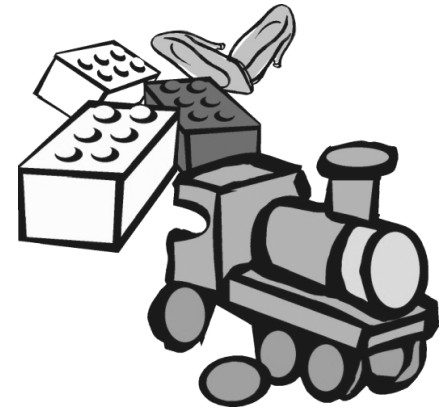


## Give it a Squeeze!

To know how much pressure or force to use when handling an object, toy or tool is to be aware of “grip strength.”

When learning is fun, children can’t get enough. Here is a list of fun but challenging activities that will promote grip strength awareness.

- Squeeze, pinch, poke, roll and press play dough.
- Pull apart toys such as pop beads, or use toys that push together (such as people into cars) or Duplo® or Lego® building pieces.
- Play with textured toys that are squeezable.
- Use clothespins to hang doll clothes, face cloths or pictures.
- At the “water ply table” - squeeze sponges, spray bottles, squirt toys, or fill up turkey basters or eye droppers.
- Use small tongs to put away toys or lift other objects.
- Wind up toys.
- Draw on carbon paper. Do texture drawing by placing paper over different textures such as a lace place mat.
- Pop the bubbles in pieces of bubble wrap.
- Store toys in different containers with lids for children to open and close.
- Present snacks in small containers or packages that children can open.
- Encourage children to dig and plant in the garden when the ground is warm and the soil soft.



Community Rehabilitation Program  
Alberta Health Services



## Inspiring Healthy Meals during Nutrition Month (March 2014)

Alberta Health Services dietitians will inspire you to prepare and enjoy healthy meals at your childcare centre or home. Remember the three “P’s” below and put these tips into practice:

### Plan your Child Care Menu

- Planning healthy meals and snacks for your childcare menu, helps you serve nutrient packed foods to preschoolers.
- For balanced meals, include 3 to 4 food groups.
- For balanced snacks, include at least two food groups, from *Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide*.

### Choosing Recipes

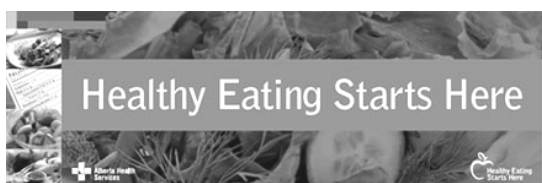
- Find simple recipes that only require a few ingredients and a few cooking steps.
- Choose recipes with mostly vegetables, whole grains, legumes (like beans, lentils, or chickpeas), and fish or lean meats.

### Need ideas?

- Check out Alberta Health Services: *Healthy Children in Preschool Settings Manual* (recipe section), and *Healthy Eating Starts Here – Healthy Eating at Child Care Centres* website [www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca](http://www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca)

### Purchase Healthy Foods

- Write a grocery list before heading to the grocery store.
- Never shop when you are hungry!
- Try to stock up on healthy, simple ingredients you can use to prepare quick and easy meals and snacks like frozen or canned vegetables and fruits; whole grain crackers, cereals, or bread; cheese and yogurt; and nut butters.



### Need budget ideas?

- Choose cheaper protein sources like beans, eggs, or cottage cheese.
- Buy fresh produce that is in season, like asparagus, spinach, mushrooms and green peppers in the spring.

### Prepare Healthy Foods

- Making a healthy meal or snack can be quick and simple.
- Try preparing part of the meal in advance to spread out your cooking time.
- Measure out ingredients and store them safely until you cook.
- Thaw meats in the fridge the day before, chop up vegetables, or cook rice, pasta or quinoa ahead of time.
- Crock-pots, casseroles and microwaves can help lessen your time in the kitchen.
- Make large batches of meat, vegetables, beans, rice or pasta to store in the fridge or freezer so you can use for other meals later.

### For more Nutrition Month resources visit:

- AHS Choose and Prepare Healthy Food [www.albertahealthservices.ca/5620.asp](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/5620.asp)
- Dietitians of Canada [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca)
  - Download the *eaTipster* app for free for a new cooking tip each day.
  - Download the *Cookspiration* app for free to get recipe ideas.





