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# Parent-Child Guide

FREE

June/July 2024

Vol. 30 - No. 2

Est. 1995

FREE



**DYSGRAPHIA**  
Diagnosis

“Good Enough”  
**ENOUGH?**

**HOW TO**  
Stop Summer  
Learning Loss

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## A Dysgraphia Diagnosis

By Claudette Bouman

A parent recently spoke about her child's dysgraphia diagnosis. An English Collins Dictionary defines *dysgraphia* as "an impaired ability to write, especially as a result of a brain lesion." This is not to be confused with *dyslexia* which the same dictionary de-

fines as "an impaired ability to read due to a disorder of the brain" (or *word blindness*). These two learning differences seem to overlap. What these definitions ignore is the range at play.

I'm not one for labels as many learning difficulties in childhood may simply be developmental and, given appropriate supports, can be surmounted or adapted to. And I am definitely no expert. A licensed psychologist trained in learning disorders should be the one to diagnose dysgraphia. It's important to rule out any other problems or conditions that could cause writing difficulties.

While teachers are aware of learning difficulties in children, they are subject-matter generalists and not trained specialists in the area of neurological disorders. Still, teachers are keen to know and learn what specific learning difficulties or differences prevent children from producing their best efforts. The emphasis in classrooms is on what kids *can do* rather than what they are yet unable to do.

There are too many signs and symptoms of dysgraphia to list here. According to an article on Wikipedia, symptoms of dysgraphia are often ignored, ascribed to student laziness, carelessness, or anxiety. It may also be interpreted as attention deficiency or delayed visual-motor processing. In order to be diagnosed with dysgraphia, a child must show a cluster of symptoms including: uneven letter sizes and shapes, uneven lines and margins use, poor spatial paper use, dependency on vision to write, and overall poor legibility.

It's interesting that there is often a proportional difference between girls and boys with dysgraph-

ia. A question raised in *The Guardian* about why women's handwriting is neater than men's gathered interesting responses including differential gendered expectations and girls' desire to please. One female writer says:

"According to a 1992 article in *Scientific American*, women do better on precision manual tasks, and men are more accurate at target-directed motor skills, such as guiding or intercepting projectiles. This could explain why we have neater writing, but we throw like girls."

Dysgraphia, when diagnosed, is best dealt with early. I never heard it named until I was an adult. Slow development of essential skills such as shoe tying and awkward or painful grip of writing tools, or feeling pain while writing (cramps in fingers, wrist, and palms) are early signs. Our adult son displayed what I think now is a degree of dysgraphia that was never identified. He was encouraged to write, sketched for hours at a time, and became the best artist in the family. Our daughter had little trouble with handwriting and loved practicing calligraphy which improved her handwriting.

Children succeed with practice and exposure to developmentally appropriate activities.

There's no known dysgraphia cure but preventing undue stress, aversion to writing, and frustration is the best approach because dysgraphia has little to do with children's innate intelligence.

**Claudette Bouman** retired after teaching for 30 years in Barbados, Saskatchewan, and Nova Scotia. Her memoir, *Failing Forward in Saarland* published by FriesenPress is due out in Summer 2024.

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# Parent-Child GUIDE

94 Bayview Rd., Halifax, N.S. B3M 1N9  
Business Line: 902-209-4461  
The Parent-Child Guide newspaper is published by Rockwell Publishing Incorporated, Halifax  
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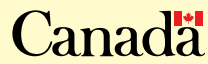
Printing on August 21, running to October 16, 2024  
Advertising Deadline August 2, 2024

ROBERT ROCKWELL, Owner/Publisher,  
Cell: 902-209-4461

Jennifer Park, General Manager 902-209-4461  
Design & layout: TC Transcontinental Printing Halifax

