JOURNEY INTO LEARNING

Extraordinary lives start with a great Catholic Education

Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board
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*The word parents is used in this document to refer to parent(s) and guardians. It may also include caregivers or close family members who are responsible for raising the child.
WELCOME TO DUFFERIN-PEEL CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD!

You and your child are joining a community of faith and learning that dates back to over 170 years in Ontario.

Catholic schools in Ontario pre-date confederation. For generations religious and lay people along with Catholic parents have served the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, physical and social needs of Catholic children. Our vibrant Catholic Education system stands strong due to the Catholic parents, trustees, clergy and educators who have worked and sacrificed to ensure that Catholic schools would remain an enduring gift to the future, no matter what political or social pressures arose.

As one of the four publicly funded school systems in Ontario, Catholic schools offer the Ontario curriculum within a rich faith-based context. Our schools are guided by the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops through the Institute for Catholic Education and are governed by your elected members of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association.

Dufferin-Peel Catholic schools stand together with parents and local parishes to ensure that the next generation of Catholic children is ready to take its place as Gospel witnesses within the local and global community.

Our promise is to collaborate with you in guiding your child to become a Catholic school graduate who can fulfill the baptismal call to love God and to follow God’s will according to the example of Jesus Christ.

May God bless you and your child as you embark on this journey of learning – this journey of faith.

The Mission of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, in partnership with the family and church, is to provide, in a responsible manner, a Catholic education that develops spiritual, intellectual, aesthetic, emotional, social, and physical capabilities of each individual to live fully today and to meet the challenges of the future, thus enriching the community.
THE JOURNEY BEGINS!

Kindergarten is a time of wonder and imagination. We look forward to the partnership of home, school and parish working together to ensure a successful journey of learning and faith.

Our Catholic schools provide safe, caring, inclusive and healthy environments where learning flourishes. Our program will build upon your child’s experiences, cultivate your child’s interests, and encourage your child’s creativity within a play-based environment.

Kindergarten marks the beginning of an education journey that will successfully transition to post-secondary education or the workplace. Success is attained when our students’ gifts and talents are discovered, nurtured and shared with the local and global community.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Catholic schools provide many opportunities for you to participate in your child’s academic and faith formation. Active participation reaps great rewards for you and your child.

The following experiences may be offered at your child’s school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiences for child:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A classroom visit will allow you and your child the opportunity to share information about your son/daughter and initiate the process of building a relationship with the school community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A “New to Kindergarten” night is held in the spring and allows you and your child to experience learning through play activities</td>
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<td>• Open House is held early in the school year. This will give you an opportunity to interact with the educators, see your child’s classroom and meet other parents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Catholic School Council meetings are an excellent avenue for becoming more knowledgeable about the school, as well as providing you with an opportunity to have input into decisions made by the Council for the good of the school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Many schools offer volunteer programs, with activities ranging from working in classrooms, assisting individual students, committee work and trip volunteers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Celebrate your child’s learning and progress by attending parent/teacher conferences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Check your child’s backpack daily for any correspondence from the school. Talk to your child about school events and share school newsletters and Twitter feeds with them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Continue to support your child’s prayer life through participation in the local parish.</td>
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“Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me...” Luke 9:48
FAITH FORMATION

The Church reminds us that you, as parent, are your child’s first teacher of the faith. By your example of prayer, worship and daily living, you have set your child on the road to knowing the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

In Kindergarten, we will offer your child developmentally appropriate, distinctly Catholic experiences of sacred scripture, Church teaching, morality, family life, prayer, liturgy, and the sacraments. As a Catholic school, we will have the honour of accompanying all baptized children through the preparations for First Communion, Reconciliation and Confirmation.

The Kindergarten Religion Program, In God’s Image, affirms your child in all areas of his or her growth and celebrates the wonder of childhood as a trace of God.

