



The MNCHP Bulletin is a monthly electronic bulletin that highlights current trends, new resources and initiatives, upcoming events and more in the preconception, prenatal and child health field. Our primary focus is the province of Ontario, Canada but the bulletin also includes news and resources from around the world. Wherever possible, we include resources that are available for free.

**Please note that the Best Start Resource Centre does not endorse or recommend any events, training, resources, services, research or publications of other organizations.*

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I. News & Views

2017 Federal Budget

Finance Minister Bill Morneau released his second federal budget. Some highlights include:

- Families: Option to extend parental leave up to 18 months and allowing expectant mothers to claim maternity benefits 12 weeks before their due date
- Child care: \$7 billion over 10 years for 40,000 new subsidized spaces, starting 2018-19
- Coding kids: \$50 million over two years for initiatives to teach children to code
- Indigenous: \$3.4 billion over five years for infrastructure, health and education
- Care givers: New care-giving benefit up to 15 weeks, starting next year
- Housing: \$11.2 billion over 11 years for the national housing strategy (CBC News 2017; CTV News 2017)

Read the full budget in [English](#) or [French](#)
[Download the PDF](#) of the news release in multiple languages
Highlights of the budget in [English](#) or [French](#)

Sugar is the 'Alcohol of the Child,' Says Children's Health Expert

In this article (CBC News 2017), Dr. Robert Lustig, a health expert from the United States, discusses the prevalence of high sugar consumption by children. He compares sugar intake by children to alcohol use by adults based on how both substances are processed and the impact they have on the liver. This article draws particular attention to the high amounts of sugar that children are consuming at breakfast.

[Read the article](#)

II. Recent Reports & Research

The Kids Are Not All Right: How the Food and Beverage Industry is Marketing our Children and Youth to Death

(Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada 2017)

SUMMARY:

The Heart & Stroke 2017 Report on the Health of Canadians examines how industry is marketing unhealthy food and beverages directly to our children and youth, and how this is affecting their preferences and choices, their family relationships and their health. They looked at national and international studies and reports and polled Canadians to understand their perspectives on the issue. They also commissioned one of the country's leading researchers to examine the volume of food and beverage advertising online to Canadian children and teens, and the quality of the products—the first research of its kind in the country.

[Read the report](#)

Family-Based Interventions in Preventing Children and Adolescents from Using Tobacco: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis*

(Thomas et al. 2016)

ABSTRACT

Background

Tobacco is the main preventable cause of death and disease worldwide. Adolescent smoking is increasing in many countries with poorer countries following the earlier experiences of affluent countries. Preventing adolescents from starting smoking is crucial to decreasing tobacco-related illness.

Objective

To assess effectiveness of family-based interventions alone and combined with school-based interventions to prevent children and adolescents from initiating tobacco use.

Data Sources

Fourteen bibliographic databases and the Internet, journals hand-searched, and experts consulted.

Study Eligibility Criteria, Participants, and Interventions

Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) with children or adolescents and families, interventions to prevent starting tobacco use, and follow-up ≥ 6 months.

Study Appraisal/Synthesis Methods

Abstracts/titles independently assessed and data independently entered by 2 authors. Risk of bias was assessed with the Cochrane Risk-of-Bias tool.

Results

Twenty-seven RCTs were included. Nine trials of never-smokers compared with a control provided data for meta-analysis. Family intervention trials had significantly fewer students who started smoking. Meta-analysis of 2 RCTs of combined family and school interventions compared with school only, showed additional significant benefit. The common feature of effective high-intensity interventions was encouraging authoritative parenting.

Limitations

Only 14 RCTs provided data for meta-analysis (approximately a third of participants). Of the 13 RCTs that did not provide data for meta-analysis 8 compared a family intervention with no intervention and 1 reported significant effects, and 5 compared a family combined with school intervention with a school intervention only and none reported additional significant effects.

Conclusions and Implications of Key Findings

There is moderate-quality evidence that family-based interventions prevent children and adolescents from starting to smoke.

[Read the abstract](#)

Comprehensive Neighborhood Portraits and Child Asthma Disparities*

(Kranjac et al. 2017)

ABSTRACT

Objectives:

Previous research has established links between child, family, and neighborhood disadvantages and child asthma. We add to this literature by first characterizing neighborhoods in Houston, TX by demographic, economic, and air quality characteristics to establish differences in pediatric asthma diagnoses across neighborhoods. Second, we identify the relative risk of social, economic, and environmental risk factors for child asthma diagnoses.

