

# Parent Engagement



## Mental Health Minute

### The Importance of Routines

Establishing a routine helps family members organize themselves. When children feel like they are a part of a family unit, it builds their sense of belonging and security. Routines encourage an understanding of family expectations and provides an opportunity for children to develop independence and feel accomplished. Routines teach children time management and organizational skills and helps them feel safe and in-control. Below are examples of routines:

- Getting ready for bed
- Eating meals
- Brushing teeth
- One-on-one time with parent(s)

Don't expect children to understand what you want. Teach your child skills by providing clear expectations and positive reinforcement.

Source: Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit [www.hkpr.on.ca](http://www.hkpr.on.ca);  
Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)

## Booster Seats

### Should my child still be in a booster seat?

The evidence says YES if they are less than 80lbs and 4' 9". Seat belts are designed for adults; a booster seat allows the child to fit the seat belt properly. If you are thinking about moving your child out of their booster seat (or have moved them) check their fit in the seat belt system.

A properly fitting seat belt lays low on the hips with the chest strap across the body not touching the neck. In an upright position (no slouching!) knees should bend at the edge of the seat and back remains against the back of the seat. Your child needs to stay in this position throughout the car ride. If you find they are slouching, then it may not yet be time for just the seat belt. If in doubt, don't rush the stages!

For more information call Your Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-5720 or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org).

## Family Literacy

Family Literacy is a chance for parents and children to enjoy literacy activities together. There are lots of fun family literacy activities you can enjoy with your child.

### Read and Write with Your child

- Ask your child questions as you read books
- Create a comic strip about your family
- Write a letter to a friend or relative

### Sing and Tell Stories Together

- Sing songs as a family
- Come up with new rhymes for songs and stories
- Tell knock-knock jokes

### Engage in Activities that Require Reading and Writing

- Play board games
- Make a grocery list, follow a recipe, read street signs
- Visit your local library together

Source: [www.tvoparents.tv.org](http://www.tvoparents.tv.org)