[parentchild@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:parentchild@ns.sympatico.ca)  
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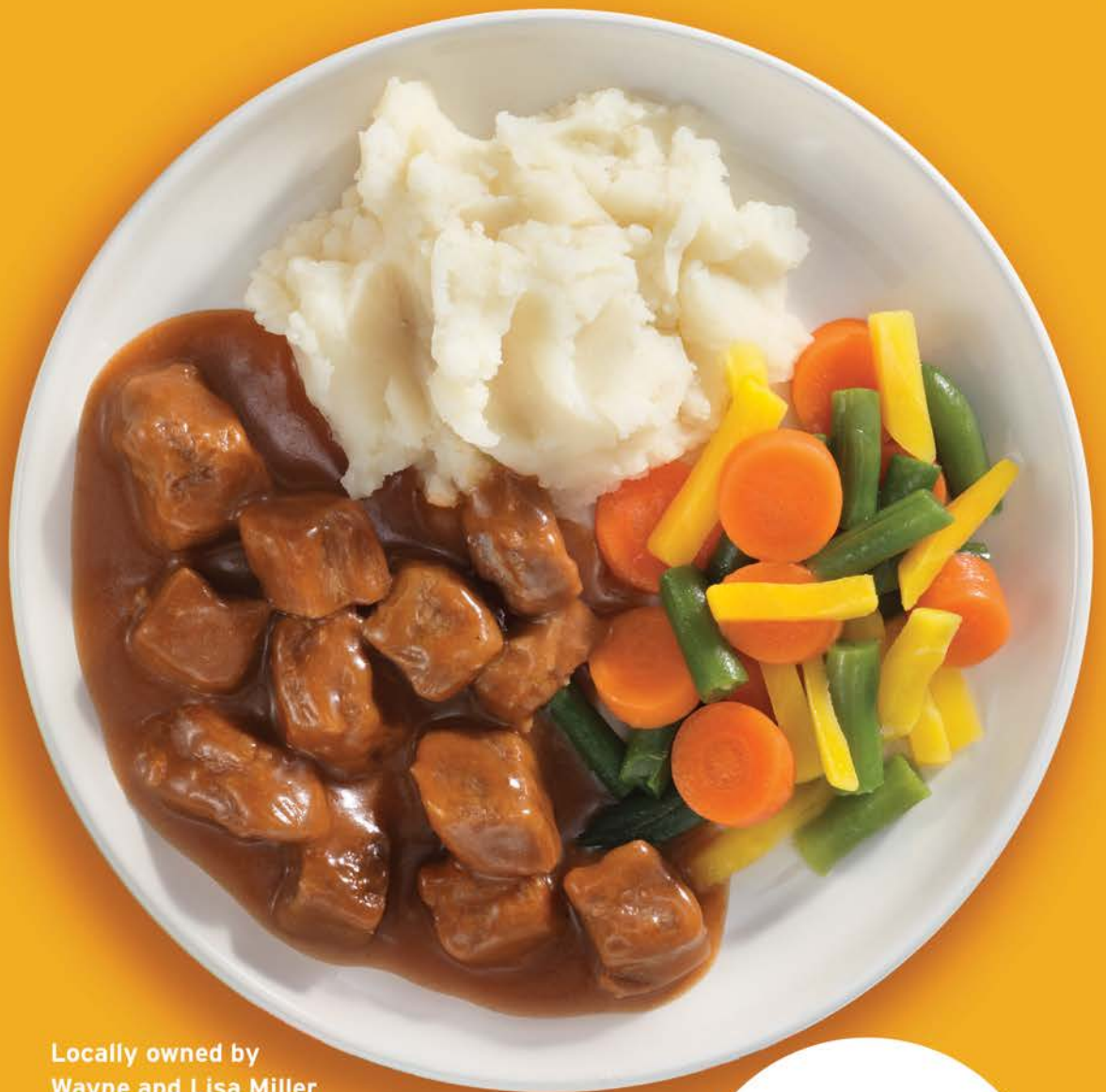
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# HRM MLAs and MPs Working Hard for YOU!

A Message from Darrell Samson, the Member of Parliament for Sackville-Preston-Chezzetcook

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE GRADS!

Congratulations on graduating! Chasing a dream requires effort, passion, and hard work. Keep it up and continue to strive.



I am looking forward to attending as many of the graduation ceremonies as possible across the riding.

## FATHER'S DAY

I would like to wish all the dads and proud grandfathers a very Happy Father's Day being celebrated on Sunday June 16th!



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Learn more: <https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2024/03/28/more-10-day-child-care-spaces-british-columbia>

## CANADIAN DENTAL CARE PLAN (CDCP)

Over 1.7 million seniors have applied for the Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP) since the program launched in December 2023. However, many clients have been met with a challenge when it comes to finding an oral health professional that participates in the Plan.

I am excited to share that as of July 8, 2024, all oral health providers will be able to direct bill Sun Life for services provided on a claim-by-claim basis without having to sign up for CDCP. This means that CDCP clients will be able to see any oral health professional they choose for their care, as long as the provider agrees to direct bill Sun Life for services provided under the plan.



May 2024: Applications open for seniors ages 65-69

June 2024: Applications open for adults with a valid Disability Tax Credit Certificate, and children under the age of 18.

Learn more: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/news/2024/04/supporting-oral-health-providers-participation-in-the-canadian-dental-care-plan.html>

**DARRELL SAMSON**  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT • DÉPUTÉ  
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**Welcome Summer!**  
I am looking forward to spending time in the riding, meeting constituents and attending events!

*Darrell*

902-861-2311  
[Darrell.Samson@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Darrell.Samson@parl.gc.ca)

## GET READY FOR CANADA DAY!

We have a limited supply of Canada Day lawn signs at our office that are available to constituents for their yard.



