

## Imagine & Play!



By three years old, your child is likely showing improving social skills and can speak clearly enough to be understood by others. They enjoy playing with other children, but still need some help to take turns, share and cooperate with their friends.

Pretend play and playing games are especially fun at this age. Try making up silly games with your child and giggle with them as you talk about what's funny.

### Growing Up Healthy & Confident

Children start to form eating habits and develop a body image at a very young age, as young as three years old! As a parent, you can play an important role in helping your preschooler develop healthy eating habits and a positive body image and self-esteem. By modelling healthy behaviours and attitudes, you can help your child develop skills to grow up confident and resilient. [Learn more here.](#)

Looking for meal ideas? [Try this sample meal plan for your preschooler](#)

**Games are a fun way to fit physical activity into your day.** Try playing follow the leader with your child and take turns doing silly movements first. Or, go on a "silly walk" by calling out the types of steps to take, like "big elephant steps", "hop like a bunny" and "tip toe".

### Positive Mental Health

You can help your child develop positive mental health at any age. Children who are 3 and 4 can identify emotions, use words to express their feelings, needs and desires. This is a great time to reinforce coping strategies and for them to learn how to regulate their emotions. [Check out page 9 of this resource](#) for tips on helping your child develop self-control to build self-regulation skills.

### Your Child's Development

**Timiskaming Health Unit has tools to help you monitor your child's development at each stage of their growth and offer tips to help your child thrive.** Contact us to find out more or to get your child screened.



### Helping Your Child Thrive

Researchers have identified key qualities that help all kids thrive - at home, at school and in their community. At home, when families have more of these assets, everyone thrives. Children feel supported, loved, and encouraged, which leads them to make healthier lifestyle choices when they are older. Nurturing relationships, established routines, clear expectations, ability to adapt to challenges and connecting to their community are the family assets defined by the Search Institute. [Read more](#) on how you can help nurture these assets and help your family thrive.

## How much does my child need?

	Guideline
<b>Sleep</b>	In a 24-hour period, 3-4 year olds should be getting 10-13 hours of sleep, which may include a nap, with consistent bedtimes and wake-up times.
<b>Movement</b>	Your child should be getting at least 180 minutes a day of physical activity throughout the day. At least 60 minutes of that time should be energetic play, but more is better.
<b>Sitting time</b>	Don't restrain your child in things like a stroller or car seat for more than 1 hour at a time. Your child should also not sit for long periods of time. Sitting screen time (e.g. tablet, cell phone, tv, computer) should be no more than 1 hour, but less is better. When sitting with your child, try reading, storytelling or singing with them.

From: Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (0-4)



### Screen Time

**Teaching your toddler healthy habits early sets your child up for a healthy life and screen time is no different!** Screen time includes using a tablet or computer, watching tv, and playing video games. Screen time is not recommended for children under 2 years old. For children 2-5 years old, screen time should be limited to less than 1 hour per day. Help your child develop healthy screen time habits by following these tips to [Minimize Screen Time and Avoid a Tech Tantrum](#).

## Getting Ready for School

Early Learning School Readiness Programs are offered by childcare centres throughout Timiskaming. [Click here for a list of centres in the area](#). For more information about the program and whether it's offered at a particular daycare, contact the centre directly.



**READY, SET, KINDERGARTEN!**  
Junior Kindergarten Resources



### Starting Kindergarten is a busy time!

In this [Junior Kindergarten Handbook](#), you'll find information about how to prepare your child for their first day, what to expect, and some other health behaviour tips to help make this transition as smooth as possible.

### Has Your Child Had Their Teeth Checked?

If you need help accessing dental care for your child, the [Healthy Smiles Ontario program at THU](#) can help. Whether you have dental benefits or not, your child may qualify for the program. Contact our dental team to find out more at 1-866-747-4305 and ask to speak to a Healthy Smiles Hygienist.



#### CONTACT US!

Call us toll free 1-866-747-4305 and ask to speak to a Healthy Babies Healthy Children nurse

