

WINNIPEG PARENT

THE TWEEN & TEEN ISSUE

Age Appropriate Chores for Kids

Building Life Skills for Success

DIETS DON'T WORK...

Here's what To Do Instead

Building a Healthy Relationship with your body

7 Tips for Caregivers - Supporting Youth and Their Feelings

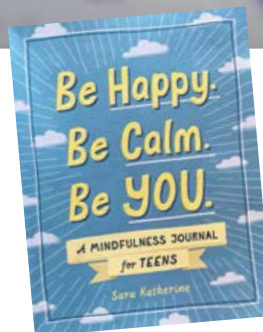
Why Tweens & Teens Drop Out of Sports

And What To Do About It

EXPLORE EVERY STORY

*Climate Heroes: Youth
Against Climate Change*

SEE INSIDE FOR
OUR TEEN BOOK
SELECTION OF
THE MONTH!





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On the Cover: Teenage boy studying on his bed.

Happy 2024!

I don't know if it's just me, but writing 2024 seems a little crazy! The past year has flown by and now we are onto the next. My new year's resolution is to go into 2024 with more 'purpose'. I don't mean filling my calendar with more things to do, or constantly being busy. I mean just the opposite.

This issue of Winnipeg Parent is focused on tweens and teens - to help them do that too. They have so much more to navigate in their daily lives than we parents did. I am hoping to lead my household by example in 2024. I would like this year to be more purposeful or mindful in how I spend my time.

Enjoying the moments with family and friends. Maybe picking up the phone and calling a friend as opposed to texting them. Being more present when I spend time with family. Putting down our devices more often and playing a board game instead.

In this issue of Winnipeg Parent, you will find suggestions on how to help your tween and teen in 2024. Whether that be in nutrition, journaling, or something as easy as getting more sleep during the school week. We have ideas and suggestions on this and more!



Cheers to you and your family. Wishing you all health, happiness and a new year of fun memories to create!

Dana

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Answers to Your Basic Tween and Teen Questions

By Dana Todd
Winnipeg Parent

How many hours of sleep does my teen need?

Tweens and teens should have 8-10 hours a night of uninterrupted sleep

Do they need to exercise every day?

According to TeensHealth, exercise benefits every part of the body and the mind. 13-17 year olds should get at least 60 minutes each day of activity. This can include aerobics, jogging, or anything that provides moderate to vigorous movement.

How much Screen time is too much?

No more than 2 hours per day (aside from homework), ironically according to many articles on the internet. Screen time impacts so many things - social behaviors, vision, mental health. It's important to know what your kids are watching and how much they are using their devices.

Is alone time good?

According to Quora from 2023, having some alone time can be good for your teen. It gives them the chance to reflect on their day, allows them to be creative and be comfortable with themselves.

Teach your tween / teen important skills they will need for the future

- Washing clothes
- Cooking a simple meal
- Keeping their space clean
- Helping others, whether it be helping a neighbor shovel snow, or volunteering at a local animal shelter
- Being responsible for something - ie: feeding the family pets or taking them for walks.
- Waking up themselves in the morning
- Earning their own money

Establishing A Healthy Relationship with Your Body

By Dr. Jay M. Greenfeld
Ph.D., C.Psych.

One of the most exciting things that can happen for children is entering a new phase of their growthful lives whether that be preteens (the early stages of social independence) or teenage years (growing independence and role models for society). Regardless of the significant developmental stage your children are entering as 2024 begins, one of the most important components of their confidence is the relationship they have with their bodies and how much their mind impacts that connection. For many, starting the New Year comes with a lot of excitement related to the anticipation of what adventures are on the horizon. However, one of the most challenging aspects of taking on a new level of independence as a teenager or preteen is understanding that you are now in much more control of the decisions you make about the care of your body and mind. Therefore, with a lot of added social pressure and exposure to a variety of often unrealistic images online, mealtime can be very stressful, anxiety provoking, and create struggles with their self-confidence.

Often times regardless of the data provided to certain people from their Pediatricians that indicate a healthy body size and shape, preteens and teenagers have a skewed version of their own reality and can start to engage in extremely unhealthy eating patterns and a disconnect with the relationship they may have with their body. It is not about the "right" body type, it is about "the right body type for you." One of the most important conversations you can have with your children prior to High School is one that focuses on a healthy body image. A formal discussion is crucial and not one while you are at a red light, but more so where you know they feel your support, your understanding, and your guidance to what is healthy.

It is not about the "right" body type, it is about "the right body type for you."

Without hyper-focusing on body image, it is important to acknowledge that I have seen children as young as five years old tell me that they are not happy with how their body looks leading them to wear excessively loose clothing, not happy when they have to be in the pool in front of



others, and the raving thoughts that emerge when they are viewing images online. If children that young are making these comments, it is clear the education and information on healthy relationships with their bodies can start as early as Kindergarten and continue well beyond High School. Our adolescents need to know what they put in their bodies will have a direct influence on how they think, feel, and concentrate. If they have a diet of too much sugar, they may have much higher levels of Anxiety and mood dysregulation because of the high sugar content in the food they are eating. If they are not burning off the excess sugar they are eating through some form of routine exercise and activity, they can often experience a series of highs and lows throughout the day due to disproportionate amounts of sugar.

Regardless of what grade your adolescent is currently in, body-esteem (i.e., how they feel about their bodies) and self-confidence present themselves in a variety of ways at all ages (even as adults). Every teenager has different dietary needs to maximize what their body can digest and metabolize without challenges. However, the key is to be sensible and help your teenagers see that they can be involved in the process to maximize how their bodies can feel.