If you would like a **HAPPY CANADA DAY** sign, please email us at [Darrell.Samson@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Darrell.Samson@parl.gc.ca) with the Subject: "CANADA DAY!" and include your name and address, and we will contact you to make arrangements later this month.

## A Message from Hon. Tim Halman, MLA Dartmouth East

As we reach the middle of the summer season, I am hoping that all of you have time to get out and enjoy the sunshine! If you choose to relax at a freshwater beach, however, please be aware of the rising occurrence of blue-green algae. Blue-green algae tends

to develop when a period of hot, dry weather is followed by a heavy rainfall. Appearances are most common between the months of May and October. Despite the name, blue-green algae can be turquoise, green, brown, red, white or mixes of these colours. Blue-green algae blooms

can look like fine grass clippings in the water, spilled paint or pea soup. Sometimes they look like a thick scum on the surface. If you think you see it in a body of water, don't touch it, swim in it, or play in it, and don't drink the water. The toxins in the algae can make people sick and be fatal

for pets if ingested. If you come in contact with blue-green algae, wash yourself and any items that came in contact. If your water source is contaminated, please use alternative water sources for drinking, cooking, bathing, laundry and watering vegetables. Contaminated water isn't safe even if it's

**Timothy Halman**  
MLA, Dartmouth East

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boiled, filtered in a jug or pitcher or treated with bleach, herbicides, copper sulfate or other algicides. If you think you see blue-green algae, you should treat it as potentially toxic.

Please report it to your local Department of Environment and Climate Change office or call 1-877-936-8476. Have fun, and be safe!

# HRM MLAs and MPs Working Hard for YOU!

## Halifax West MP Report

By: Hon. Lena Metlege Diab, Member of Parliament

**Happy summer, everyone!** Graduation season is here at last. With the school year behind them, I want to extend my congratulations to all our hard-working students on their academic accomplishments over the last nine months. Whether you're moving on to another school, starting a new degree, or pursuing a career in your field, I wish you great success. Wherever life takes you, remember everyone who's supported you along your journey!

### SUMMER AT A GLANCE

In Halifax West and across HRM, there's no shortage of fun family activities planned for this summer. Here are some key dates to add to your calendar for July and August:

- **Canada Day Celebrations** – July 1 – Find all kinds of events at [hrmcanadaday.ca](http://hrmcanadaday.ca)
- **Nova Multifest** – July 19-21 – Alderney Landing, Dartmouth
- **Halifax Pride Festival** – July 18-28 – Full schedule and parade route at [halifaxpride.com](http://halifaxpride.com)

• **Friends of Clayton Park Summer BBQ** – July 28 – Details coming soon!

• **HRM Natal Day Activities** – August 2-5 – Learn more at [natalday.org](http://natalday.org)

• **Fairview Community Association BBQ** – August 17, 12-4pm – Piercy Field, Fairview

• **My MP Summer BBQ** – August 24, 11am-3pm – Canada Games Centre

I encourage you to keep up with my Facebook and Instagram pages where I'll share more details as they become available.

### DENTAL CARE PLAN EXPANDING

Since May 1, more than 150,000 seniors have accessed dental care through the Canadian Dental Care Plan. In July, the program will be made easier for providers to navigate, and we expect more clinics to choose to take part. What's even better is that—on June 27—applications for the plan will open to eligible adults with a valid Disability Tax Credit certificate, as well as children under 18. I've received wonderful mes-

sages already from seniors who've finally been able to get to the dentist, without having to worry about the cost, and I'm happy to know that more kids and people with disabilities will soon have that same opportunity. Visit [canada.ca/dental](http://canada.ca/dental) for full details on eligibility, coverage, and co-pays.

### FUNDING MORE CHILD CARE SPACES

Some more good news for parents: in May, we announced that another \$20 million in federal funding will be invested in the creation of new child care spaces in underserved communities in Nova Scotia. This is an important step towards our goal of 9,500 new \$10/day child care spaces by March 2026, and responds to the concerns I hear every day from parents looking for a space for their children.

Thank you for your continued support. I can't wait to see you out in our community this summer!

## A Message from Rafah DiCostanzo, MLA for Clayton Park West

### Summer is Here!

The sun is shining and the longer days are finally here. My office is hard at work keeping our community clean and beautiful. We had a successful community clean up in May with over 30 volunteers. We picked up more than a dozen bags of garbage. We are looking forward to our next clean up on Saturday, June 22 from 10-12pm. We would love to have you join us. We meet at the

parking lot across from Saint Benedict Church. We provide all the gear. If you care about our community and keeping it clean, please reach out to [Rafah@RafahDicostanzo.com](mailto:Rafah@RafahDicostanzo.com) and we can add you to our list of volunteers. It is fun for the whole family.

