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Is There a Perfect Way to Parent?

By Claudette Bouman

Dear Parents,

Parenting. There's no harder job on the planet and the birth of children do not arrive with child-rearing guidebooks on how to raise perfect citizens. Recently, while flipping through one of my favourite national magazines, I came across an article written by a mother of two preteens who shared her misadventures with "gentle parenting". I had never heard of this theme. My immediate reaction was: Is it possible to be *always* gentle when parenting?

So, what is gentle parenting? Turns out it's an *entirely novel* (pardon my irony) parenting approach employing compassion, respect, and collaboration in child-rearing. Stressing empathy, understanding, and emotional connection over punishment and control, it calls for setting consistent, kind boundaries, "validating a child's emotions, and teaching self-regulation and problem-solving skills". All this *hopefully* fosters confident, independent, and emotionally intelligent people.

What struck me was the idea that this method could be applied successfully across every family situation for all parents and children, all the time. Like following a recipe in a cookbook.

Looking back, there are plenty of commissions and omissions I can blame my parents for and no doubt my children in turn will charge me with many of the same. Can we adults and seniors exit the hands-on parenting stages in our lives error-free?

Honestly, there *were* times when I wasn't a gentle parent. In the real universe I lived in, I was often exhausted and overwhelmed. Grocery shopping needed to be done, supper needed to be prepared, homework needed to be supervised, children needed to be readied for bed, and preparations needed to be made in time for the next day of work and school. So many needs! The challenges and stresses of hands-on parenting, while juggling full-time work for mothers and fathers, clamour relentlessly. In the traditional ideal model, there are relatives in an extended family waiting in the wings ever glad to assume childcare responsibilities and ease parental pressures. But this is not the modern-day model we can consistently count on.

I believe love, kindness, and patience are essential underpinnings of good, reasonable parenting. As adults, we pass on knowledge and wisdom that come with lived life experiences and maturity to our offspring, and fortunately parents aren't the only ones in society able to do this. Along with love and kindness, firmness is sometimes required in the moment, to move forward. Later at a more opportune moment, parent and child can circle back to the problem-solving skills, validation, and understanding necessary to raise healthy empathetic and intelligent human beings. This has become trickier in times of excessive exposure to social media and screens.

So, as parents it's really not always possible to devote long session to *validating a child's emotions, and teaching self-regulation and problem-solving skills* when supper is on the stove, band or hockey practice is about to start, and another child needs urgent attention.

Not surprisingly, the article ended with the writer admitting in due time she stopped trying to parent from a script and learned to trust herself.

Claudette Bouman retired after teaching for 30 years in Barbados, Saskatchewan, and Nova Scotia. Her memoir, *Failing Forward in Saarland* published by FriesenPress, is available from her at: claudette.bouman@gmail.com. It is sold at Helen Creighton House in Dartmouth, and Atlantic News and Bookmark stores in Halifax.



✓ FACT

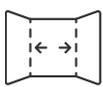
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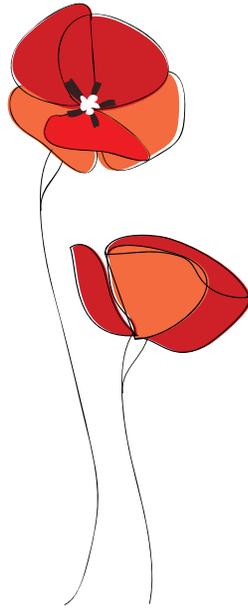


