

Healthy Habits: Success at School

A student's success at school can be greatly influenced by how they are feeling. 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* (healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide) when planning meals, making sure adequate servings from each food group are provided throughout the day.

- Make sure 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
 - Provide a snack that includes a fruit or vegetable, and cheese or yogurt (a source of calcium and protein) that will give them energy that will last much longer and help them stay alert and focused in class
- Provide students with a well-balanced lunch, including foods from each food group. This 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.
- Make sure your child is dressed appropriately for playing outside at recess and lunch (running shoes, boots, coat and hat when it is rainy or cool), so 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 him/her focus on learning while in class.
- Regular exercise also helps children sleep. Children should be getting at 10 hours sleep per night.
 - 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.

Give your child the tools to have success at school through nutritious meals and snacks, exercise, and sleep!