Speaking of fun for the whole family, our date is set for the Annual Friends of Clayton Park/MLA Barbecue. It will be held on Sunday, July 28 from 4-6pm. A rain date is set for July 29th from 5-7pm. Come and bring the family and friends to enjoy a fabulous community BBQ with entertainment, face painting and lots of activities.

For other events happening this summer,

follow Rafah' social media – Facebook: [@RafahDiCostanzoNS](https://www.facebook.com/RafahDiCostanzoNS), Twitter: [@RafahDiCostanzo](https://twitter.com/RafahDiCostanzo) or Instagram.

You can contact our office at [Rafah@RafahDiCostanzo.com](mailto:Rafah@RafahDiCostanzo.com) if you have any provincial issues that we can assist you with. Once a month, I have coffee and conversations with constituents where we discuss the matters most important to them. If you would like to have coffee with Rafah, reach out to our office for an appointment. I send out quarterly newsletters to my email subscribers. If you would like to subscribe, please contact my office by email or by telephone at 902-443-8318.



# HRM MLAs and MPs Working Hard for YOU!

## A Message from Claudia Chender, MLA Dartmouth South

Summer is fast approaching, make the most of it with fun family activities for everyone to enjoy. Here are some recommendations for fun in the sun that will make the most of summer in Dartmouth!

### Playground Hopping

Start your summer adventure by exploring different playgrounds around the city. One of our top recommendations is the playground centered in Ferry Terminal Park, a fantastic spot with a beautiful view of our harbour. Playgrounds are a great way for kids to burn off energy and for families to spend quality time together outside.

### Library Programs

Don't forget to visit your local library! Alderney Library offers a variety of fun summer programs for families. From storytelling to crafting, there is something for everyone. Libraries are the not-so hidden gem of every community with activities that can keep families entertained and engaged while nurturing a love for reading.

### Cool Off

Fun ways to beat the heat in Dartmouth: Shirley's Splash Pad at 60 Windmill Rd. is a ton of fun. Check out the Zatzman Sportsplex, dive into fun with their pirate ship slides and challenge each other on the pool's rock wall! Take advantage of the Ferry for a scenic and cost-effective harbour cruise. Don't forget to stop for ice cream at Kiwanis Graham's Grove Park!

### Free Swimming Lessons

We may have saved the best for last! Halifax Recreation offers free swimming lessons at many beaches and lakes throughout the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). To register or find out more information, call RecConnect at 902-490-6666 or visit their website.

### Safety Tips

While enjoying your summer activities, remember to prioritize safety. Always apply sunscreen 15 minutes before heading outside to protect against UV rays. Be selective about swimwear for your child; bright and contrasting colours stand out more clearly against the water, making it easier for lifeguards and parents to spot them quickly in case of an emergency.

This summer, embrace the warm weather and make memories with your family by trying out these activities and tips.

*Have a happy summer, Dartmouth!*



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# Summer Camp Guide

## Is my Child Ready for Camp?

Submitted by Rebecca Lancaster, Executive Director,  
Canadian Parents for French, Nova Scotia

**W**ith summer just around the corner, many parents are looking for summertime activities for their children that enrich the path to success. Extracurricular activities, such as summer camps, regardless of a student's age, are a great way to do this.

Overnight camps can help build independence if children are ready for the experience. When making the decision whether to send a child to an overnight camp, it is important to consider your child's strengths and weaknesses. How independent is your child presently? Are they comfortable being away from you? Can they handle the daily routines of self care such as teeth brushing, dressing themselves or making beds? Counsellors are there to help campers with responsibilities, but your child should be prepared to take on new roles and tasks.

Camp life is fun but full of activities and schedules. How well does your child take direction? It is important to be able to listen to counsellors and understand directions. Is it hard for your child to switch activities? Having a flexible personality helps with the routines and activities at camp.

Making friends or bringing friends? While making friends is one of the best aspects of summer camp, not all children are socially equipped for camp. If your child is shy or has trouble making friends, bringing a friend to camp helps ease the situation. Also, your child is less likely to want to come home if they sign up for camp with a friend.

Most camps focus on technology free activities, so prepare your child to spend time outdoors and away from television, computers and cell phones. Being technology free at summer camp gives children the opportunity to develop new hobbies, sports and engage with their friends.

Many factors contribute to your child's success and motivation, your support and encouragement is one of the main ways to help your child to feel confident. If your child isn't ready for camp, then it is okay to wait another year or two.

CPF Nova Scotia has organized French summer camps for over 45 years. We offer a variety of camp experiences in French from day camps to overnight camps for ages 6-14 yrs. Check out [ns.cpf.ca](http://ns.cpf.ca) for more information on our camps in July and August 2024!