Religion and Family Life expectations are described in terms of knowledge and skills, as well as values, attitudes and actions. In Dufferin-Peel schools, faith formation is evident in every conversation, every interaction; child to child, adult to adult, and child to adult. Our educators are trained as catechists who imbue the whole curriculum with a sense of the sacred.

“A Catholic school is one in which God and His truth are integrated into the entire syllabus, curriculum and life of the school.” – Archbishop Philip Pocock

JOURNEYING WITH THE ONTARIO CATHOLIC SCHOOL GRADUATE EXPECTATIONS

Your child is beginning the journey towards graduation today. Everything that happens between now and vocation is designed to prepare your child to take his or her place as a witness to the Gospel message of Jesus Christ in the local and the global community.

The following outline of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations demonstrates some ways that home and school can complement each other on the faith and learning journey.

As your child journeys through the school years in Dufferin-Peel, we promise to do our part in cultivating the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations – to encourage your child to become:

FAITH TIPS

- Teach your child how to make the sign of the cross.
- Make bedtime prayers a part of your child’s bedtime routine.
- Say a simple Grace before Meals.
A DISCERNING BELIEVER FORMED IN THE CATHOLIC FAITH COMMUNITY

Every child has the capacity for spiritual and religious growth. Four and five year olds are especially open to experiences of prayer and worship – to conversations about who God is and the signs that God is present.

In the classroom children will:

- find stories of saints and other faith heroes
- find children’s bibles
- find symbols and images including statues and pictures and rosaries
- identify symbols of life (plants, pets)
- bring offerings to support the poor

At home you can:

- get to know your parish priest and parish community by attending weekly mass and parish events
- review pictures/ videos of significant spiritual celebrations including baptisms, weddings, Easter, Christmas
- get to know the volunteers who lead the Children’s liturgy at your parish
- allow your child to participate in charitable donations of food, toys and money
- create a small prayer space in the bedroom or another place in the house
- share your belief that all life is good and that all can be forgiven

A REFLECTIVE AND CREATIVE THINKER

A reflective and creative thinker creates, evaluates and adapts ideas and decisions in light of what is good. They act according to a well-formed conscience as a person of virtue.

In the classroom children will understand that:

- they have thoughts and opinions that matter
- they can make good choices
- they have hope for the future
- they can solve problems with knowledge, understanding reconciliation and prayer
- we are all equal and special

At home you can:

- provide a wide variety of used and purchased craft materials for children to express themselves
- engage your child in helping others with simple solutions
- allow your child to perform drawing, cutting and assembly tasks on their own
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**AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR**

Communication is a wide ranging set of skills and abilities that encompass listening and reading, speaking and writing. These skills are developmental in nature – that is, they emerge as the child is physically and intellectually ready. No two children develop at the same rate. We look at what we know to be typical at particular ages.

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<td>• speak, write and listen as Jesus would want</td>
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<tr>
<td>• care about others and speak up for them</td>
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<tr>
<td>• be honest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• think carefully before reacting or speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• respect all people and their languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• listen to the Word of God</td>
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<td><strong>LISTENING</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• model attentive listening, especially at church</td>
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<tr>
<td>• help your child to be discerning toward messages in ads during favourite TV shows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• remind your child that others deserve to be heard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• talk about what you can learn by listening – What did you hear? Did you hear what I heard?</td>
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| **SPEAKING** |
| • share personal experiences and feelings in relation to daily occurrences |
| • encourage your child to ask appropriate questions during discussions |
| • allow your child to retell a story or give information |
| • encourage your child to speak and watch to see that others have understood him/her |

| **WRITING** |
| • make the shopping list together; ask what is the first sound in words such as milk, butter, and cookie |
| • have your child dictate a story about a trip, a family outing, or a special occasion |
| • make lists, signs, labels and notes together |
| • demonstrate that writing, traditional and technology based, should always promote a respect for self and others |
### A SELF-DIRECTED, RESPONSIBLE, LIFE-LONG LEARNER

Being self-directed means being able to set and pursue life goals that are in keeping with the mission and model of Jesus Christ.