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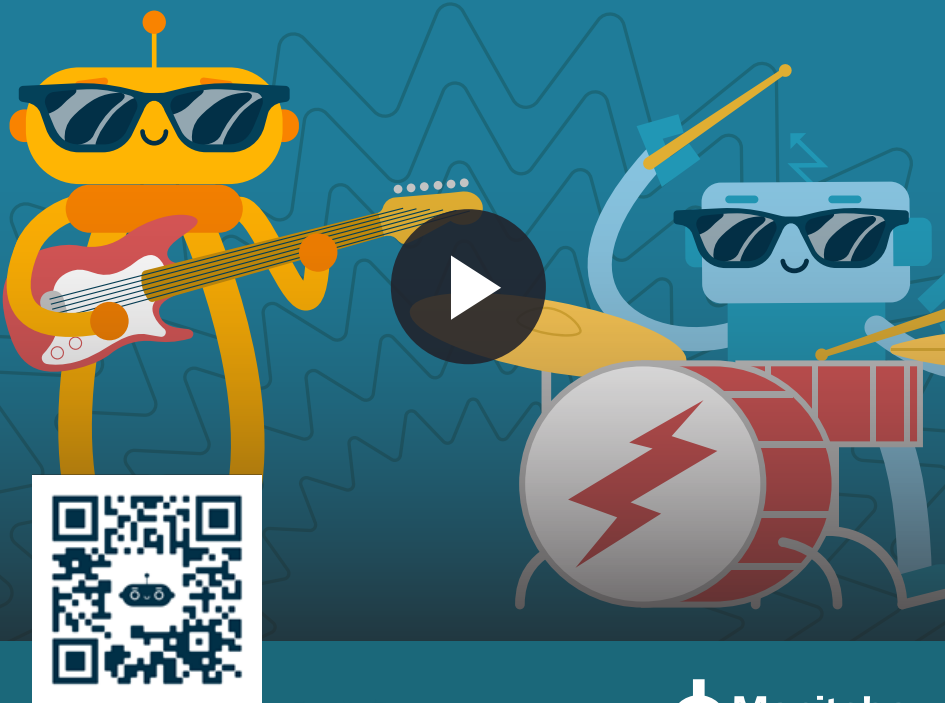


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Establishing A Healthy Relationship With Your Body cont.

Help your teenager build their confidence and knowledge with healthy eating by establishing what their options are for breakfast, lunch or dinner each school day. Reward them for packing their lunch and eating breakfast. Instead of using their time to worry about not feeling right about their bodies, use that time to eat a well-balanced breakfast to start the metabolism immediately upon wakeup so that the body can feel nourished, loved, and cared for, rather than ignored until dinner time! Even though at times, teenagers will start taking on part-time jobs and thus have their own funds at their disposal, discuss with them the value of having Coke, Pepsi, Red Bulls, Monster drinks, ketchup chips, and a wagon wheel for lunch. Let them know that Froot Loops, Fruit by the Foot, and Fruit Juice boxes are not fruits. Help your children see which options are best for them. We nourish our friendships and family relationships by caring for one another, spending intentional time with these people in our lives leading to healthier relationships, why not do the same with your body and the relationship you could have, short-term and long-term? Regardless of the stage of life, remember, as long as your offspring are living in your house, you are likely still buying the groceries, help them become confident shoppers with you and decide with your teenagers what goes into the cart and on your shelf at home.

The more aware and confident teenagers can become with what they are putting in their bodies, the more likely they are to become happier with how they feel about what they ingest and how they feel about themselves. Moreover, the more willing they are to put forth the effort to maintain a healthy body by balancing what they are eating they are likely more willing to engage in physical activity to help create that balance. Regardless of what their intention is for exercise or the VERY early stages of weight training, it is important not to focus on the numbers, as we want to try and stay away from

any early and unnecessary calorie/carbohydrate/fat content/mount of lifting power counting and remain focused on a healthy understanding of what will help them reach their overall fitness goals. However, if you start to notice your preteen and teenager focused on counting calories or obsessing over numbers when they exercise, address it yesterday. A select number of resources that can help with this are: The Body Image Workbook for Teens: Activities to Help Girls Develop a Healthy Body Image in an Image-Obsessed World by: Julia Taylor & Melissa Atkins Wardy, Body Image for Teen Boys by: Michael G. Smith, Raising a Healthy, Happy Eater: A Parent's Handbook: A Stage-by-Stage Guide to Setting Your Child on the Path to Adventurous Eating by: Nimali Fernando & Melanie Potock and Body Image for Teens by: Erin Smith.

Regardless of the age of your preteens and teenagers, identifying the importance of following a balanced diet and the ability for them to see a healthy body type and image when they look in the mirror each day is crucial to equip them with the psychological benefits of mealtime and healthy exercise or physical activity. Starting the year off right and remaining consistent will likely help contribute to finishing the year the same way; more confident, happier, and purposeful when focused on mealtime and the internal dialogue they have with themselves about their bodies. Whether your preteen or teenager is involved in competitive athletics or dance or not, it does not matter, what matters most is that they pay closest attention to a healthy view of themselves and not to rely on perceived healthy images, regardless of gender. Revisit this topic throughout the year with your preteen or teenager so that both of you are on the same page with what is healthy and with what will maintain their consistency with how confident they can feel about what they see in the mirror.

4 Reasons Tweens & Teens Drop Out Of Sports And What To Do About It

By Susan Scandiffio
Active for Life contributor

Every kid is different. Some like apples, some hate broccoli. Some like to dig for worms, and some wouldn't dream of getting their hands dirty.

And some, while super-active as younger children, need a bit more encouragement to keep active in their tween and teen years.

Data from Statistics Canada reveals that almost 70 percent of kids over the age of 12 don't meet the minimum recommended healthy movement guidelines, and girls are half as likely as boys to remain active into their teen years.

But why are so many kids dropping out of sport and physically active pursuits early in their teenage years?

1. Burnout

The most effective way to prevent burnout is to introduce your kids to a variety of physical activities from a young age, not just sports, and let them choose which activities and sports they'd like to do at different times of the year.

When a child focuses on one activity or sport too early, they may grow bored and even physically exhausted.

The best thing for a burned-out tween or teen is to scale back to create a more manageable schedule, and focus on having enjoyable sport experiences. Talk to your teens about what activities they would like to do and about the importance of keeping up (or restarting) their active lifestyle.



2. Social life

Tweens and teens can't wait to spend time with their friends at sleepovers, "chilling" in someone's backyard, or hanging out at the mall, checking out each other's clothes and people-watching. Practices, away tournaments, and games don't always fit into this new social lifestyle, and many teens feel that they have to choose one over the other. Often, it's the social life that teens prioritize.

Before kids hit their tween years, it's important that they understand the importance of a schedule that balances school, homework, family time, friend time, and physical activity.

3. Puberty concerns

This is the age of acne, zits, body odour, sweat, and growing pains. Not to mention the raging hormones, making tweens and teens feeling like their moods can swing at a moment's notice.

With growth spurts coming at different times during these years, some kids feel like they're being left behind. Some may worry they are not able to keep up, or may feel awkward if they're shorter or taller than their peers.

For girls, getting their periods and developing breasts can cause discomfort, embarrassment, and may lead them to withdraw from sport participation.

"...almost 70 percent of kids over the age of 12 don't meet the minimum recommended healthy movement guidelines..."

It's not surprising that many kids step away from sports due to a change in confidence levels and body image. It's important to speak with your kids before puberty hits so that they're not terror-stricken and completely unaware of what's coming.

Discuss the fact that changes will be happening to their bodies and what those changes will be. If you haven't had a chance to chat with your teen about the impact that puberty can have on their sports participation, it's not too late!

