

Schoolbells will be ringing soon

Get into habit of healthy routines

New and demanding routines on those first few days back at school can be intimidating for both parents and kids alike. To assist, the Canadian Health Food Association (CHFA) offers some tips to help your little ones start off the school year feeling strong:

Play and exercise for better sleep

Research shows that exercising helps you fall asleep faster and stay asleep for longer.

This is especially true for kids. Unfortunately, studies show that only seven per cent of kids in Canada get the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Make sure your child gets enough sleep every night by encouraging physical activity during the day.

Go organic

Teaching our kids about the benefits of organic foods is almost as important as making sure that they eat breakfast every day.

When you buy organic foods, you're investing in your health and the health of your family, and you're supporting environmentally sustainable practices. These are all important messages we should be teaching our children.

Add a multivitamin to your mix

Mornings can be busy and hectic. Sometimes kids just don't have time to eat a full, healthy breakfast to get all the nutrients they need. Supplementing your kids' diet with a multivitamin might be a good idea to ensure they are getting all the essential nutrients.

There are multivitamins formulated for every age, ranging from kids to adults. Speak with your health care practitioner to determine which multivitamin is best for every member of your family.

Pack a brain boosting lunch

Packing the right food for lunch can also play a role in boosting your child's brain power.

Foods that contain poly-unsaturated fats are good for brain health and provide energy. If possible, try to slip avocados or pumpkin seeds into school lunches.

Add omega-3s for brain health

The long-chain omega-3 fats in



A healthy child is an education-ready child. The Canadian Health Food Association offers tips to help prepare students for the classroom.

fish oil have been shown to improve cognitive performance, including improved behaviour, memory and reading.

Getting the right amount of healthy fats during pregnancy and childhood has shown to have a number of benefits for children, including increased intelligence and visual acuity. Omega-3 supplements are available in different forms for children and adults.

Don't forget about vitamin D

In September, the days get shorter and back-to-school means more time indoors, both of which can lead

to a decrease in vitamin D. Children and toddlers need vitamin D to absorb calcium and form strong teeth and bones. It has also been linked to increased immunity and disease prevention. Consider adding a vitamin D supplement formulated for children.

When adding supplements to your child's diet, it is always a good idea to speak with your health care practitioner. Visit chfa.ca for more information on how to help your child thrive and enjoy a healthy transition back to school this September.

- www.newscanada.com

Online education could work for you

As the fall season sets in, education is on the minds of many Canadians. For those who are considering continuing their education, learning in the classroom isn't always an option.

Between work, family, and social commitments, there isn't much free time. Learning must be flexible and dynamic.

For many of us a popular alternative to in-class learning is distance education.

Distance education can help students meet their educational goals while giving them the freedom to continue their life:

It is convenient

Online learning allows for flexibility.

Students can learn anywhere at any time on a computer or tablet with Internet access. Whether it's picking up an extra credit, improving high school grades or studying new subjects to help facilitate a career change, learning can easily fit into an individual's schedule.

TVO's Independent Learning Centre (ILC), for example, offers accredited high school courses in

a variety of subjects – from mathematics to the arts – helping adult students meet a variety of personal and professional goals.

It is affordable

With costs starting as low as \$40 per course registration, picking up an extra credit doesn't have to break the bank.

Although education costs aren't limited to tuition, online learning allows students to save on commuting, some learning materials (e.g. textbooks) and additional fees like childcare.

Learn at your own pace

Every student has a preference for how he or she likes to learn; solo studying allows you to cater your learning to your individual needs, whether it's a half hour at a time or three solid hours.

In addition, interacting with teachers and students can be intimidating. Online communication with other students and teachers allows for more time to collect your thoughts and formulate questions.

- www.newscanada.com

Future is bright for university grads: Report

Ontario appears to be recovering and headed for growth after years of economic challenges, improving the outlook for both the employment and earnings of university graduates, according to a new report, University Works.

The report, newly released by an economist with the Council of Ontario Universities (COU), says the unemployment rate for university graduates in February 2015 was 4.2 per cent – the lowest among the population.

"In fact, university graduates experienced the highest employment growth of any educational attainment group over the last decade," says Patrick Deane, COU chair and president of McMaster University. "They are getting jobs related to their skills and on average Ontario university graduates earn 58 per cent more than graduates from other Ontario post-secondary programs."

The report says Ontario university graduates consistently outperform the rest of the population in employment and earning outcomes. That's true for all ages, including recent graduates.