**In the classroom children will:**
- use and recognize their gifts and talents are given by God
- always do their best
- build on their strengths and weaknesses; have an “I can” mindset
- set goals and accept change
- be proud of the good things they do
- be thankful for the gifts of others

**At home you can:**
- allow your child to choose his/her clothes
- encourage your child to pick his/her own storybooks
- encourage your child to clean up toys and craft materials
- have your child help to prepare and pack the daily, healthy snack
- encourage your child to choose to play outside regularly and develop curiosity toward the natural environment

### A COLLABORATIVE CONTRIBUTOR

A true collaborator share one’s God-given gifts and talents and acknowledges the gifts and talents that others have to offer.

**In the classroom children will learn to:**
- co-operate with others in all that they do
- value everyone’s work
- follow rules of fair play
- work hard in school so that they can build their community and make it a better place

**At home you can:**
- affirm your child by reminding them of what they do well
- ask your child to be your helper and encourage him/her to ask for help as well
### A CARING FAMILY MEMBER

A caring family member takes a loving, caring and respectful view of all family members and the role that family plays in society.

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<thead>
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<th>In the classroom children will:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• understand the love of God, themselves and their family</td>
<td>• tell stories about when you were young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• understand ways to care about and respect their family at school, Church, in the community and the world</td>
<td>• talk about your own family members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• understand ways to care about and respect God’s creation - the Earth</td>
<td>• pray with your child</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• focus on feelings in conversations about actions and consequences</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• participate in family-oriented neighbourhood and community events</td>
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### A RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN

In the Catholic school, children are offered an apprenticeship in Christian living. They learn to prepare themselves to take their place in the local and global community as witnesses to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

<table>
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<th>In the classroom children will learn to:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• be peacemakers</td>
<td>• model and encourage turn-taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• follow rules and do their share</td>
<td>• model and encourage taking responsibility for accidents and mistakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• help the poor and care for people in need</td>
<td>• encourage conservation and care of the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• stand up for what is right</td>
<td>• model courtesy to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• know that all life is precious</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• respect and protect the world and all of God’s creation</td>
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</table>
In addition to the core faith formation program, *The Kindergarten Program (2016)*, a Ministry of Education document, provides a framework of four learning areas, including: *Belonging and Contributing, Self-Regulation and Well-Being, Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics behaviour, Problem Solving and Innovating.*

Learning through play and inquiry is an essential foundation of the Kindergarten program. Purposeful play is the child’s way of working and learning. Children acquire many skills through play. They try new roles, solve problems, learn how to make sense of the environment, and practice social skills.

| Belonging and Contributing | • sense of connectedness to others;  
| | • relationships with others, and their contributions as part of a group, a community, and the natural world;  
| | • understanding of relationships and community, and of the ways in which people contribute to the world around them. |
| Self-Regulation and Well-being | • their own thinking and feelings, and their recognition of and respect for differences in the thinking and feelings of others;  
| | • regulate their emotions, adapting to distractions, and assessing consequences of actions in a way that enables them to engage in learning;  
| | • physical and mental health and wellness. |
| Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviour | • communicate thoughts and feelings – through gestures, physical movements, words, symbols, and representations, as well as through the use of a variety of materials;  
| | • literacy behaviours through the use of language, images, and materials to express and think critically about ideas and emotions, as they listen and speak, view and represent, and begin to read and write;  
| | • mathematics behaviours, evident in the various ways they use concepts of number and pattern during play; access, manage, create, and evaluate information and experience a beginning understanding of mathematical relationships, concepts, skills, and processes;  
| | • an active engagement in learning and a developing love of learning, which can instil the habit of learning for life. |
| Problem Solving and Innovating | • explore the world through natural curiosity, in ways that engage the mind, the senses, and the body;  
| | • make meaning of their world by asking questions, testing theories, solving problems, and engaging in creative and analytical thinking;  
| | • the innovative ways of thinking about and doing things that naturally arise through curiosity, and apply those ideas in relationships with others, with materials, and with the environment. |
ASSESSMENT AND COMMUNICATION OF LEARNING

Ongoing communication between the school and home is a crucial part of the reporting process. Kindergarten educators constantly assess and monitor student progress. The Kindergarten Communication of Learning, in combination with a formal interview, provide clear, detailed information to parents about their child’s key learning, next steps for growth and what parents can do to support their child’s learning.

