

Success at School

A student's success at school can be greatly influenced by how they are feeling on any given day. Students are able to function better and think more clearly while at school if they have had enough **sleep**, are provided with **healthy foods**, and have adequate **exercise**. You can give your child a great start to the day by providing them with a healthy breakfast, making sure they have a source of protein in their breakfast meal, which helps with alertness and focus. Use Canada's food Guide (access the guide at www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide) as a resource when planning meals, making sure adequate servings from each food group are provided throughout the day. It is important that your child has a healthy snack at recess time to provide them with necessary energy to get them through to lunch. Sugary snacks tend to give the body a short "high" of energy followed by a low or lethargic period, so providing a snack that includes a fruit or vegetable, and cheese or yogurt (a source of calcium and protein) will give them energy that will last much longer and help them stay alert and focused in class. Providing students with well-balanced lunch (foods from each food group) will give them the needed energy to get through their afternoon of learning.



Being physically active also benefits students when it comes to learning. Canada's Food Guide recommends that children have at least 90 minutes of exercise spread out over the course of a day. Encourage your child to become actively involved in "play" as a form of exercise, particularly at recess and lunch breaks. By making sure your child is dressed appropriately for playing outside at recess and lunch (running shoes, coat and hat when it is rainy or cool), you can provide your child with an opportunity to participate in much needed physical activity, increasing the oxygen flow through the brain, which in turn will help them focus on their learning while in class. Regular exercise also helps children sleep. Children should be getting at least 8 hours sleep per night (it is recommended that teenagers get at least 9 hours). Students who don't get enough sleep can often become irritable or grumpy and according to the Canadian Sleep Society, inadequate sleep results in decreases in response time, motor ability, visual acuity, memory, and attention. So give your child the tools to do their best through nutritious meals and snacks, exercise, and sleep!