Citing data from Statistics Canada's National Household Survey, the report says the average high school grad earned \$38,808 (during the last year data was available), while the average Ontario college grad earned \$47,706, and the average university grad earned \$75,396.

"When lifetime earnings and employment rates are considered, a university education is still one of the most resilient and personally fulfilling investments a person can make," says Deane.

To read the University Works report, visit cou.on.ca.

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Board expands its offerings

'Learning can be so much fun. It can happen everywhere,' Picard says

By ANNA CABRERA CRISTOFARO
Special to The Star

With weeks yet to go before the end of summer, Southwestern Ontario Conseil scolaire catholique Providence director Joseph Picard sounds as excited as a schoolboy to begin the school year.

And with good reason. The French language Catholic board is set to introduce a number of new programs this year, which Picard hopes will not only attract students to the board, but will also encourage existing students to look forward to the upcoming year like never before.

"As a board, we've always been capable of offering traditional type of programs – the basics and fundamentals," says Picard. "Recently we've been expanding programs to meet student needs."

The school board is wide, with schools located throughout the province, from Windsor to Woodstock to Owen Sound.

But Windsor schools in particular are getting some exciting new programs this year, including the addition of a dance program and studio at Lajeunesse, which will be completed in late September.

"For us, that's very exciting," says Picard. "To get into dance and artistic expression is something we're thrilled about."

The school board is also offering Hockey Canada skills training at all of its high schools, a program Picard says has been very successful in the schools where it has already been implemented.

"We're doing research and tracking (for this program), and we find student engagement for those participating in the program increasing. There is less disciplining of students, there's a higher attendance



Non-French speaking parents need not worry about sending their children to a French school, says Joseph Picard, director of the Southwestern Ontario Conseil scolaire catholique Providence. "We're here to help," he says.

rate and overall a more positive attitude.

"We want to see over a period of time if indeed those changes are due to this program on its own, or if it's part of a greater picture within the curriculum and environment."

Picard is hopeful that sports and arts programs like this will help students find their passions, or help them become more successful in their academic and personal lives.

"Of course, when you keep students engaged and focused, it's always very positive," he says. "To make a successful society, you need a wide variety of skills, and improve conditions for everybody, allowing

them to explore and examine what they enjoy.

"For us it begins with this (Hockey Canada skills) program, but we fully expect it to expand to the arts soon."

Picard adds: "It's just going to be such an exciting year because of so many fun things. We attempt to always be innovative, and at the same time responsible."

"At the end of the day, we think about it, try to do it right, measure it, and if it's effective, we go through with it. It's all about enhancing student learning."

"Learning can be so much fun. And it can happen everywhere."

'HOW CAN I HELP MY KIDS?'

Many non-French speaking parents are intimidated by the idea of sending their children to a French school, but Picard stresses that even if the parents don't speak the language, there are many ways for them to help their children succeed.

"A lot of parents might have lost the language, or have never spoken it at all, and they think, 'How can I help my kids?'" he says. "But this is who we are, and this is what we do, and we're here to help. Our mandate is obviously



to promote, encourage and share the French language and culture, and there's the Catholic component as well. It's very special."

For more information, visit www.cscprovidence.ca.

Keeping your kids healthy part of RN's job

It's back-to-school time and for most parents, this brings concerns about keeping their kids healthy.

Did you know that in Ontario, a dedicated group of registered nurses (RNs) work in public health specifically to focus on ways to keep our kids and the community in the best of health?

Public health nurses are part of a network of RNs who provide highly skilled services and care. With their special training, these RNs work to provide a wide range of services and education from their public health units, and this includes work with our children on issues specific to them.

Public health nurses point out that there is a strong connection between health and many environmental factors, so they teach kids about the practice of good health habits.

In addition to running immunization clinics, offering counseling and sexual health programs for teenagers, public health nurses have expertise when kids need help with speech, language, hearing or vision issues.

Parents can access public health for assistance and counseling. Take a look, for example, at the Healthy Schools program which was initiated to ensure overall fitness, well-being and proper nutrition.

By working with whole communities, public health nurses educate and counsel patients, monitor health trends and identify health factors specific to that location. They use their expertise to design and deliver health education campaigns and implement disease-prevention and screening activities to keep kids healthy.

So as children go back to class, it's good to know there are skilled and educated health advocates on our side. More information is available at ona.org/RNs.



Public Health nurses are your partner in kids' health.



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