4. Co-ed activities

Some girls find it discouraging to be involved in activities with boys due to factors like being sweaty or finding boys to be more competitive.

And many boys find it just as embarrassing to be sweaty and awkward in front of girls.

For both boys and girls, encourage them to pack deodorant or antiperspirant in their school bag. It's a simple solution to a whole lot of sweat and body odour issues, and a way to counter their possible feelings of embarrassment.

Overall, the tween and teen years are difficult to navigate. By giving kids guidance and freedom to make some of their own decisions, it is possible to bring those who have left sports back to the active lifestyle they once had.

Kid Entrepreneur

Entrepreneurs start early and are all around us!



One of the many Young Entrepreneur 'Makers' in the Market...

Venture Development student Anna Gould is a success story of the program and the Makers Market. Anna came up with the idea of 'Study Buddies' and crocheted these wonderful little friends throughout her grade 9 year. Not only did Anna's 'Study Buddies' become a must within the school community but also captured the hearts of the greater Winnipeg audience at "The Summer of Locals" market. Her savvy marketing and commitment to social entrepreneurship saw Anna donating a substantial \$1000 to The Children's Hospital Foundation of Manitoba.

Anna remains a driving force in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. In collaboration with the Grade 10 Ventures and Beyond group, she works on enhancing the Maker Market's visibility, as well as planning a high school pitch competition in collaboration with North Forge Technology Exchange exemplifying the lasting impact and enthusiasm fostered by the Venture Development course.

Do you know a remarkable young person with an Entrepreneurial spirit?

We would love to feature them in

WINNIPEG PARENT

Contact us at winnipegparent.com



By Kirstan Osborne M.Ed
Technology/Entrepreneurship,
Balmoral Hall School

The "Maker Market" is a small store inside the school where students can learn how to sell products they have developed through the course and beyond. It also gives the community an opportunity to support these fabulous young people.

Some fun facts from this course and the Makers Market:

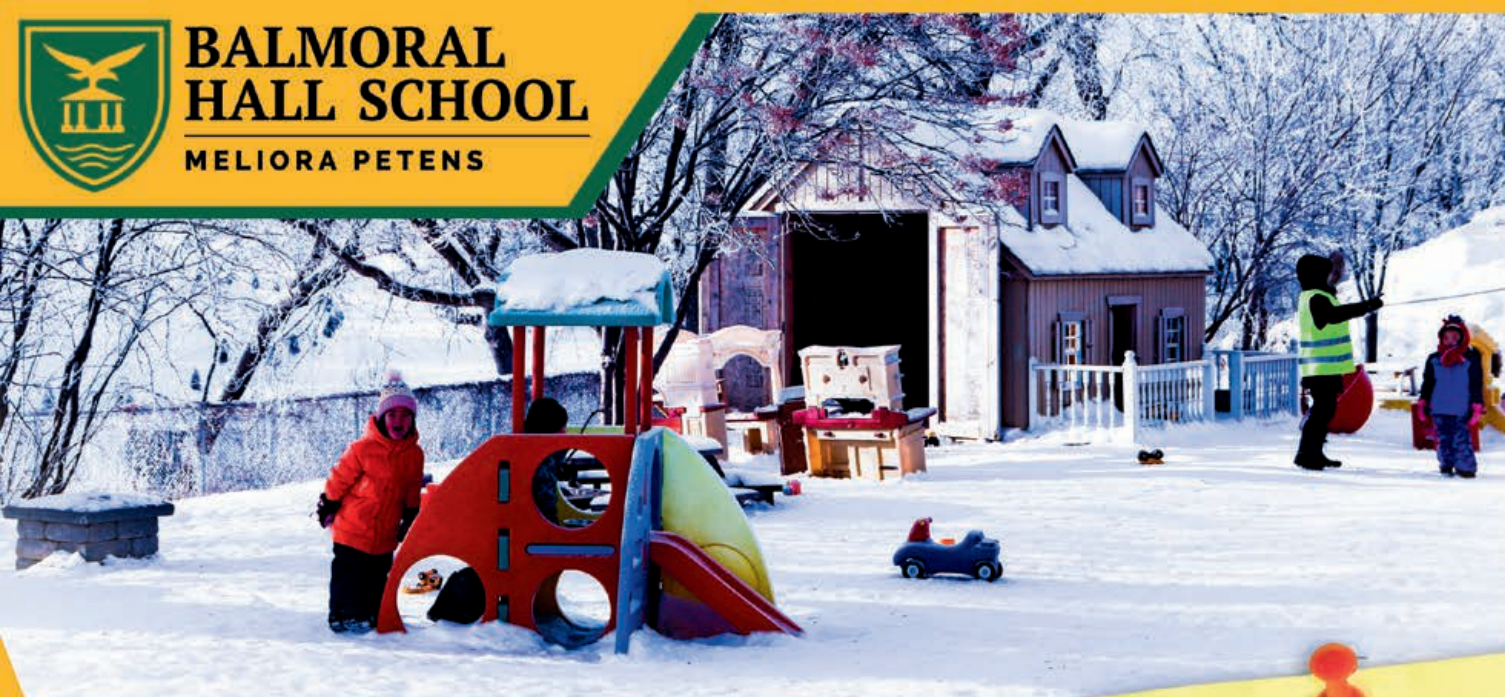
- The physical space was designed and set up by 2023 graduate Inez Mayberry.
- All products are uploaded by the students to the Makers Market online Shopify platform for purchase.
- The Maker Market is open to all students, staff, and alumni to sell handmade products.
- Students are responsible for approval of the products in the market and on educating the students on how to apply.
- Visit the Balmoral Hall School Maker Market on their instagram account: [@makermarketbh](https://www.instagram.com/makermarketbh)

The students at Balmoral Hall School have an incredibly innovative program – The Venture Development course - that begins in Grade 9 and helps to develop critical thinking and an Entrepreneurial spirit.

This course is a hub of innovation. With the help of visiting experts from industry, students dive into the world of entrepreneurship and learn the ropes of creating and running small ventures. Throughout the year they reflect and analyze using their learning in an attempt to strengthen their success.

In 2023, the Venture Development students and their teacher took their creative spirit and thought 'outside the box' of their 4 classroom walls. The result was the 'Maker Market'.

"This course is a hub of innovation..."



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Explore Every Story Climate Heroes: Youth Against Climate Change

By **Mika Pineda**
Learning and Engagement producer for Youth Climate Action at the Manitoba Museum

Working with youth always fascinates me. Their enthusiasm, creativity, and eagerness to learn are contagious; even tackling a complicated topic such as climate change is something that they are ready to take on.