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Session 5: July 29–August 2

#### CAMP DU SOLEIL

Session 1: August 6–9 | Session 2: August 12–16  
Session 3: August 19–23 | Session 4: August 26–30

#### CAMP FRANTASTIQUE

Session 1: July 29–August 2  
Session 2: August 12–16

#### CAMP DE LA BAIE

August 19–24

#### CAMP BRETON

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Information and registration form for summer camps can be found at [ns.cpf.ca/en/youth/french-camps](http://ns.cpf.ca/en/youth/french-camps)



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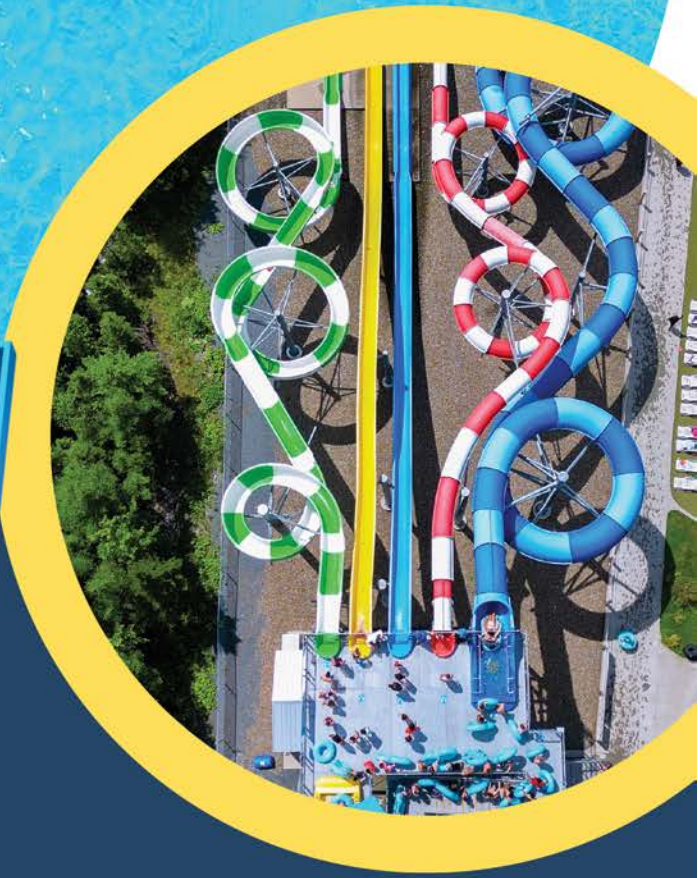
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## RETURN to Sherbrooke Village!

Submitted by Lanny Boyer, Events & Marketing Coordinator, Sherbrooke Village

Nestled along the picturesque St. Mary's River, Sherbrooke Village stands as a beacon of Nova Scotia's rich history, offering visitors an immersive journey into a more adventurous time along the eastern shore. As a living history museum, Sherbrooke Village brings the past to life with over 25 original and carefully reconstructed buildings, each brimming with stories from the gold rush era to the thriving days of lumbering and shipbuilding.

In 2024, Sherbrooke Village is breaking ground on an innovative and interactive tour that delves deep into the folklore collections of Ms. Helen Creighton. The new ghost tour, titled "The Shadow of Sherbrooke Village," will provide groups of wayfaring visitors an intriguing peek behind the curtain at what haunts this storied village. This unique experience promises to be a thrilling addition to the museum's array of historical activities.

Adding to the excitement, the Courthouse Concert Series is returning bigger and better than ever! With fourteen concerts scheduled from June to October, Sherbrooke Village is set to be the premier destination for the best musical performances in the region. These concerts provide a wonderful opportunity for visitors to enjoy live music in a historic setting, blending cultural enrichment with entertainment.

Sherbrooke Village is not just about observing history; it's about living it. Visitors can engage in hands-on activities such as blacksmithing, weaving, and woodworking, guided by knowledgeable costumed interpreters. The village also hosts special events throughout the year, including Heritage Day celebrations and the beloved Old Fashion Christmas, which features traditional decorations, caroling, and holiday activities.

For those seeking a deeper understanding of 19th-century life, Sherbrooke Village offers educational programs and historical workshops that provide in-depth insights into various aspects of the era, from cooking and gardening to textile arts.

With a welcoming café, a charming gift shop, and guided tours available, Sherbrooke Village ensures a comfortable and enriching visit for all. As the village continues to evolve and expand its offerings, visitors are invited to RETURN to Sherbrooke Village and experience history like never before. Whether exploring the new folklore exhibits, attending a concert, or participating in interactive activities, Sherbrooke Village promises an unforgettable journey through time.

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- Hone your own skills during your time at Sherbrooke Village participating in a workshop of your choosing serving as "apprentice" to a Heritage Artisan!

