

CAPC SPRING NEWSLETTER

March 2026

People will forget what you said,
people will forget what you did,
but people will never forget how
you made them feel.

- Maya Angelou

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saskatchewan
preventioninstitute
our goal is **healthy** children

The Saskatchewan Prevention Institute provides services to all those living on Treaty Lands 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10, and the Homeland of the Métis. The Saskatchewan Prevention Institute is dedicated to moving forward on a shared path of reconciliation and partnership. We are all Treaty people.

Mattering: A Foundation for Early Well-Being

There are many ways to talk about young children's well-being, including strong early connections, safe and nurturing relationships, buffering toxic stress, and building resilience. Research increasingly points to mattering as a simple, powerful way to bring these ideas together. Mattering means feeling valued and knowing you can make a difference - and it begins in infancy. While it's never too late to build a sense of mattering, starting early can positively shape children's health and well-being across their lifespan.

Research from the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University shows that when babies and young children feel noticed, understood, and relied upon, they develop stronger emotional security, healthier stress responses, and more resilient brain architecture. These foundations are built through everyday moments - being held, comforted, listened to, and invited to participate in small, age-appropriate ways. Even very young children learn that they matter when adults make eye contact, respond to their cues, spend time with them, and show up consistently.

Mattering is especially important in the context of adversity. Experiences such as poverty, racism, or adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can increase stress and vulnerability, but positive early relationships can buffer these effects. Across decades of research, one factor stands out as most protective: at least one stable, committed relationship with a caring adult. When caregivers themselves feel valued and supported, this sense of mattering ripples outward - strengthening children, families, and communities.

By focusing on mattering, parents and service providers can support infant and early childhood mental health in a practical, hopeful way. Small, everyday actions help children feel seen, important, and capable of contributing, laying the groundwork for lifelong resilience, connection, and well-being. Caregivers, early learning professionals, service providers, and policymakers all play a role in creating environments where children and families know they matter.

How Adults Can Foster Mattering

- Notice and respond. Make eye contact and respond to children's cues so they feel seen and valued.
- Practice serve and return. Go back and forth through smiles, sounds, words, and play.
- Show up consistently. Reliable care and routines help children feel safe and important.
- Offer comfort and repair. Soothe distress and reconnect after tough moments.
- Spend time together. Talking, singing, reading, and playing communicate "you matter".
- Invite small contributions. Encourage age-appropriate helping so children feel capable and needed.
- Care for caregivers. Supported adults are better able to provide nurturing, responsive care.

For more information, visit:

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/working-paper/mattering-in-early-childhood/>.



Supporting Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Through Play

Play is central to supporting infant and early childhood mental health. Through play, children make sense of their world, express feelings, build relationships, and practice skills that support lifelong well-being. From before birth through the early years, play-based interactions with caring adults provide safe learning opportunities that support emotional development, communication, self-regulation, resilience, empathy, attachment, positive thoughts, and overall well-being.

The *Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Play Statements* from the Etobicoke Brighter Futures Coalition highlight play as the primary way children develop emotionally, socially, and cognitively through responsive relationships with caring adults. When adults notice children's cues and respond with warmth, consistency, and care, play becomes a powerful way to reduce stress, build emotional security, and strengthen developing brain architecture. Simple play experiences - such as singing, reading, movement, pretend play, back-and-forth games, and shared exploration - help children feel safe, valued, and capable.

Responsive play supports many important areas of development that shape children's mental health and well-being.

- Through play-based interactions, children experience **attachment**. When adults follow children's cues, respond consistently, and engage in playful back-and-forth interactions, children develop a secure sense of safety and trust.
- Play also supports **emotional development**. Through shared play, adults notice and name children's feelings, helping children feel seen, understood, and emotionally secure.
- Children build **communication** skills through play when adults talk, sing, read, gesture, and respond to children's sounds, words, and actions. Play creates language-rich opportunities where children practice expressing needs, ideas, and emotions.
- Opportunities to explore, try new things, and problem-solve through play support **resilience**. When adults encourage effort, allow children to try again, and provide reassurance during play, children learn to cope with challenges and build confidence.
- Play is also essential for developing **self-regulation**. Through playful routines, movement games, and calming activities, adults help children learn to manage big feelings, stay focused, and return to a calm state.
- Through caring and imaginative play, children develop **empathy**. Pretend play, storytelling, and shared experiences help children recognize emotions in themselves and others and learn compassionate responses.
- Positive, joyful play experiences support **positive thoughts**. When adults share encouragement, celebrate effort, and show delight during play, children develop positive beliefs and a sense of belonging.
- Finally, play supports **well-being**. Loving touch, movement, music, and face-to-face play support healthy brain development, physical growth, and emotional balance.

By intentionally using play as a tool for connection, learning, and emotional support, parents and caregivers help lay strong foundations for infant and early childhood mental health, relationships, and lifelong well-being.

For more information, suggestions, and strategies to enhance children's mental health through play in the early years, visit: <https://www.webconnects.ca/node/596>.