Climate change is a global concern. It is the long-term change in the Earth's overall temperature, with massive and mostly permanent effects. You see, climate change solutions are not simple for many, but for youth, you would be surprised with what they can come up with given the opportunity.

Young people play an important role in combating the climate crisis. They hold power in making a difference in the community and accelerate climate action. With youth's increasing awareness and knowledge about climate change, many institutions are stepping up to provide a platform for them to pursue their climate change advocacies.

The Manitoba Museum launched its first-ever Youth Climate Alliance program in March 2023. The Youth Climate Alliance is a group of high school students, age 14-18, who work together to better understand climate change and its impacts. Through a series of workshops and training, the Youth Climate Alliance host events "by and for" youth.

Since then, the program has had two cohorts with each cohort tackling various issues surrounding climate change - from global and local impacts of climate change to clothing and fast fashion. The participants of the Youth Climate Alliance organize and develop an event that aims to raise awareness and start important climate conversations with their fellow youth and even adults.

While climate change is a big and complicated issue that the world is facing right now, programs such as the Youth Climate Alliance help provide a glimmer of hope to many, and with the start of the new year, the next cohort of the program is also around the corner!

The Youth Climate Alliance application for the winter cohort is now open! To find more details, visit ManitobaMuseum.ca/ClimateAlliance



The Climate Alliance works together to better understand climate change and its impacts. ©Manitoba Museum



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Motivate Tweens and Teens to Get Active Outdoors

We all know the importance of being outdoors. Fresh air is good for the mind and the soul, Vitamin D is good for the body. However, having a teen myself, I know how many times a day I repeat this! I understand just how hard it is to get them to leave their room, away devices and into the great outdoors. Katharine Watts, Active for Life Contributor has unique suggestions to help get your family of all ages outdoors and having fun!

By Katharine Watts
Active for Life Contributor

Even if you've created an outdoorsy family culture during the younger years, kids tend to push back on nature time as they get older. Here's how to gently encourage them to put down the Fortnite and TikTok and engage in more active family fun.

1. Try a thrilling, outside-the-box activity

Chances are your kids have been sledding, skating or even snowboarding and skiing. But have they tried something unique like fat biking? Consider renting a bike for the day. You can get them excited by watching YouTube videos and helping them visualize how great it could be to try something new.

You can rent fat bikes at The Forks, Birds Hill Park and Fort Whyte Alive.

2. Suggest a photography project to spruce up their room

Tweens love their space to feel like it reflects their personality. So pack up the camera and suggest a bunch of cool places to take photos. Get the photos printed and framed to hang on their walls. **Bonus:** The photos will serve as a reminder of all the amazing outdoor adventures that await when they're willing to go.

3. Pay them to shovel the driveway (or help them start a neighbourhood business)

Teens are highly motivated by having their own money to spend on what they wish. Encourage them to head out on snowy days and knock on neighbours' doors to ask if they need shoveling done (for \$5 a walk). You can also help them make flyers to post around the neighbourhood—which also requires a walk outside.

4. Make a video

If they're into taking videos, give them what they want. Promise to be their videographer as they do cool skiing, sledding, tubing, or snowboarding "tricks." Later, you can watch the videos together and they can share them with friends (and hopefully motivate their friends to join them next time).

5. Sign them up for an active, outdoorsy sport

There are so many incredible sports centred on outdoor recreation. While any sport that gets their body moving is good for them, having that connection to nature is always an added bonus.

Try cross-country in Birds Hill Park or any city golf course. Downhill skiing isn't far at Spring Hill, Falcon Lake or Assessippi. There are so many places to go sledding in neighborhoods around the city and the outdoor rinks have finally opened for skating.

6. Mandatory family hike day—but let them choose the trail

If all else fails, make it mandatory. Insist that even though they might not like the idea of a hike or outdoor time, that you're their parent and it's your job to keep them healthy and safe—which includes nature time. Involve them in choosing the destination by suggesting some of the cool natural wonders you can check out and letting them make the final call. If this suggestion is met with a "who cares?" then let them know that you care, and then go ahead and pick the destination you're most excited about yourself.

Some suggestions for great family hikes in within Winnipeg: Assiniboine Forest, Seine River, Bunn's Creek, King's Park, St. Vital Park.

"While any sport that gets their body moving is good for them, having that connection to nature is always an added bonus."

Thinking About Language

By Dana Todd
Winnipeg Parent

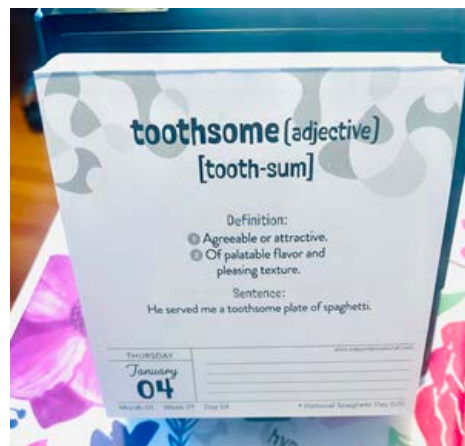
As a family, there are so many times at the end of a busy day we resort to picking up our phones and sitting in front of the tv to unwind. Screen time to the max! This past season while I was holiday shopping, I came across a fun family gift that I thought would not only have a small educational impact for all of us, but it would be an activity we could do together.

"...there are so many times at the end of a busy day we resort to picking up our phones..."

So, 2024 is the year...we are going to improve our vocabularies!

The gift? I picked up a desk Word-Of-The-Day calendar as a funny family joke. However, once we opened it, we couldn't wait for the new year to begin so we begin our educational quest. The first challenge, deciding who got to rip off the first day and read the first word!

Now, each morning we begin the day with a fresh word and definition. The rules (we made up) are simple.



1. We have all day to come up with 2-3 sentences for that word during the day.
2. At dinnertime, we each take turns using the word in a sentence. Talking about how we used it during the day, and discussing the meaning.

Face it, it's hard to get your tween or teen away from their phone. This is a great way to share time with your tween or teen for 30 minutes a day, get everyone thinking and not a device in site!

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Vaccine Information <http://www.manitobavaccine.ca>

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First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line
1-855-242-3310 - Counselling available in English and French. Upon request, in Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktitut

Safety Alert

If your power goes out this winter, are you prepared?

By Manitoba Hydro

Weather is unpredictable and can disrupt electrical service without warning. Your power may be off for a few hours or, in extreme cases, a few days. It's important to be prepared in case your power goes out this winter.

The best way to prepare for a power outage is to assemble an emergency kit with essential items ahead of time and store it where it will be easy to find in the dark. It should include:

- Candles and matches.
- Flashlights and fresh batteries.
- A wind-up or battery-powered radio to keep you informed on the status of a power outage.
- A supply of non-perishable food that doesn't need cooking like crackers, cereal, trail mix, dried fruit, granola bars, peanut butter, canned fruit and fish - don't forget a manual can opener or multipurpose tool.