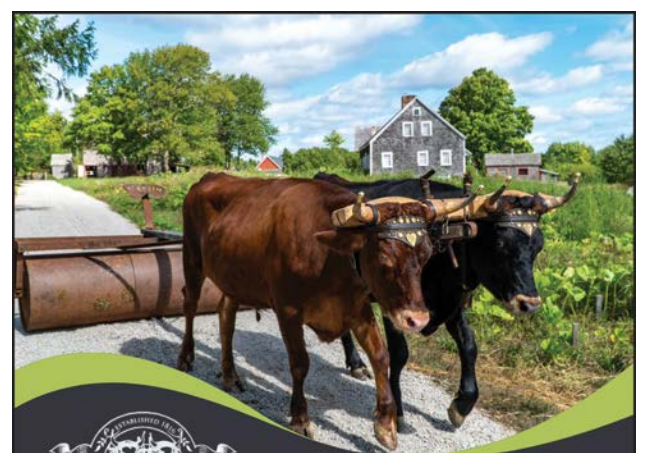


### Creative and Exciting Programming Weekly

- Whether it's family fun and festivals to thrilling Ghost Tours and concerts, Sherbrooke Village can quench the appetite for entertainment.
- Don't miss the locally hosted events like St. Mary's River Days, Show & Shine, Fright Night, and Old Fashion Christmas as well for old school fun in these modern times!



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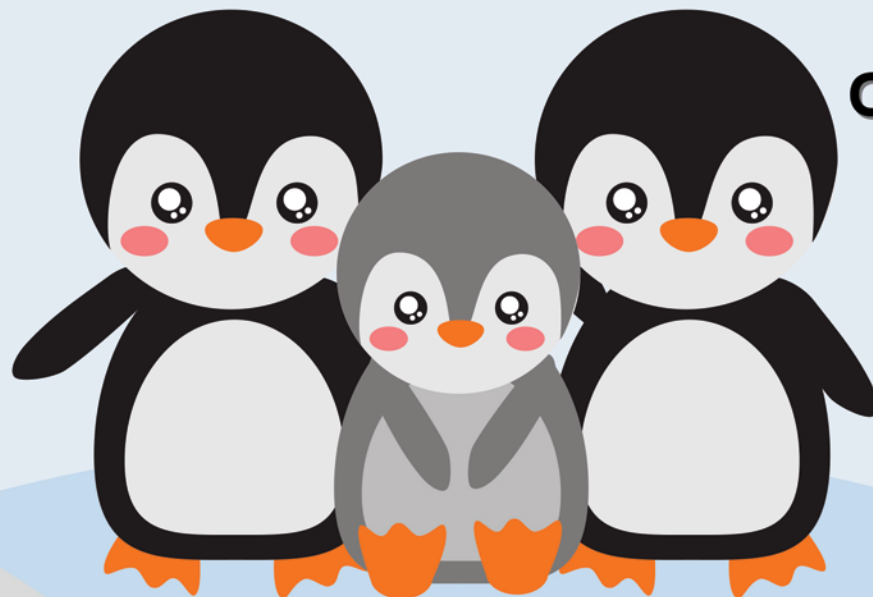
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# Health & Wellness

## Is “Good Enough” Enough?

By Dr. Sarah Davidson DDS, MSc (Ortho) FRCD (C), Halifax Orthodontic Specialist Group



I recently had a very open and candid conversation with a friend and fellow parent about the need for braces, and while we looked at his daughter’s teeth he uttered the phrase: “I think they are good enough.” It is a phrase I often hear. As an orthodontist and as a parent I understand. Some patients we see are ‘good enough.’ In fact their occlusion is correct and there would be no benefit from braces. But there are many others who would greatly benefit from a correction and timeliness of this treatment can limit invasiveness. I can appreciate that it seems every teen you see is sporting braces and that many young kids these days are excited to get their braces, if for no other reason than all of their friends have them. Some people even call braces “a right of passage.” While I disagree with the notion of braces being a right of passage, there are some very solid reasons why braces are so widespread these days.

There are two main reasons braces have become so prevalent. It is a fact that malocclusions, or the deviation from a normal bite, are on the rise. Genetics and a host of other factors have ensured that bite and excessive crowding or spacing issues are part of our genetic makeup. The second reason is that oral health has finally received due recognition for its importance to overall health. With this acknowledgement there has been an increased value placed on teeth and their surrounding structures. There is an awareness that teeth can be maintained throughout life and that maintenance means that today’s youth should never need to wear dentures, which were commonplace in the elderly not so long ago.

The reason you see more braces is because more people are choosing to set up their children or themselves for excellent present day and future oral

health, not to mention the improved self-confidence that comes with a beautiful smile.