Curried Chickpea Salad

Ingredients

1 can (540 mL/19 oz) lower sodium chickpeas, drained and rinsed
45 mL (3 tbsp) lower fat yogurt
60 mL (¼ cup) diced celery
¼ red onion, diced
60 mL (¼ cup) raisins
1 tomato, diced
2 mL (½ tsp) curry powder
15 mL (1 tbsp) apricot jam (optional)
7 mL (½ tbsp) lemon juice (about ½ lemon)
1 mL (¼ tsp) black pepper
Pinch of salt

Instructions

1. Place the chickpeas in a large bowl, and roughly mash with a fork or potato masher.
2. Add all remaining ingredients and toss to combine.
3. Cover and marinate in the refrigerator for 10 to 15 minutes.

Serve on its own, in a pita, or as a sandwich with romaine lettuce.

For other plant-based recipes, visit: <https://guelphfamilyhealthstudy.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Plant-Based-Proteins-Made-Easy-Peasy-Nov-2021-Web.pdf>.



Animal Movement Scavenger Hunt

 <p>hop like a frog</p>	<p>jump high like a dolphin</p>	 <p>wiggle like a worm</p>	<p>scurry like a skunk</p>	 <p>stretch down like a dog</p>
<p>crawl on hands and feet like a bear</p>	 <p>waddle like a duck</p>	<p>climb (a pretend tree) like a squirrel</p>	 <p>jump quickly like a rabbit</p>	<p>stand on one leg like a heron</p>
 <p>prance like a deer</p>	<p>become a ball like a hedgehog</p>	 <p>spin a web like a spider</p>	<p>bob up and down like a jellyfish</p>	 <p>march in a line like an ant</p>
<p>flap and hop like a robin</p>	 <p>zigzag like a bee</p>	<p>kick like a donkey</p>	 <p>crawl sideways like a crab</p>	<p>twist side-to-side like a snake</p>
 <p>skitter like a mouse</p>	<p>jump far like a grasshopper</p>	 <p>pounce like a cat</p>	<p>tiptoe like a sneaky racoon</p>	 <p>gallop like a horse</p>

For more information, visit: <https://activeforlife.com/spring-activities-scamenger-hunt-for-kids/>. 5



Read for Reconciliation

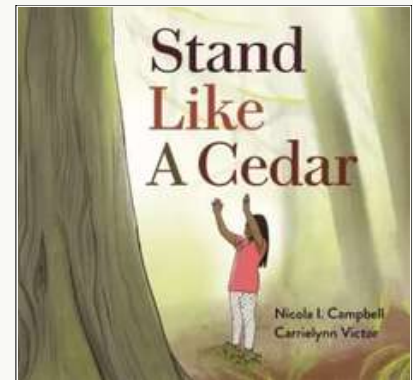
Stand Like a Cedar

Written by Nicola I. Campbell

Illustrated by Carrielynn Victor

Description from the publisher

When you go for a walk in nature, who do you see? What do you hear? Follow along as a young Indigenous girl takes a journey through the wilderness. She admires the varied sights and sounds of her environment, absorbs the lessons taught by animals, and reflects on the importance of honoring her heritage and the lands of her family.



Learning the Land

Website by Treaty Education Alliance

Learning the Land is an educational initiative rooted in Indigenous knowledge and land-based learning. It is aligned with the Treaty Education Alliance's mission to support First Nations in advancing their Treaty and inherent rights to education. At its core, the program emphasizes learning from the land - understanding the environment not just as a classroom, but as a teacher that communicates, sustains life, and strengthens cultural identity. The program blends Indigenous traditional knowledge with practical and ecological teachings, exploring physical and spiritual connections to the land and how these inform identity, culture, and stewardship.

Located in Fort Qu'Appelle, SK, the Treaty Education Alliance primarily serves K-12 schools and communities within Treaty 4 First Nations in Saskatchewan, specifically Cote, Kawacatoose, Pheasant Rump Nakota, and White Bear First Nations.

To learn more, visit: <https://learningtheland.ca/>.

Learning the Land Showcase: Community Land Mapping, Species At-Risk, and Outdoor Learning Areas Video

In honour of Treaty Education Alliance affiliated schools, past and present, this video features drone footage and photo montages of student and school engagement in three different projects and initiatives.



To watch the video, click the picture or visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WeVbbexuy8Q>.

Saskatchewan Prevention Institute Resources



The Hand You Hold Is the Legacy You Leave

Booklet, 2025

The Hand You Hold Is the Legacy You Leave highlights an important message – the first years of life lay the foundation for lifelong health, relationships, and learning. For babies to thrive, they need the following from consistent caregivers: love, safety and security, and acceptance. *The Hand You Hold* is built around these needs, while also emphasizing the vital role of parent support. This resource offers practical actions for parents to meet each of these needs, paired with research insights that explain why these actions matter.