- Potable water - at least four litres of water per person, per day.
- Hand sanitizer.
- Extra blankets or sleeping bags.
- Cellular phone and car charger as well as an extra power bank. Remember, you need dry chargers and batteries, so have plastic zippered bags in your kit to keep them protected.
- First aid kit and extra medication. You can buy a first aid kit at most drugstores or make your own that contains basic items.
- Extra pet food, baby food and diapers, if required.

If your power goes out, check if your neighbours have electricity. If they do, check all fuses or circuit breakers to rule out electricity issues inside your home. Report a power outage to Manitoba Hydro at **1-888-MBHYDRO**. You can follow Manitoba Hydro for power outage updates on Twitter using a mobile device.

Turn off all electrical appliances and electronic equipment when your power goes out. Pay special attention to those you may have been using when the power went out - like the stove or oven. Keep one light turned on so you will know when the electricity is restored.

Never use a barbecue or generator while indoors or an enclosed space. They can create dangerous levels of toxic carbon monoxide very quickly. This also applies to any other fuel burning equipment that is not connected to a chimney or vent.

Know that in the event of a power outage, emergency crews are working as quickly as possible to restore your electrical service.

For more tips on how to prepare for a power outage, visit hydro.mb.ca.

Safety. It's in your hands.



Age-Appropriate Chores for Kids: Building Life Skills for Future Success

By Katharine Watts
Active for Life contributor

You can build independence and a sense of responsibility in your kids—from toddlers to tweens—by assigning them age-appropriate chores.

Chores not only help children develop essential life skills but also foster a sense of teamwork and contribution to the family. It may seem strange to assign your two-year-old tasks, but we actually do our kids a disservice by not trusting them to contribute. Taking responsibility for family chores makes kids feel like they're part of an ecosystem that works together to keep everything running smoothly.

The lists below for some ideas of age-appropriate chores for your child.

Toddler chores (ages 2 to 3)

Toddlers are probably the most eager when it comes to chores. ("I get to use the vacuum!?") And this is a good time to lay the groundwork for future expectations. At this age, chores are more about creating routine and consistency, but you may find that your toddler is actually helpful. Have them try one of these options to start:

- Matching up socks
- Throwing used diaper in the pail
- Putting toys in bins
- Setting the table
- Sorting cutlery
- Sweeping with a child-sized broom

Preschooler chores (ages 3 to 5)

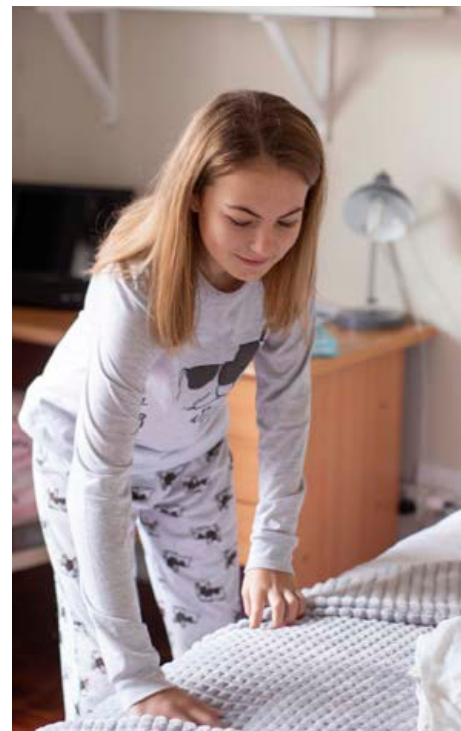
When it comes to chores, preschoolers genuinely just want to be part of the family unit and mimic what their parents are doing. Some options include:

- Feeding pets
- Clearing the table
- Filling water cups for everyone at dinner time
- Tidying toys
- Sorting their laundry into a pile and putting it away in their closet (note: it probably won't be perfectly folded, and that's not the goal!)

Middle-schooler chores (ages 6 to tweens)

School-age kids can handle chores that require a bit more attention to detail.

- Making their beds (this is a skill they'll have to practice, and again the goal is not perfection)
- Vacuuming or sweeping under the table when crumbs accumulate (especially helpful if you don't have a dog)
- If you do have a dog, kids can be in charge of walking them (if the dog is trained) and picking up waste
- Emptying trash cans and replacing the bag or liner
- Organizing laundry. In our house, we rarely fold clothing. Instead, all three kids are given the basket of clean laundry and told to find their clothes and put them away (folding is optional and done by preference of each kid) and they're all equally responsible for folding sheets and towels and putting the household items away.
- Watering indoor plants and weeding the garden outdoors



Family chore mindset

When you first institute chores, there might be some (or a lot) of pushback from your kids. It's important to approach chores as a family activity that you embark upon together. Kids often don't know how to clean their room or load the dishwasher if they've never done it. Always start a new chore by teaching them and working alongside them before they attempt to do it by themselves.

"Taking responsibility for family chores makes kids feel like they're part of an ecosystem that works together to keep everything running smoothly."

To bribe or not to bribe?

There's a big difference between saying, "If you don't clean that up, no screen time for a week!" and saying, "Once we're all done putting these things away, we're going to enjoy a relaxing family movie night together." One is a threat, the other is incentive. We all enjoy the rewards of our hard work, and there's nothing wrong with a little motivation.

Weekly chore charts can also help with this. For every chore your child completes on their weekly chore chart, they get a sticker. Once the chart is full, they get a reward of your choice, whether it's a movie night, a fun outing, or a book they've been wanting.

Beginning a family chore routine isn't always easy, and for our family, it's still not always seamless, but it feels so good to work together as a family to get things done so we can effectively function in our space. The most important thing to remember is that chores should never be about perfection or attaining some unrealistic aesthetic. The goal of chores is to make sure our space is cared for—so the people in it feel cared for too.

Solving Reading Difficulties

By Dr. Matthew Anderson
Developmental Optometrist

Working with children on their schoolwork provides the opportunity for parents to see firsthand what happens when their children are trying to learn. It is easy to mistakenly assume that when a child struggles with reading comprehension, it couldn't possibly be due to a vision problem. This is typically because the child can actually read the text out loud. It may not be read perfectly, but it seems as though there is "no problem" seeing the actual letters on the page.

The reason the child can see the words on the page is because the type of vision problems that interfere with reading and learning are intermittent, which means they are not all the time. Typically we see children who can read fine for about 5 minutes or so but then suddenly can't remember what was read, even though they read it out loud moments ago.