Methods:

We geocoded and linked electronic pediatric medical records to neighborhood-level social and economic indicators. Using latent profile modeling techniques, we identified Advantaged, Middle-class, and Disadvantaged neighborhoods. We then used a modified version of the Blinder-Oaxaca regression decomposition method to examine differences in asthma diagnoses across children in these different neighborhoods.

Results:

Both compositional (the characteristics of the children and the ambient air quality in the neighborhood) and associational (the relationship between child and air quality characteristics and asthma) differences within the distinctive neighborhood contexts influence asthma outcomes. For example, unequal exposure to PM_{2.5} and O₃ among children in Disadvantaged and Middle-class neighborhoods contribute to asthma diagnosis disparities within these contexts. For children in Disadvantaged and Advantaged neighborhoods, associational differences between racial/ethnic and socioeconomic characteristics and asthma diagnoses explain a significant proportion of the gap.

Conclusions for Practice:

Our results provide evidence that differential exposure to pollution and protective factors associated with non-Hispanic White children and children from affluent families contribute to asthma disparities between neighborhoods. Future researchers should consider social and racial inequalities as more proximate drivers, not merely as associated, with asthma disparities in children.

[View the abstract](#)

Meeting Women Where They Are: Integration of Care As the Foundation of Treatment for At-Risk Pregnant and Postpartum Women*

(Thomas et al. 2017)

ABSTRACT**Purpose:**

In these times of rapidly changing health care policies, those involved in the health care of women, especially during the reproductive years, have a unique and daunting opportunity. There is great potential to positively impact women's health through focus on prevention, attention to addressing disparities, and new focus on the integration of behavioral health care in primary care settings.

Description:

In this report from the field, we suggest that the integration of mental health care into other health services and addressing underlying social needs by partnering with community-based organizations should be a top priority for all settings seeking to provide excellent health care for women.

Assessment:

We describe our experience in a diverse, urban, safety net system to draw attention to four areas of innovation that others might adapt in their own systems: (1) addressing social support and other social determinants of health; (2) tailoring services to the specific needs

of a population; (3) developing integrated and intensive cross-disciplinary services for high-risk pregnant women; and (4) bridging the divide between prenatal and postpartum care.

Conclusion:

Women are more likely to be engaged with healthcare during their pregnancy. This engagement, however limited, may be a unique "window of opportunity" to help them address mental health concerns and implement positive behavior change. Future work should include research and program evaluation of innovative programs designed to serve the entire family and meeting at-risk women where they are.

[Read the abstract](#)

III. Current Initiatives

A Better Way Forward: Ontario's 3-Year Anti-Racism Strategic Plan

(Government of Ontario, 2017)

This new initiative includes measures to help identify and eliminate systemic racism. It is also an acknowledgement that systemic racism -- including anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, Islamophobia and racism experienced by other communities, including the Jewish community -- is real, and can act as a barrier to achieving opportunity.

The strategy includes:

- Developing a framework for the collection of race-based data in various institutions, including the child welfare system and the justice, education and health sectors. Collecting race-based data is a valuable way to better understand where racial inequalities exist, which will help government work toward solutions to address it.
- A new Ontario Black Youth Action Plan targeted at increasing access to supports and opportunities for Black children, youth and their families to address outcomes disparities.
- Implementing an anti-racism impact assessment framework to help anticipate and remove unconscious bias in proposed policies, programs and decisions.
- New legislation that would, if passed, ensure the sustainability and accountability of the province's anti-racism work by providing a framework for government and organizations to identify and combat systemic racism.
- Public education and awareness initiatives targeting racism, including Islamophobia and antisemitism.

Read more about the strategy in [English](#) or [French](#)

IV. Upcoming Events

Towards Well-Being for All - Ontario Healthy Schools Coalition - 2017 Healthy Schools Conference

April 4-5, 2017: Toronto

This conference is hosted by The Ontario Healthy Schools Coalition (an Ontario-wide, broad-based coalition of community and health agencies). The theme of this conference is rooted in the Well-Being Strategy for education and will explore what this means for Ontario schools. The conference will focus on the four areas of the strategy that include:

- Safe and Accepting Schools
- Healthy Schools
- Positive Mental Health
- Equity and Inclusive Education

[Learn more](#)

Expanding Horizons for the Early Years Institute on Infant Mental Health

April 26-28, 2017: Toronto

This conference is hosted by the National Institute on Infant Mental Health. It will bring together a range of practitioners and professionals working in the field of infant mental health to discuss and share innovative and promising practices to address infant and toddler mental health concerns.

