



# Parent Connection



HENRY FORD DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS

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Your Henry Ford pediatrician is here for you. Below we have collected articles and resources we think you might find helpful. Information in our newsletter is yours to use when it is helpful to you and yours to disregard when it is not. We hope you and your family are staying safe during this pandemic.

## Ready for Preschool?

Going to school is one of the biggest steps in a child's life. Preschool can start after a child turns three years old, however it can be hard to decide if a child is ready to attend. There are many things that can indicate whether a child is [ready for preschool](#). One thing is whether a child can follow directions. Cleaning up toys, following snack guidelines, and walking in a line with the rest of the class are all simple directions a child will need to follow. Some of these things can be implemented at home to give a child practice at following directions.

How well a child handles transition, can also be a way to tell if they are ready for preschool. Transitions such as moving from snack time to craft time can seem like a simple thing that they may experience in preschool but without experience, it can be jarring to a child. Transitions are something that can be practiced at home during your daily activities. Explaining what is coming next, for example, saying "After this snack, we will color" can be a way to teach children transitions.

[Potty training](#) is also something that schools may require, so be sure to check with your preferred preschool. General self-care, like washing hands or pulling up pants, are skills a child should know to start school. Children develop at different rates, so don't worry if your child isn't ready just yet. There are many preschool-style activities parents can [do at home](#) while a child is getting ready to start school.

**Is Your Child Preschool Ready?**

As your child nears the preschool age, you will want to make sure they are prepared before sending them off. There are some things your child should be able to do before you enroll them in preschool.

- INDEPENDENCE** - Your child should have a certain level of independence before starting preschool. They should be able to use the bathroom on their own, wash their hands, get lunch, and do other basic tasks on their own.
- EMOTIONS** - Your child should be able to be away from you without wanting to leave. Ideally, they should also be able to tolerate their feelings and reactions and not only cry when upset.
- CONCENTRATION** - Your child should be able to complete an activity that lasts at least 10 minutes long. They also need to be able to follow most directions and focus on tasks without getting distracted.
- STAMINA** - Your child should have the physical and mental energy for preschool. Get them used to the routine and make sure they are not extremely tired on naps.
- RELATIONSHIPS** - Your child should be able to participate in group activities, work with other kids, and pay attention to what the teacher is instructing. They have to be used to working with and around other kids.

If your child is ready for preschool, be sure to schedule a visit at Yellow Brick Road Early Childhood Development Center. Contact us today to learn more and start preparing your child for preschool.

Yellow Brick Road  
Early Childhood Development Center

## Seasonal Allergies in Children

It can be difficult to tell if your child is suffering from a common cold or if they have developed [spring seasonal allergies](#). Besides the common symptoms of runny nose and sneezing, one telltale symptom is [rubbing of the face and eyes](#). There are [things you can do](#) to help reduce symptoms in your child. There are also some [natural remedies](#) for seasonal allergies. However, before giving your child anything, whether natural or something over the counter from the pharmacy, be sure to talk to your pediatrician first. They can help you determine if something is safe or if allergy testing is needed.



## Teens and Social Media

Most teens spend a large amount of time on [social media](#). Many of their interactions with friends, classmates, and even family are done through social media. We often hear the negatives about social media, however, there are positive ways social media can benefit teens. Social media allows teens to stay connected with their peers, volunteer or get involved with a campaign or nonprofit organization, and enhance their creativity by sharing music or art. There are many [ways to help](#) teens better navigate social media. Starting conversations at home about cyberbullying, what's real vs. not real, and [self-esteem](#) can all be ways to help teens stay safe while using social media. Being involved with your child's social media can be a way to help teens. [Staying aware](#) of what accounts they follow or suggesting accounts that promote a positive image can help teens view things that will benefit them. Discussing what they see on social media can be a good way to teach world events and find out your teen's opinion on the world around them.

## Talking to Your Kids about Drugs and Alcohol

Talking to your children about [drugs and alcohol](#) is an important conversation. As young people become more independent, they need to understand the risks and dangers associated with using mind altering substances. Especially with respect to an adolescent's [developing brain](#). The euphoric high associated with addictive substances can be highly reinforcing for a teenage brain, which is more prone to emotional decision making. The National Institute on Drug Abuse has [a lot of resources](#) for both parents and teens on this topic. Talk to your children [about reasons why teens may use drugs or alcohol](#) and discuss alternative options.


Making sure your child understands the risks of drug and alcohol use isn't enough. They also need to know how to get out of a potentially bad situation. Help your child think through ways to act if they find themselves in any uncomfortable situation. How do they reach out for help? Will someone be able to pick them up? What if they drove and they are worried about abandoning friends? Developing some [codes for your teen to use](#) can be helpful when they don't want friends to know they are uncomfortable.

Also, you and any other co-parents responsible for your teen should talk about how to address these situations [after they happen](#). Discussing things ahead of time will ensure everyone is on the same page and focuses on helping and not blaming.