Words can appear to move around on the page, double up at first and then look single. While it can be very challenging to read when this happens, one can still read - it is comprehension and fluency that suffer.

When a student struggles with reading and learning it is important to first rule out the possibility of an eye coordination or eye movement problem. Most vision screenings in school and even at the pediatrician's office do not test for these visual skills. Vision screenings typically test for how clearly one can see the letters on the eye chart ("20/20") which is only 1 of 17 visual skills required for reading and learning.

Most children think that everyone sees the same way they do, so they don't know if they have a vision problem or not. The way they tell you is by their behavior. Therefore, it is vital that parents and

educators know the signs of a vision problem. The 5 most common signs that a vision problem may be interfering with your student's academic success are:

- Skips lines, rereads lines
- Poor reading comprehension
- Reading assignments take longer than they should
- Reverses letters like "b" into "d" when reading
- Short attention span with reading & schoolwork

If your child has any of the above symptoms, he or she may have a fully correctable vision problem.

Please don't assume that because the results of the last vision screening were good that your child does not have a vision problem. If reading is difficult and assignments take longer than it should, be sure your child has all the visual skills required for reading and learning. The type of vision testing that is needed is performed by a Developmental Optometrist.

For children who are performing well in school, a yearly eye exam is important. However, if your child struggles with reading, is smart in everything but school or is a bright underachiever, you need to make sure your child has all the visual skills required for academic success. To do this you need an in-depth evaluation by a Developmental Optometrist. To find one near you visit:

www.visiontherapycanada.com

Dr. Matthew Anderson, Developmental Optometrist, provides vision care for the entire family and also provides specialized services in the diagnosis and treatment of vision problems that interfere with reading and learning. Dr. Anderson is a popular speaker with parents and professional groups and may be reached at (204) 633-5566. For more information visit his website: www.grandvisioninstitute.com

Active Ways Dogs and Kids Can Have Fun Moving Together

Pets are a great way for your tween or teen to take on some of the household responsibilities, and get them outdoors and active. Jaime Neefs, Active for Life contributor has great suggestions below to get your tween or teen into the fresh air and moving with their best friend.

By Jaime Neefs
Active for Life Contributor

Let's take a moment to appreciate dogs. Man's best friend is a friend to all, regardless of whether you own one or know one.

For kids in particular, dogs can be a source of confidence as they learn to move and develop their physical literacy.

No dog at home? No problem. Odds are a friend at the playground or neighbourhood has a playful puppy begging to go for a w-a-l-k. Here are some pet-friendly ways to move together:

Fetch

This classic game of toss and return is perfect for developing kids' overhand throw with a variety of objects: tennis ball, Frisbee, newspaper, you name it! You can also alternate throwing the ball with either hands. Variety is the spice of fetch and life.

"...dogs can be a source of confidence as they learn to move and develop their physical literacy."

Walk

A daily necessity for a dog can become routine for a family. Keep it interesting by exploring different outdoor spaces together as it can help kids connect with nature and tackle different terrains.

Run

It's all fun and games when you run with a dog. Kids will have a ball chasing, racing, and running alongside a four-legged friend.

Added challenge: play *Follow the Leader* in an off-leash area.

Explore

Being a "dog family" means taking care of a pet through all seasons and all weather. To do that, you have to be confident and balanced on ice, in mud, and through snow. Having a dog can help your family gain that confidence, one walk at a time.

Play

A puppy is the perfect partner for developing physical literacy. Their unpredictable nature encourages kids to be creative and try new skills.

Bonus: free puppy kisses as a reward!

There are 101 ways a dog can help develop physical literacy, and provide a sense of confidence and responsibility at the same time. What's your family's favourite way to play with pups?



Attention Parents!

Does YOUR child:

- Have trouble reading or spelling?
- Have trouble copying?
- Have a short attention span?
- Prefer to be read to?
- Have poor handwriting?
- Reverse numbers and letters?
- Have trouble remembering what was read?

If your child has any of these symptoms, they may have an eye coordination and/or eye tracking problem blocking learning.



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 - Short attention span?
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 - Becoming more nearsighted?
 - Driving at night?
 - Dizziness especially when riding in a car?

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Diets Don't Work...

Here's what To Do Instead

By Janine LaForte
Registered Dietitian

Are you considering a goal this year that includes eating healthier? 'Improving diet' & 'losing weight' continue to make the top 5 most popular New Year's resolutions.

As a Registered Dietitian, I recognize that eating well to feel your best, is of course important to overall health. However, there are couple main reasons I do not recommend making restrictive diet resolutions.

- **Diets don't work.** They are designed for failure and are just not sustainable!
- **It does not set a good example** for the children in your life or set them up for success with their relationship with food as they grow.

You may be wondering what should I do instead...? Consider *ADDING* rather than taking things away.

Here are some suggestions:

1. Learn to cook vegetables and fruit in ways that you enjoy and include them at all meals.

- Try satisfying salads or sautéed veggies with toasted almonds, add extra vegetables to soups or casseroles, include a fruit smoothie or a sliced banana or berries on your cereal at breakfast.

2. Decide to include more pulses (beans, lentils, and chickpeas) in meals and snacks.

- A good place to start is to swap out half of your meat for beans – for instance, add black beans to taco meat, chickpeas to curry chicken dishes or lentils to spaghetti and meat sauce.
- Choose hummus as a dip for fresh veggies or crackers, find a good recipe for bean burritos or veggie burgers to include in your regular meal plan rotation.

3. Commit to eating more meals together as a family.

- This simple act has been shown to improve nutrition, mental health, and kids' academic performance, among many others.



Photo ©Janine LaForte

4. Finally, if you're looking for more family nutrition support, seek assistance from a Registered Dietitian such as myself.

- Or check out the College of Dietitians of Manitoba website for a listing of local RD's. You can also follow along at @reallifenutrition.rd as I share lots of simple tips & recipes for making veggies, fruit and pulses super tasty.

The bottom line is that your body innately perceives dieting as a form of starvation and shifts into survival mode, slowing down metabolism and increasing food cravings. This is clearly a recipe for failure. If you want a sustainable solution for long-term success, consider adding to your eating experience, rather than taking away from it.

Want to learn more? Reach out today.

I'm Janine LaForte. A proud Winnipegger, a Registered Dietitian of 23 years and a busy mom of 3 teens. Through my business, Real Life Nutrition, I specialize in helping families get nutritious meals on the table without the stress or spending hours in the kitchen.

Here's where to find me:

Website: www.reallifenutrition.ca
Email: janine@reallifenutrition.ca

Goodness of Fit When Choosing Schools

By Dr. Jay M. Greenfeld
Ph.D., C.Psych.