At the end of each reporting period, educators will communicate information about the child’s learning in three categories: **Key Learning**, **Growth in Learning**, and **Next Steps in Learning**. These terms are defined as follows:

- **Key Learning** refers to the most important or significant skills and/or understandings (knowledge) that your child has demonstrated during the reporting period.
- **Growth in Learning** refers to positive developments in learning that your child has demonstrated over the reporting period.
- **Next Steps in Learning** refers to ways in which your child can move forward in developing knowledge and skills both at school and at home.

*(Growing Success: The Kindergarten Addendum, Queens Printer for Ontario, 2016)*

FAITH TIP

*Pray with your child. Sharing gratitude for our gifts enhances well-being within us all.*

CLOTHING LABELS

*Label your child’s clothes and other belongings. Labelling everything they bring to the school can make sure it gets back to its rightful owner. Hats, backpacks, socks, even shoes, boots and coats and lunch containers.*
**EARLY YEARS**

Children’s first six years of development set the foundation for their success in school and future well-being. Children’s development during these first six years affects their learning, behaviour, and physical and emotional health throughout adulthood. A parent is a child’s first and most enduring teacher.

Visit our Early Years webpage for information on programs and services that help families give their children the best start possible.

www.dpcdsb.org/CEC/Programs/Early+Years.htm

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**OUTDOOR FUN**

*Physical well-being is as important as intellectual well-being in your child’s learning and long-term success. Plan a family picnic or a walk. It does not have to be a long trip; you can even make it a weekly event. Keeping them active and outdoors is key.*
ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

A strong knowledge of any language will help your child to learn a new language well, think more clearly and feel confident. To help your child strive for success, speak your first language at home, and, where possible, begin to speak in English for part of your conversation. Read a variety of materials to your child, in both your first language and in English.

SUPPORT SERVICES

In Dufferin-Peel, our Christ-centred worldview invites a variety of services to support all learners. Parents are key partners in supporting successful transition plans for students with diverse learning needs. Dufferin-Peel is committed to supporting our spiritual foundational principle that ‘Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me.’ (Luke 9:48).

In support of student transitions, we strive to provide strategies that are universally designed, are good for all, necessary for some, and essential for a few. You are encouraged to talk to your child’s teacher and/or other school staff to learn about support services available to best support the unique needs of your child.

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/LearningforAll2013.pdf
**PREPARING YOUR CHILD**

The first day of Kindergarten is a special beginning for you and your child. Your child may experience mixed emotions, feelings of excitement as well as fear, about coming to school. Be assured that these feelings are to be expected. We will work together to make the transition from home to school a positive experience for you and your child.

**Helpful Hints for Preparing Your Child:**
- Raise the topic of going to school in a positive, non-threatening way to alleviate fears.
- Help your child prepare for the routines of school by developing morning and lunch routines before school begins.
- Let your child know that many familiar story, craft and play activities also take place at school.
- Take walks through the neighbourhood during the summer. Show your child the route to school and the school grounds.
- If your child will be taking the bus to school, attend the transportation orientation sessions offered in August. A brochure containing specific information is available in your child’s registration package.
- Take some time to play in the schoolyard with your child.
- Your initial visit with the teacher and DECE is an effective way to ease anxiety. You can communicate any concerns about anxiety or other behaviours that you feel the teacher and DECE may encounter with your child.
- Reassure your child that you will be thinking of them, and looking forward to hearing all about how great the day was.
- When you say good-bye to your child on the first day, make it quick, light and reassuring.
- Discuss the after-school pick-up routine with your child.