**speaknow!**

## NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO TALK


### Adults can help reduce youth substance abuse




**SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT HELPS**  
Youth who participate in extracurricular activities are **1.5x LESS** likely to misuse prescription drugs.<sup>1</sup>




**FAMILY MEALTIME MAKES A DIFFERENCE**  
Sharing a family meal and actively listening to kids is of incredible value and worth.<sup>2</sup>



**ADULTS CAN HELP REDUCE YOUTH ALCOHOL USE**  
Youth who can ask a parent, guardian, or other adult for help are **1.5x LESS** likely to binge drink.<sup>3</sup>



**TEACHERS CAN HELP REDUCE YOUTH MARIJUANA USE**  
Youth who agree that teachers care and encourage them are **1.7x LESS** likely to use marijuana.<sup>4</sup>



**ALCOHOL, DRUGS & BRAIN DEVELOPMENT**  
Just as the body changes dramatically between the ages of 9 and 20, the brain changes dramatically too. Studies show exposure to alcohol and drugs during adolescence may interrupt key processes of brain development.<sup>5</sup>

***It is more important than ever to have a conversation with children about harmful effects of alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drugs use and abuse.<sup>6</sup>***

**SPEAK NOW, HERE'S HOW**

**START THE CONVERSATION**

- What will you do if there is alcohol at the party?
- How would you handle it if a friend offered you marijuana?
- If your friend gave you his prescription, what would you say?

Get more tips on how to start the conversation at [speaknowcolorado.org](http://speaknowcolorado.org)

Source:  
<sup>1</sup> <http://www.colorado.gov/pacific/health/2018/08/20/18-08-20-Substance-Use-Graphic.pdf>  
<sup>2</sup> <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/07/26/parents-who-prepare-a-meal-for-their-children-are-more-likely-to-communicate-with-them-about-substance-use/>  
<sup>3</sup> <http://www.colorado.gov/pacific/health/2018/08/20/18-08-20-Substance-Use-Graphic.pdf>  
<sup>4</sup> <http://www.colorado.gov/pacific/health/2018/08/20/18-08-20-Substance-Use-Graphic.pdf>  
<sup>5</sup> <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures/Alcohol-Drugs-Brain-Development>  
<sup>6</sup> <http://www.colorado.gov/pacific/health/2018/08/20/18-08-20-Substance-Use-Graphic.pdf>

### Women’s History Month

March is [Women’s History Month](#) and celebrates the achievements and contributions of women to society. The National Women’s History Alliance (DWH) selects a [theme](#) each year, and 2022 is “Women Providing Healing, Promoting Hope. Page 8 of the NWA magazine, [Women’s History](#), details many women providing healing and promoting hope. This includes Flint’s [Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha](#) whose research and tireless work exposed the high blood lead levels associated with the Flint water crisis. Another group of women who are making history today are [those making a difference during the pandemic](#). Sharing these stories with your children will help them learn the roles women play in the world to contribute to our society. As always, books are an excellent way to open discussions with children. Here Wee Read has a great list of [picture books](#) for Women’s History Month.



### **Spring Let's Get Healthy!**

As winter ends, it may be a good time for your family to refresh your commitment to [healthy habits](#). While it may seem like a good idea to focus on your child's weight to gauge change, for children it is better to [focus on their daily habits](#). One easy way to get started is to use the concept of [5-2-1-0](#). These daily healthy habits provide a great foundation for helping kids incorporate nutrition and physical activity into their everyday activities.

If you feel your family may benefit from a more structured approach, [Spring Let's Get Healthy!](#) is a motivating, 10-week program that teaches children ages 9-13 and their families how to take simple steps toward understanding the importance of healthy eating habits and an active lifestyle. The LGH team is made up of a doctor or nurse, registered dietician, behavioral therapist, and personal trainer. By partnering each child with at least one parent or caregiver, the families and teaching team work together to reshape how each child and their family think about food, nutrition, and exercise.

We are also offering an LGH Teen program for teens ages 14-18. This program builds on the foundational messages of LGH while also addressing the unique needs of teens. LGH-Teen participants are not required to have a parent present.

For the spring session, groups will meet virtually once a week. Programming includes a wide variety of topics including mindful eating, snack choices, staying motivated and body image. Classes will be fun, interactive and provide you a chance to learn and get answers to your healthy lifestyle questions from the comfort and safety of your own home. Each class will also have thirty minutes of live physical activity instruction.

For more information or to register, please call (313) 874-6653 or email us at [LetsGetHealthy@hfhs.org](mailto:LetsGetHealthy@hfhs.org). You can also register online [here](#).

*Are there other topics you are interested in and would like to learn more about? If yes, please e-mail us at [ParentConnection@hfhs.org](mailto:ParentConnection@hfhs.org) or to unsubscribe.*