Any orthodontist will tell you that braces are never “needed.” True needs in life are few: food, shelter, water. Braces are almost always elective in some nature but that does not mean that they are “just cosmetic” and are not indicated to improve function, decay breakdown and wear of teeth and to foster a healthy bite and smile. Most orthodontists are focused on the occlusion or bite first and esthetics second. The truth is, teeth that are aligned and in a proper bite look better and last longer. Minor rotations or deviations in tooth position can have a large impact on the health and prognosis of teeth.

So I would ask is “good enough” enough?” For all that we do to set up our youth for the future, oral health should not be neglected. It is not the place

to cut corners. We get one permanent set of teeth and we need to protect them to maintain them for a lifetime. Given the opportunity to do this at an early age, when damage to the teeth can be minimized and a young person can reap the rewards of having a beautiful and healthy smile for their lifetime, is invaluable.

*Dr. Sarah Davidson is a Board-Certified Specialist. She is a co-owner of The Brace Space in Bedford (Larry Uteck), The Brace Space in Halifax, The Brace Space in Sackville and The Brace Space in Dartmouth, offering conventional braces and Invisalign for children, teens and adults. For more information, contact (902) 455-7222.*

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# Education

## How to Stop Summer Learning Loss

Submitted by Oxford Learning

Every year, the cycle repeats. After a summer spent chasing butterflies, swimming, working, or just plain lazing about, hundreds of thousands of students file back into their schools after the break, ready for a new school year. Or are they?

Typically when students return to school in the fall after two months of break, they are far from ready to dive back into learning. Students are often unmotivated and struggling to re-adapt to the structure and routine of the new school year. Attention spans are often lower than usual. Engaging students after summer break can be challenging for teachers.

To get students back into learning mode, teachers spend up to a month or more reviewing last year's materials and catching students back up rather than being ready to learn new concepts. Considering that the average school year includes only 195 days of instruction, spending even 1/4 of that time reviewing

last year's material is less than ideal.

### What Can You Do to Help Prevent Summer Learning Loss?

- 1. Keep Kids Academically Engaged Over the Summer:** To avoid the fall gap, help your kids stay sharp over the summer holiday. Kids who are focused and ready in September will learn, integrate, and understand new material immediately. This will allow them to make the most of each school day instead of only half of them.
- 2. Encourage Regular Reading:** Make sure your children read during the summer. Even if they have a busy social life and a part-time or full-time job, ensure they take time each day to read.
- 3. Establish Daily Learning Time:** Set up brief study periods at least every other day. These can be times when your child reviews the most challenging subjects, reads ahead into next year's material, and organizes for the

coming school year. Check out study resources here.

**4. Enrol in Summer Programs:** The best way to help students stay sharp is with a summer program that balances activities with academics to keep thinking, reading, writing, math, and study skills sharp and ready for September.

**5. Balance Fun and Learning:** Holidays are essential for relaxation but shouldn't lead to mental passivity. Make sure that your student has fun and stays active. Activities like family walks, biking, swimming, and fishing help balance relaxation and mental activity.

**6. Plan Engaging Activities:** Beat boredom by staying engaged with fun, active pursuits.

**Grades 1 to 3:** Read, write, and play games that require concentration and memory. Maintain a family journal for the holiday, writing in it every day. Discuss stories, books,

carry to page 18

Pre-Prim to Grade 12 Reading Writing Math French SAT/ACT Prep



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# Education Education Education Education Education

## Embracing French in Nova Scotia: A Gateway to Family Bonding

Submitted by ÉQUIPE D'ALPHABÉTISATION-NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE

Learning a new language goes beyond academic achievement; it opens doors to strengthening family connections. For parents in Nova Scotia whose children are learning French as a second language, embracing French together can bring many personal and familial benefits. Équipe d'alphabétisation Nouvelle-Écosse supports Nova Scotian families through the free "Je parle français avec mon enfant langue

seconde" program, promoting French learning across the province.

When both children and parents engage in learning French, language acquisition transforms from a solo endeavor into a collaborative family activity. This shared learning experience promotes stronger relationships as families can practice basic conversational French at home and read books together in French. These shared activities not

only enhance language skills but also reinforce the family bond.

The "Je parle français avec mon enfant" free program meets these diverse needs through a structured, beginner-friendly curriculum that fits into the busy schedules of parents. Offering 20 weeks of in-person classes or 21 weeks of online instruction, this program supports parents not only in fostering their children's love for French but also in advancing their own personal learning.

**Here are three tips for practicing French this summer:**

- 1. Read French Books:** Summer is an excellent time to enjoy literature. Pick books at your language proficiency level. Children's books and comic books are particularly suitable for beginners, as they are generally easier to understand and include helpful illustrations.
- 2. Watch French Movies and TV Shows:** Take advantage of the wide array of French films and series available on streaming platforms. Watching with subtitles can help beginners follow along.
- 3. Cook French Recipes:** Cooking French dishes introduces you to both the language and culture. Following recipes in French can help you learn culinary vocabulary and phrases.