**EMOTIONS**

*Talk about your feelings and encourage your child to do the same. “Today I was angry because I didn’t get my way, but yesterday I was happy because I saw my uncle.”*
NUMERACY & LITERACY AT HOME

The home is a perfect place for children to learn the connections between early mathematics and their world. As your child plays, he or she naturally communicates about mathematical thinking. Following your child’s self-initiated, mathematical play will help to develop a meaningful foundation for school mathematics. Here are several ways you can encourage your child’s mathematical thinking at home.

TOP TIPS FOR PARENTS

• Build strong, positive attitudes about math. When children feel positively engaged and successful, they are most likely to stick with an activity or a problem to find a solution.

• Begin with activities that meet your child’s level of mathematical understanding. Early success in solving problems will build your child’s confidence. Gradually move to activities that provide more challenge for your child.

• If you and your child are more uncomfortable in language other than English, use it. Your child will understand concepts better in the language that he or she knows best.

(Supporting Your Child with Mathematics, Ministry of Education, p. 2)

For young children, draw your child’s attention to the variety of places mathematics can be found in everyday places in fun, playful ways, with songs, silly voices or big body actions. Engage with numbers in a meaningful way and in the context of your child’s life experiences:

• Count, count, count!
• Count food items at snack times (3 fishy crackers, 5 carrots, 10 grapes);
• Count small toys and blocks during play;
• Count down to your child’s birthday or a special family event;
• Build awareness of his or her birthdate, your house number, the number of people in your family, the number of people who can fit into the family vehicle, the number of steps up to their bedroom, the number of place settings at the family dinner table, etc.;
• Build opportunities during play to write down numbers, matching them to models (magnetic numbers and blocks) or even using their own written symbols. Play waiter or waitress, grocery store, or any other community role that piques your child’s curiosity and write tickets or uses numbers with customers.
• Use numbers in play situations: measuring during cooking or baking, measuring with, foot lengths, sidewalk sections, etc., counting steps, jumps, swings or tumbles, counting down to blast-off, singing numbers in sequence, ordering sizes of sand castles or trucks, using stones or gems for money, sorting buttons or coins;
• Sing songs and play games that involve instructions for positional words like forward / backward, front / back, in / out, up / down, etc.,
• Play board games (age appropriate) and card games. Each support number recognition and various counting principles.
• Play with blocks, Lego, clay and other building materials to support spatial reasoning skills.
Some additional resources you might want to check out:
Doing Mathematics with Your Child – A Parent Guide
TVO.KIDS.COM
Parents as Partners - TeachOntario

You can help your child develop excellent literacy skills. Here are several fun and informative ways you can encourage your child to write.

- Pay attention to everyday signs. They are a great way for kids to experience the usefulness of print communication. Try to read signs aloud: “Stop, S-T-O-P. That red sign tells me to stop the car.”
- Make shopping and things-to-do lists together. Let your child be the keeper of the list and tell him/her to use a pencil to mark off items as you shop or do chores around the house.
- Set up a play office at your home. preschoolers love to collect and use old office supplies. Help your child set up a place where he or she can “work” at pretend writing.
- Encourage your child to make greeting cards, thank-you notes or get-well cards. He or she will see that you can express feelings through words.
- Be encouraging and positive. Positive reinforcement makes it more enjoyable and will make your child want to do it more.