[Learn more about the conference](#)

The Power of Play Conference

September 25-27, 2017: London, ON

The Family Resource Program Canada is hosting a conference that will explore the power of play.

[Read the announcement](#)

V. Resources

Technology in Early Childhood Education

This resource in the Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development focuses on technology in early childhood education. This resource offers expert advice, resources to help navigate what apps and online tools are appropriate for young audiences, and information sheets regarding young children and technology.

Read more in [English](#) or [French](#)

From Breakthrough to Best Practices - A Science-Based Approach to Building a More Promising Future for Young Children and Families

This report, From Breakthrough to Best Practices (2016), explains key concepts of the science of child development to demonstrate healthy child development. In addition, it highlights lessons from research to provide examples of program characteristics that have been shown to help promote healthy child development.

[View the resource](#)

Ontario's Health System: Key Insights For Engaged Citizens, Professionals, and Policymakers

Ever wondered how the Ontario health system works? You can find answers in a new book edited by the McMaster Health Forum's director, John Lavis (2016). The goal of this book is to help make the system more understandable to the citizens who pay for it and are served by it, the professionals who work in it (and future professionals who will one day work in it), and the policymakers who govern it. Chapters include figures that highlight key features of a sector or other parts of the health system "at-a-glance."

McMaster University is making individual book chapters freely available to advance the public interest, [here](#). However, the University does not give permission for these chapters to be posted on websites other than the website of the McMaster Health Forum, or to be circulated electronically. The book is available for purchase on Amazon.ca.

[Access the book chapters](#)

VI. Featured Resources by the *Best Start Resource Centre*

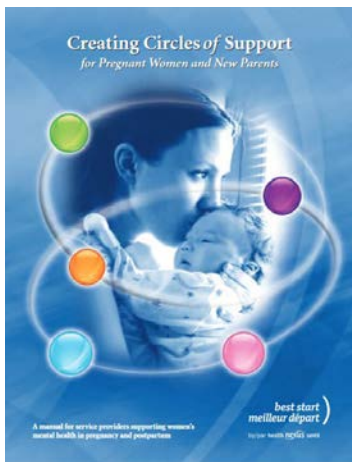


Feeding Your Baby - A Guide to Help You Introduce Solid Foods

(Best Start Resource Centre & Nutrition Resource Centre 2016)

This guide for parents provides information about feeding their baby from six months to one year. It has information and answers questions they may have about breastfeeding and starting solid foods.

Available in print in English and French
Available in PDF in [English](#), [French](#), [Arabic](#), [Chinese \(Simplified\)](#), [Hindi](#), [Ojibwe](#), [Punjabi](#), [Spanish](#), [Tagalog](#), [Tamil](#), and [Urdu](#)



Creating Circles of Support for Pregnant Women and New Parents - Manual

This manual for health and social service providers working with pregnant women, new mothers and their families supports mental health promotion in pregnancy and postpartum. A helpful template to assist service providers and their clients identify their circle of support, can be downloaded [here](#).

Available in [PDF](#)



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- The free weekly **Ontario Health Promotion E-mail bulletin (OHPE)** offers a digest of news, events, jobs, feature articles on health promotion issues, resources, and much more, to those working in health promotion.
- **Click4HP** is an international dialogue on health promotion. Participants exchange views on issues and ideas, provide leads to resources, and ask questions about health promotion.
- **The Maternal Newborn and Child Health Promotion (MNCHP) Network** - A province-wide electronic forum for service providers working to promote preconception, prenatal and child health.
- **Ontario Prenatal Education Network** - A space where professionals can share information and resources, ask questions and collaborate with peers on topics related to prenatal education.
- **Health Promotion Today** - Our blog keeps you informed of news and topics related to health promotion.
- **The Best Start Indigenous Sharing Circle (BSASC) Network** is a distribution list designed for service providers working with Aboriginal Peoples in areas of preconception, prenatal and child health. The network is a forum to share news, ideas, questions and best practices.

En français:

Restez branché!

- Le bulletin francophone **Le Bloc-Notes** est un outil indispensable pour les intervenants professionnels qui aiment être à l'affût des nouveautés dans le domaine de la promotion de la santé.
- Le **Bulletin de santé maternelle et infantile** est un bulletin électronique mensuel à l'intention

des fournisseurs de services œuvrant dans le domaine de la promotion de la santé maternelle et infantile.

- **Promotion de la santé aujourd'hui**– Notre blogue sur lequel on partage des nouvelles et réflexions liées à la promotion de la santé.