Engaging in these activities can make learning French both enjoyable and productive, enhancing your language skills over the summer. We hope you all have a wonderful summer filled with enriching experiences and joyful educational opportunities.

and TV shows to encourage active thinking.

**Grades 4 to 6:** Focus on planning skills. Use a daily planner to organize family activities and responsibilities. Encourage writing with a family journal and reading with interest-specific magazines.

**Grades 7 to 8:** Make time daily or weekly to maintain learning skills in key subjects such as reading, writing, and math. Get worksheets or workbooks online, download apps, or use school texts. Practice areas that need the most attention.

**Grades 9 to 12:** Take a summer class or summer tutoring program that focuses on academic weak areas. Without a full course load, students can make major gains in the summer without the reg-

ular stresses of the school year.

Bridge the Summer Learning Gap with Oxford Learning

This summer's challenge is to keep students mentally active and focused throughout the year. Integrating a tutoring program at Oxford Learning can help your children stay sharp and maximize their educational opportunities. Contact us today to learn more about our programs and how we can help.

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# NEW BOOK LAUNCH – Failing Forward in Saarland

By Claudette E. Bouman

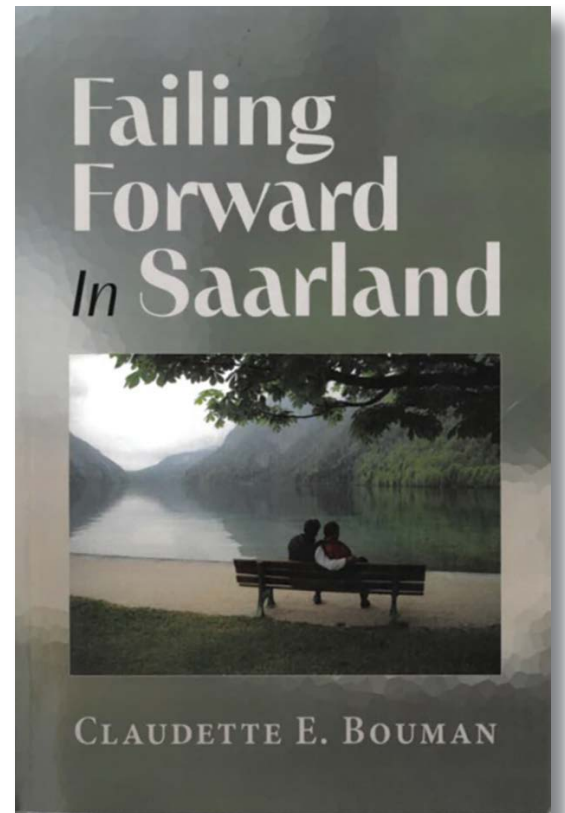
**F**ailing Forward in Saarland is the memoir of a transplanted Canadian with Caribbean roots, venturing with her husband and their daughter into Saarland, Germany. The memoir describes the year the family spent in this small forested land tucked away in the western corner of Germany on the border to France. Her teenage daughter made the daily commute to attend a lycée in France and her husband spent most days doing research in labs and forests. What was the mother and wife left to do in the Saarland with next to no knowledge of the German language let alone the Frankish accent? As a career teacher, the author’s life had never before been reduced to awaiting the daily home-coming of a daughter and husband. During her year in Saarland, she did much more than that. This book is an entertaining and informa-

tive account by an experienced Black teacher of what it means to transplant a family into a foreign country and how to enjoy a welcoming culture.

Most significantly, this memoir is a meaningful addition to the literary corpus focusing on strangers in a strange land. Even though the author is intimately familiar with the notion — she has lived most of her adult life in Canada, far from her Barbados birthplace — she immediately faces the challenges of adjusting to the customs of a new land and, especially, learning to communicate in German. And her story is anything but ordinary — it’s a moving, often amusing, and sometimes humbling account of the author’s adventures and learning experiences in a largely unknown country without the benefit of fluency in the local language. As the title indicates, the author comes to view these

challenges — and even failures — as positive “life lessons in adaptability, strength, and resilience” — failing forward.

*Claudette E. Bouman lives in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, with her husband. Their two adult children live nearby in Halifax. Claudette was born in Barbados and immigrated to Canada where she pursued graduate studies culminating in a doctoral degree from the University of British Columbia. She worked for many years as an educator in Barbados, Saskatchewan, and Nova Scotia. Over the years, she has written for publications and this is her first book. Her book project was supported by the Writers Federation of Nova Scotia, Arts Nova Scotia, and the Canada Council for the Arts. Claudette was a recipient of the 2021 Alistair MacLeod Mentorship Award.*



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