CHILDREN’S BOOKS ABOUT KINDERGARTEN

Annabelle Swift, Kindergartener by Amy Schwartz
Berenstain Bears Go to School by Stan & Jan Berenstain
Bug, a Bear, and A Boy Go to School by David McPhail
Curious George’s First Day of School by Margret & H.A.Reys
David Goes to School by David Shannon
First Day, Hurray by Nancy Poydar
The First Day of School by Mercer Mayer
Hairy the Dirty Dog by Gene Zion
Kindergarten Here I Come by D.J. Steinberg
Kindergarten Rocks by Katie Davis
The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn

MISS BINDERTAGEN GETS READY FOR KINDERGARTEN
by Joseph Slate
Mom, It’s My First Day of Kindergarten by Hyewon Yum
Monster Goes to School by Virginia Mueller
Mouse’s First Day of School by Lauren Thompson
See You Later, Alligator! by Laura Kuansosky
The Night Before Kindergarten by Natasha Wing
Timothy Goes to School by Rosemary Wells
Wemberly Worried by Kevin Henkes
When You Go to Kindergarten by James Howe

WRITE A BOOK
Come up with an idea together and then write and draw the story out on a few pages.

NUMBERS AND LETTERS
Look for street and store signs, license plates, and building/house numbers you pass when you’re on the go. Try to get them to identify numbers and letters.
HEALTHY SNACKS AND LUNCHES

To young children, food is not just a taste. It is something you touch and see as well. Keeping your child interested in healthy food can be simple if you look beyond the flavour and include foods that incorporate a variety of shapes, colours and textures.

- Cut sandwiches into triangles or diamonds. Use cookie cutters to make fun and exciting shapes.
- Try different kinds of grains (rye, pumpernickel, flax) as well as the type of bread like whole grain tortillas, bagels and pitas.
- Offer various types of cheese (mozzarella, cheddar, Jack, Swiss) in different forms (cubes, strings, slices and balls). To create a cheese ball, shred and then shape into balls.
- Switch up the veggies and fruit. Give your kids something different to experience with each bite. Group foods according to: type (citrus, tropical.); colour (green, red, orange, yellow, purple); shape (balls, strips, chunks, whole); or texture (soft, juicy, crunchy)
- Kids love to dip. Use cottage cheese, different types of hummus, yogurt, or guacamole as healthy dips

FOOD ALLERGIES

There are a number of students enrolled in our schools who have very serious, and in some cases, life threatening food allergies. Your cooperation is necessary in helping ensure a safe environment for these children. Some children in our schools are allergic to peanuts and products containing nuts, nut oils, or by-products. Other children may be allergic to wheat, eggs, dairy products or shell fish, etc. Your school community may have children in attendance who have one or more of these food allergies.

For some children, even second hand contact with these substances, can cause a reaction to occur.

For example, a severe reaction can occur if the child touches a desk, toy, or book previously handled by another student who has touched the allergen food item.

We ask that, as caring community members, children do not bring foods containing allergy-related foods or byproducts to school (lunches, snacks, treats for the class, etc.). Your child’s school will advise you of potential allergy concerns and related procedures.
The Ministry of Education funds several child and family programs including: Ontario Early Years Centres, Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, Child Care Resource Centres and Better Beginnings, Better Futures programs. These programs provide opportunities for all children to participate in play and inquiry-based programs, and support all parents and caregivers in their roles. Parents and caregivers also have access to information about child development and specialized services as needed.

The government recently announced its plan to move forward with integrating these child and family programs to create Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres by 2018. The Ministry of Education is working with the Region of Peel, Dufferin County, The Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, community partners, parents and caregivers to enhance programs and minimize service disruptions for children and families.

Your input as a parent and caregiver is sought as part of a very important process of review and consultation. The collection of data related to Early Years Experiences has been introduced to parents who are registering their children for the first time in junior or senior kindergarten. This on-line survey seeks information related to your experience with Early Learning Centres and service delivery in the area. The data that is collected will be used to determine new Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centre locations, new programs and the value of our services. The information you provide will not identify you or your family.

At the provincial level, the data will support outcome monitoring and will inform the development of a provincial definition of quality child care and early years programs. The information gathered will be shared with the Region of Peel, the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board and affiliates to support transitions to kindergarten, plan for future sites, evaluate programs and determine the viability of new or existing programs within the Region.

More information related to this data collection is available through the Board website; dpcdsb.org  Early Years

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