



Preparing Your Child for School and Community Resources Updated to reflect changes DURING COVID-19

Starting school is an important milestone in your child's life. It is an exciting time that presents your child with new opportunities to learn. However, for many families it can be a time of uncertainty. Below you will find some tips to make school transition easier for you and your child!

Before Your Child Starts School - Things for you to do

- In order to register your child, ensure you have necessary documentation: Birth certificate, Immunization record, Health card and Proof of address.
- Find your "home" school by going to the Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium website, <https://scstc.ca/Eligibility>
- Watch the local newspapers or contact your local school and find out when and how to register your child. Typically, online registration starts in late January or early February. At registration, let the school know the concerns that you have with your child's development and that you were referred to Early Intervention Services for assessment.
- *Begin checking your school boards website to get up-to-date information on how COVID-19 impacts your school and opportunities for at home activities to support you and your child.*
- Once your school has re-opened, plan to attend your school's Kindergarten Open House or visit the school.
- The school will connect with you to provide you with updates and opportunities for visiting before your child starts school. You may want to request a meeting with the school principal, Special Education Resource Teacher and/or Classroom Teacher to share the following:
 - Your child's strengths and needs
 - Any concerns you may have
 - Any reports from others who have worked with your child
 - Special equipment (e.g. visual schedules, special seating)
 - Arrange a time you can bring your child to the school for a visit

Preparing your Child for school - Things to do with your child

- *While practicing social distancing* (for walking students), begin to practice the walk to school. Have your child pack and carry a backpack on walks.
- At home, practice opening and closing the zippers on their backpack and lunch bag.
- At home, pack a picnic lunch in your child's backpack/lunch bag and let them practice opening containers and choosing what to eat.
- Use backpacks and lunch containers you have on hand if you have not purchased one for your child for school yet.
- Practice hanging a coat and backpack on a hook.
- Visit the school yard a few times and play outside. *During COVID-19 restrictions, do not use the equipment and continue to maintain social distancing.*
- Begin making adjustments to your evening & morning routines, working towards a smooth start to the school year
- If your child will be taking a bus, there is typically a "First Rider" program that runs over the summer. Find more information on this program at <https://main.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca/>
- Work with your child to help them gain as much independence as possible with their self-help skills: dressing, undressing, toileting, eating etc.
- Visit the RVH CDS Facebook site for other tips and tricks.

When Your Child Has Started School

- Some schools may hold a brief teacher-family meeting in the first few days of school. Use this time to review your child's strengths and needs and share updated information with the teacher (e.g. "My child loves trains and will do any work if it involves trains", "My child needs reminders to use the washroom").
- Keep an open line of communication with your child's classroom teacher to promote consistency between home and school.



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- Discuss questions or concerns with your child's teacher. The school may be able to access assessment and programming supports, if needed.

The following are recommended resources to support you and your child as you prepare for school entry. Each resource offers a different focus and a variety of supports. Please check out and use the resources you find fit you and your child.

- The Simcoe County Early Intervention Website <https://www.simcoe.ca/dpt/ccs/early>
 - the Printable Resources tab has many handouts. The "Help Your Child Develop Independence" and "Getting Ready for School" handouts offer many school readiness suggestions
 - Updates on Early Intervention services <https://www.simcoe.ca/dpt/ccs/early>
 - Updates on Early Intervention services <https://www.simcoe.ca/dpt/ccs/early>
- Your local Library Website
- Visit our Facebook page (RVH Children's Development Services) @RVHCDS for speech, language, fluency and early literacy tips, information about hearing, feeding, Autism, regulation as well as some useful websites and resources.
- Visit your EarlyON Child and Family Centres website and / or Facebook page. Many area EarlyON programs are offering live circle and story times daily! <https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-earlyon-child-and-family-centre>
- Hanen website for ideas & tips to build your child's language and communication skills www.hanen.org
- The Preschool Speech and Language Program - City of Toronto website - Help your child now tab for more ideas and supports to build communication skills <https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/children-parenting/pregnancy-and-parenting/parenting/speech-language-vision-hearing/speech-and-language/>
- The Autism Ontario website for further links and supports. www.autismontario.com
- Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) <https://www.triplep-parenting.ca/ont-en/find-help/find-a-session/> Triple P is a flexible, practical way to develop skills, strategies and confidence to handle any parenting situation.
- New Path Early Years Service at <https://newpath.ca/> or call 1-866-566-7656. *During COVID-19 restrictions, New Path continues to offer their counselling sessions by telephone only.* They can support families who are experiencing social, emotional or behavioural problems with their child.
- Children's Treatment Network website <https://www.ctnsy.ca/> and Facebook page
 - *During COVID-19 restrictions, CTN is offering a virtual coffee chat for parents and caregivers of children with special needs. You can find more details about this under the Events tab.*
 - Subscribe to the CTN monthly newsletter for more information on resources and supports available to you from a variety of community groups and agencies. (Scroll to the bottom of the page and push the Subscribe button)

When COVID-19 restrictions have passed, you can find more information about the publicly funded resources in your community by contacting CTN (Children's Treatment Network of Simcoe York) to speak to a Service Navigator 1-866-377-0286