To download the booklet, visit: <https://skprevention.ca/resource-catalogue/the-hand-you-hold-is-the-legacy-you-leave/>.

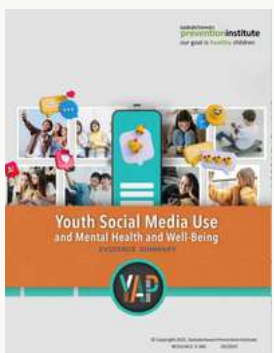


Prenatal Supplements

Infographic Poster, 2025

Developed in collaboration with the Perinatal Nutrients of Concern Resource Development Working Group, this infographic poster highlights key nutrients to look for in a prenatal supplement, including folic acid, vitamin D, and iron. It includes tips for managing common challenges with taking supplements, such as nausea or difficulty swallowing.

To download the infographic, visit: <https://skprevention.ca/resource-catalogue/prenatal-supplements/>.



Youth Social Media Use and Mental Health and Well-Being: An Evidence Summary Report, 2025

Social media use in youth has increased over the last decade, with most youth using social media regularly. There is a belief that the increase in social media use is responsible for the increase in mental health challenges in youth. However, research suggests that the associations between social media use and mental health remain unclear, with mixed findings suggesting that the relationships are complex and interrelated. This summary highlights evidence regarding potential impacts of social media use on youth mental health and well-being, and recommendations for protecting youth from potential related harms.

To download the report, visit: <https://skprevention.ca/resource-catalogue/youth-social-media-use-and-mental-health-and-well-being-an-evidence-summary/>.





Important Dates

National Nutrition Month

March 1 - 31, 2026

<https://www.unlockfood.ca/en/nutritionmonth>

Safe Sleep Week

March 9 - 16, 2026

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/campaigns/safe-sleep-week.html>

Poison Prevention Week

March 15 - 22, 2026

<https://parachute.ca/en/program/poison-prevention-week/>

National Oral Health Month

April 1 - 30, 2026

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/topics/oral-health.html>

World Immunization Awareness Week

April 24 - 30, 2026

<https://www.immunize.ca/parents>

Mental Health Awareness Month

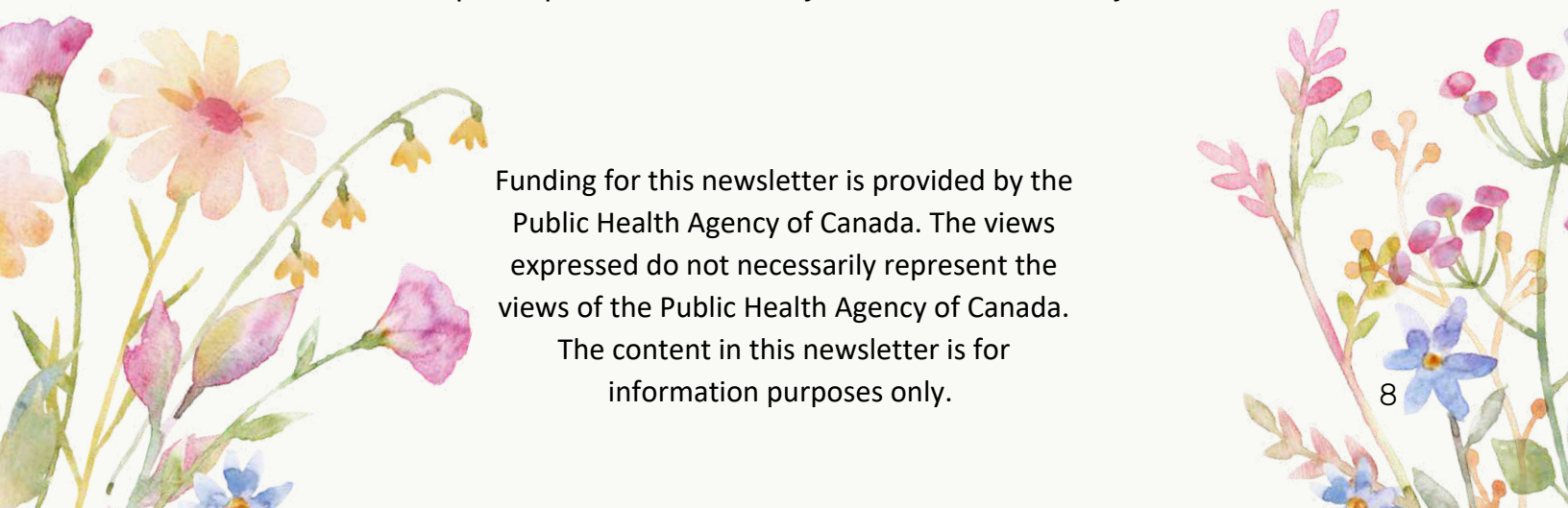
May 1 - 31, 2026

<https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/>

Bicycle Safety Week

May 10 - 16, 2026

<https://skprevention.ca/safety/bike-and-wheel-safety/>



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