The New Year has begun and we are not going to focus too much on resolutions because it may be most helpful to be setting and achieving goals all throughout the year and not just the opening days of January. However, with the New Year also comes the gradual process of open houses at schools across the province. Many parents have engaged in conversations with me about what schools are best for their children and adolescents as they navigate the years from Kindergarten to Grade Twelve. Although for many, it may not be a conversation, but for others, (both parents and children) it can create a lot of stress, uncertainty, confusion, fear, and regret. The key is to first understand that not all schools are best for all so one school may be a good fit for one child, but not their sibling. Moreover, just because you as a parent attended a certain school when you were younger, based on probability, it has likely been a couple of decades since you were last in class there and thus the school, administration, philosophy and such have changed at that institution. Regardless of what you did during your schooling years, it may not be best for what your child needs. Shift your attention away from what you did, and pay closer attention to what your child needs and wants academically, culturally, socially, and athletically to help them reach their true potential.

"Shift your attention away from what you did, and pay closer attention to what your child needs and wants... to help them reach their true potential."



For anyone selecting from a variety of schools, outline the most important variables that you attend to when it comes to schooling (e.g., location, teaching, resources, class sizes, extra-curricular activities available) and evaluate which school has the highest score when adding all the most important factors while letting go of any emotional connection you may have to any one school. Focus your efforts on what each child needs now and the short-term, because unlike the days of yesteryear, changing schools throughout grade school happens far more often than it once did. Most importantly, be mindful of your own opinion and agenda when having these conversations with your children because sometimes you want to ensure each child has a voice and other times, as parents you need to make the decision with the utmost guidance underpinning the choice. As you attend open houses throughout January and February, factor these ideas into your equation to make the process as smooth as possible and remember much of the biggest decisions in life are not real choices, they have already been made, as it is not so much about the answers we are looking for but more so the questions we may be too afraid to ask.

You're in the right place if you...

- ✓ are a motivated parent of school age kids, teenagers or young adults and want to make sustainable, healthy changes in your diet.
- ✓ need ideas for nutritious meals & snacks your whole family will enjoy.
- ✓ want to reduce the unending stress of 'what's for dinner?'
- ✓ want to enjoy simple family meals, without stress or spending hours in the kitchen.

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Distribution: April 29th

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E-Blast: Feb 6th

Apr Deadline: Mar 28th
E-Blast: April 2nd

Jun Deadline: May 30th
E-Blast: June 4th

For more information email:
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7 Tips for Caregivers - Supporting Youth and Their Feelings

By L. Robin
 WholeChildCounseling.com

Navigating the pathways of parenthood can often feel like a maze. As caregivers, our natural instinct is to want to pave a seamless route for our children, where their moments of sadness are brief and their happiness is unending. But in this process, we may overlook the significance of accepting and understanding the many different emotions that our children experience. These feelings are an important part of the human experience as well.

1. Listen – not only to their words, but their actions.

Youth are not always able to verbalize or articulate their feelings but may rather express their feelings in the way they know how (such as, tone of voice, body language, yelling, crying, laughing). And feel honoured! If they are showing you how they truly feel, you are their safe space! Welcoming all these feelings, even the uncomfortable ones, normalizes the wide range of feelings we all have. And this helps to build healthy emotional well-being.

2. Approach feelings with patience, curiosity & empathy.

When I shifted away from trying to “fix” my children’s feelings, patience and curiosity were key. And approaching their feelings from a place of empathy was more powerful than I had expected. As I had shared on CTV Morning Live, my children and I may not get frustrated over the same situation, but we have all felt frustrated.

But don’t let me lead you to believe I think this is so easily done. Patience can be tough to muster in the heat of the moment, especially if you are also experiencing intense emotion. Which leads me to point 3...

3. Be aware of your own emotional triggers.

These triggers may be situations occurring in the present that spark feelings from your past, such as previous childhood or relationship experiences. I have found the value in looking into and identifying my own triggers for the benefit of parenting at my best and fostering a healthy relationship with my children.

Please Note: I have found mental health professionals to be pivotal in emotional self-care and parenting support. Don't hesitate to ask for help, especially if you have a history of trauma.

4. Be open to learning and growing on this journey.

How we were brought up is not inherently right or wrong. But how we were parented influences our own role as parents, intentionally or not.

We are always able to work on and learn about how we see ourselves as parents with the information we know today. This includes how we view feelings and how we present feelings to our children.

5. Refrain from judgement.

Start with avoiding labels on feelings, such as “good” or “bad” feelings. These judgments can dissuade children from sharing certain feelings and develop associations of shame that lead to suppressing feelings.

The other area, to be conscious of judgment, is how we perceive management of feelings. Having feelings, learning to regulate feelings, and helping your children with their feelings is hard work!

6. The power of validating feelings.

This doesn’t mean we aren’t expected to learn to regulate feelings or that all behaviours are appropriate. But validation of emotions, especially for youth, is extremely important to feeling heard and moving through emotions. Phrases like “don’t be frustrated” or “you’re fine” are not helpful to moving forward. Imagine how you feel as an adult hearing those words?

7. Regulating feelings & appropriate behaviour must be learned.

Caregivers are pivotal in helping kids explore ways to regulate feelings and understand what behaviour is appropriate and healthy – and which behaviours are not. Kids will not get it right the first time! And many adults won’t either! It is a life journey and shouldn’t be judged to have a level of mastery. We do the best we can in each moment and we, as caregivers, may not fully understand how to teach emotional regulation.

Laurie Robin is a mother of two, an educator for nearly two decades, and self-published author of I Want You To Be You living in Manitoba, Canada.

L. Robin Books donates 25% of proceeds of each book sold throughout 2023 to Kids Help Phone, who do amazing work supporting and advocating for youth every day. Find out more at www.lrobinbooks.com.

For Laurie's full Blog, please visit <https://www.wholechildcounseling.com/blog>

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13 THINGS TO DO THIS WINTER IN MANITOBA

Shel Zoklewich, Travel Manitoba Contributor has put together an incredible list of fun-filled activities to do this winter in our wonderful province. We have picked 13 of Shel's family-friendly activities that tweens, teens and kids of all ages will love! For Shel's other 38 great recommendations, visit: <https://www.travelmanitoba.com/>

By Shel Zoklewich
Travel Manitoba Contributor

Bright blue skies. Fresh white snow. Crisp clean air. It's winter in Manitoba and time to play outside. Whether you slide into skis, hop on a snowmobile, lace up skates, drop a fishing line or tie up a pair of snowshoes, our wide-open spaces make it nearly impossible to resist the calling of the great outdoors. Then it's warm up time with hot sips, cool music and wintertime activities to stir your soul. The best of both worlds awaits this season.