### Why should I wean my child?

#### Better Nutrition

If your child drinks many bottles of milk each day, he/she will feel full and not be able to eat a variety of foods that are rich in iron and other important vitamins and minerals.

#### Healthy Baby Teeth

If your baby drinks juice, pop or even milk from a bottle or sippy cup frequently during the day or night he/she can develop tooth cavities. Putting baby in bed with a bottle or propping a bottle can also put your baby at risk for choking or inhaling the fluid.

#### Increased Independence

Children love to imitate others and will feel more “grown up” when drinking from a cup.

#### Tips for Weaning From a Baby Bottle:

- Offer children a sip of water from their own cup when you are drinking a glass of water.
- Offer your child small sips from a cup that he/she can hold. Be prepared for spills! Learning to use a cup takes lots of practice. Eventually, your child will learn.
- Exchange a cup feeding for one bottle. You can offer expressed breast milk, formula, milk or 100% real juice at meal or snack time. Slowly reduce the number of bottles and increase the number of cups your child drinks each day.
- Limit juice to ¼ -½ cup per day.
- After age one, offer your child 2-3 cups of whole milk daily until two years of age.
- Offer snacks such as cottage cheese, cheese, and plain yogurt, whole wheat crackers or cereal before naptime or bedtime so that your child is not hungry and may sleep better.

**Weaning your child can be difficult and will take time. Be consistent and do not give up!**

**Remember to clean your child’s teeth and gums twice daily.**

**Ask your dental health professional about the use of fluoride toothpaste for your child.**

Nina Kennaugh, Registered Dental Hygienist  
Alberta Health Services

Reference: Weaning Your Baby from the Bottle and Oral Health and Your Child - Calgary Health Region  
[www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/dental](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/dental)







## PADIS (Poison & Drug Information Service)

**PADIS** can answer any questions about poisons, drugs and medications. PADIS will assess and evaluate your situation in a timely manner. **PADIS** will provide ongoing support and follow-up until the situation is resolved.

### Why Call?

- You have just found a child holding an open bottle of pills (or exposure to any other potential poison) and you are not sure what to do.

### What to do when you call PADIS

- Have the poison, chemical, toxin or medication container with you if possible.
- Listen carefully to instructions.
- Ask questions if you do not understand.
- Follow the advice of the **PADIS** expert. Go to the hospital if advised to do so.

### Check for POISONS in your Home or Centre

The most common causes of poisoning in children are:

- Medicines
- Vitamins
- Plants
- Cosmetics
- Household chemicals

Store anything poisonous out of sight, out of reach and locked up.

**PADIS** is free and confidential

- 1-800-332-1414 (Alberta)

### References

Healthy Parents, Healthy Children Page 213  
 PADIS pamphlet, [www.padis.ca](http://www.padis.ca)



Poison & Drug Information Service



Save the Date! | October 6-7, 2014  
Edmonton Marriott at River Cree Resort

ALBERTA EARLY YEARS CONFERENCE 2014

IGNITE AND TRANSFORM:  
WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?

WITH KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

<b>Lawrence J. Cohen, Ph.D.</b>	<b>Eileen McDargh, CSP, CPAE</b>	<b>Dr. Alex Russell, Ph.D.</b>
The author of <i>PLAYFUL PARENTING</i> and <i>THE OPPOSITE OF WORRY</i> , Dr. Cohen is a licensed psychologist specializing in children’s play and play therapy. Dr. Cohen teaches parenting classes, consults with schools and is co-author of <i>THE ART OF ROUGHHOUSING</i> .	Selected as one of the top 100 thought leaders in leadership and among the top ten consultant providers of leadership development, Ms. McDargh is the author of <i>WORK FOR A LIVING &amp; STILL BE FREE TO LIVE</i> , the first book on work / life balance, which placed her as a futurist in this issue.	With excerpts and takeaways from his book, <i>DROP THE WORRY BALL</i> , Dr. Russell offers a fresh perspective on raising children that is reassuringly familiar and strikingly sensible while providing insight into the powerful forces that pull us into over-involvement in our children’s lives.

**REGISTER NOW!**

[www.albertaearyyears.ca](http://www.albertaearyyears.ca)

2014 ALBERTA EARLY YEARS CONFERENCE | OCTOBER 6 – 7, 2014  
EDMONTON MARRIOTT AT RIVER CREE