- Drop a line at an ice fishing derby. Hot chocolate of big prizes await at **Gimli Ice Fishing Derby** or **Winter Fish Off at Falcon Lake**
- Pull up a stump for storytelling and roasted marshmallows over the campfire at **FortWhyte Alive** on weekends.
- Manitoba is home to The Guinness Book of World Record's Largest **Snow Maze!** Snow sculptures, a snow mountain for tobogganing, bonfires, a giant luge run, snow games and hot chocolate await.
- Workshops and screenings await multimedia lovers at **Freeze Frame's International Film Festival for Kids** in March.
- See world-class show jumping, heavy horse competitions and top-notch live entertainers at the **Royal Manitoba Winter Fair** in Brandon.
- Do some Manitoba downhill skiing with visits to **Holiday Mountain** in La Riviere or **Assessippi** near Russell.

- Rent snowshoes from **Wilderness Supply** then hit the trails in Winnipeg and beyond.
- Did you know that the first floor of **WAG-Qaumajuq** is always free to visit? Shop, eat and view nearly 5,000 stone carvings in Ilavut, the glass vault.
- **It's a waterpark wonderland!** Hecla Lakeview Inn (Hecla Island), Days Inn (Steinbach), Canad Inns Destination Centre (Brandon), Best Western (Dauphin) and Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott (Winnipeg) all have wet and wild indoor fun.
- Slide the afternoon away at **Valley View Tubing Hill** in MacGregor and remember to bring some weenies to roast over the campfire.
- Fly high and have some fun at Winnipeg's indoor trampoline and adventure parks including **The Flying Squirrel, Fun Park Canada** and **The Rec Room**.
- Spend the day at **Birds Hill Park** where the resident deer population is in no short supply along the hiking, biking, snowshoe and cross country ski trails.
- Get your fill of piping hot pea soup, savoury tourtiere and maple syrup rolled in snow at **Festival du Voyageur**.

About the author: A journalist by trade and an adventurer at heart, my career has included stints as a reporter, magazine writer, editor, food stylist, television cook and digital marketer. I am always collecting stories about Manitoba, whether I'm on assignment or not.

COOL WINTER Parent Puzzler

T A W V H B O A R D G A M E Z Y F F
 R S S F G H O C K E Y M U V O R K J
 H S N G R S L E E P O V E R A C T Y
 O E O S N O W S H O E I N G N B Q I
 T S W F B C L S H I V E R S F W I C
 C S B D O W N H I L L S K I I N G E
 O I A H N F E S T I V A L S V Y V F
 C P L P F M X E Y S N O W M A N J I
 O P L P I V B X Q F M O V I E S Z S
 A I S T R M A R S H M A L L O W S H
 E M U S E U M S J L S C B W L G G C
 S K A T I N G H J C E M L X R Z J R

Find the following words in the puzzle. Words are hidden → ↓ and ↘ .

- | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|
| ASSESSIPPI | FESTIVAL | MARSHMALLOWS | SKATING |
| BOARD GAME | HOCKEY | MOVIES | SLEEPOVER |
| BONFIRE | HOT COCOA | MUSEUMS | SNOWBALLS |
| DOWNHILL SKIING | ICE FISH | SHIVERS | SNOWMAN |
| | | | SNOWSHOEING |



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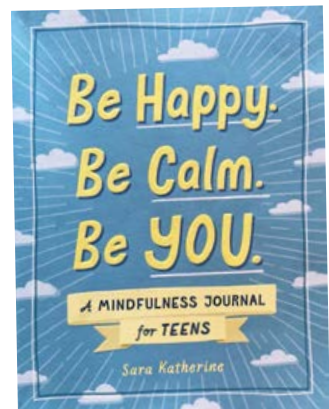
Visit our website to learn more and to register for our open house on January 11th www.sjbschool.ca

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WINNIPEG PARENT TEEN Book Selection of the Month



Be Happy. Be Calm. Be You. A Mindfulness Journal for Teens by Sara Katherine

Review By Dana Todd & Spencer Todd

Be Happy. Be Calm. Be You. A Mindfulness Journal for Teens is our book selection this month. This is an interactive selection and slightly different than what we have suggested in the past.

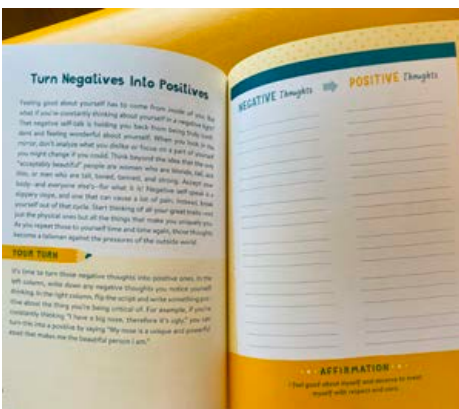
My teen loves her mindfulness journals, and she has recommended them to her cousins and friends over the past couple of years.

This one is a favorite. It is a guided journal that give her small positive prompts, ideas, and short meditations to work on. Writing in her journal has given her routine, focus and a positive way to look back on the good and not-always-so-good parts of the day.

As a parent, I highly recommend encouraging your tween/teen to pick up a prompted mindfulness journal. It's good for the mind and the soul and I know that for my teen, these books have been helpful to her as she navigates her high school years.

“
What my teen has to say about Be Happy. Be Calm. Be You. A Mindfulness Journal for Teens
 Writing each day in my journal helps me be calm and I feel good writing about my feelings. The different suggestions on each page make it easy to follow. They help you get your feelings out of your head. I like starting my day by opening the book and doing some journaling and then before I go to bed, I write something too. It helps me go back to my day and realize how good it was. It also makes me work on what I can improve on for the next day.
 -Spencer Todd

About The Author:
 Sara Katherine is a writer, blogger and marketing manager as well as the author of *I'm Awesome. Here's Why...* After publishing her first book, Sara Earns Her Ears, she launched her current personal development blog, Sara-Katherine.com where she strives to help empower millennials and GenZ to find their passions and live their best lives.



Winter Early Literacy Programs at Winnipeg Public Library January 22 - March 18

- Join other families for staff-led programs.
- Featuring stories, songs, and rhymes for children 0-5 and their caregivers.
- Discover simple practices to nurture pre-reading skills at home.

Registration opens Monday, December 11.

For details on locations, times, and to register, scan QR code, visit our **Programs & Events calendar** at winnipeg.ca/library, or register in person or by phone.





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JOIN US AS AN EXHIBITOR!

Be an integral part of a fantastic day of fun and education.

Sunday, April 7th 10:00am – 4:00pm
Manitoba Theatre for Young People,
2 Forks Market Rd.



**Reach out
for more info!**

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