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Parent-Child GUIDE

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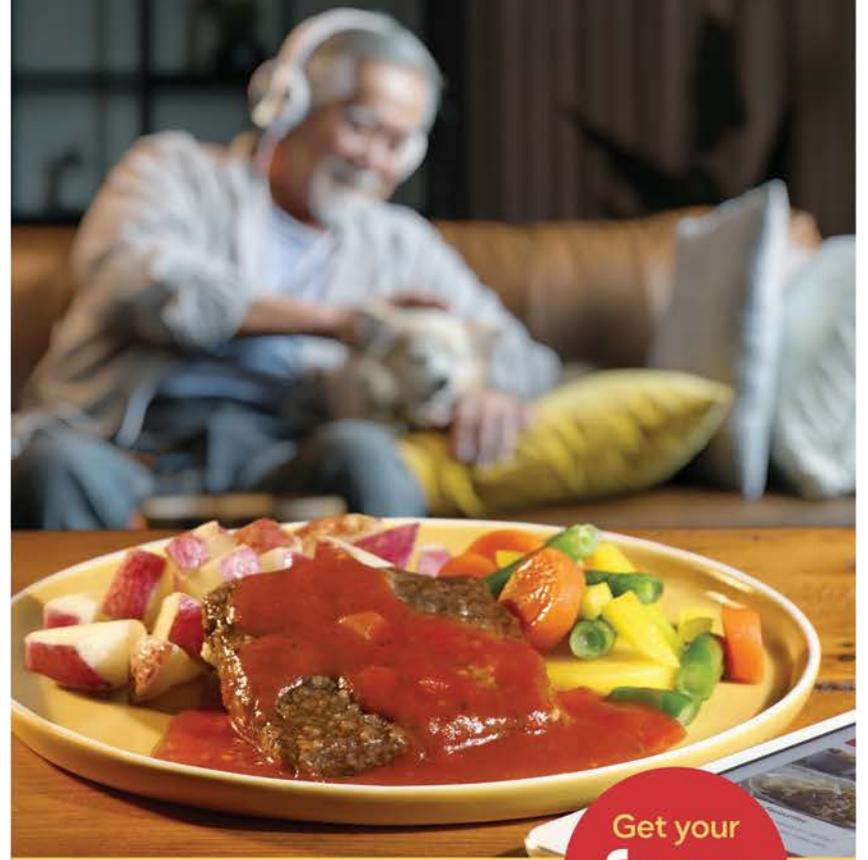
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HRM MLAs and MPs Working Hard for YOU!

A Message from Braedon Clark, MP Sackville-Bedford -Preston

As the leaves begin to turn here in Sackville-Bedford-Preston, I wanted to share an update on some of the work underway in Ottawa and at home.

On September 18, I introduced Bill C-227, the National Strategy on Housing for Young Canadians Act. The goal is to bring governments and partners together to address the urgent housing challenges facing young people. Access to affordable housing is the foundation for opportunity, yet today, young Canadians are being priced out, locked out, and forced to compromise their futures. Whether it's renting, securing student accommodations, or saving for a first home, the path has become increasingly difficult. Without secure housing, it's harder for young people to study, work, and plan their futures—and the ripple effects threaten the strength of our entire economy. By acting now, we can help ensure Canada remains a place where young people can build successful, fulfilling lives.

Over the past few months, I've met with both provincial and municipal leaders to stay aligned on key priorities like housing, affordability, and infrastructure. These conversations are essential to delivering meaningful results for families in Sackville-Bedford-Preston. I remain committed to working across all levels of government and party lines to make real progress on the issues that matter most to our communities.

With Halloween just around the corner, I hope everyone enjoys a safe and fun evening in our neighbourhoods. And as we head into the holiday season, I look forward to connecting with many of you in the coming weeks.

Please don't hesitate to reach out any time with your thoughts, questions, or ideas.

All the best,
Braedon Clark



A Message from Hon. Leah Martin - MLA for Cole Harbour

Wela'lin for the honour of serving as your MLA for Cole Harbour. It continues to be a privilege to meet with constituents, attend community events, and represent your voices at Province House. This fall, as the leaves change and we move into a season of reflection and gathering, I'd like to share a few updates and some seasonal reminders.

Over the past months, I've been working with my colleagues in the Legislature to advance initiatives that support families, strengthen our schools, and prepare Nova Scotia for the future. I've also continued to meet with many of you across Cole Harbour to hear your concerns and ideas. Each conversation helps me do my job better, and I am deeply grateful for the trust you place in me.

As we head into the autumn season, there are so many reasons to celebrate—and to take care. From Halloween fun to the solemn reflections of Remembrance Day, this is a time for both community joy and thought-

ful remembrance. Here are a few tips and reminders for the weeks ahead:

1. Halloween Safety

If your children are heading out trick-or-treating, make sure costumes include reflective tape or glow sticks so they're visible in the dark. Encourage them to walk in groups, stay on well-lit streets, and check treats before enjoying them.

2. Seasonal Wellness

The fall can bring cooler weather and shorter days. Dress in layers, keep active, and take advantage of the many walking trails in our community. Staying connected socially is just as important as staying warm physically.

3. Remembrance Day

On November 11th, we pause to honour those who served and continue to serve our country. I encourage everyone to wear a poppy, attend a ceremony if you're able, and take a moment of silence to reflect on the sacrifices made for our freedom.

4. Community Connection

Autumn is also a season of gratitude. Check in on neighbours, especially seniors, who may need help with yardwork or preparing for winter. A small act of kindness can go a long way.

As always, if you see me out in the community, please feel free to stop and say hello! I am always here to listen. I wish you and your family a safe, warm, and meaningful fall season.

Wela'lin,

Leah Martin
MLA for Cole Harbour



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In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

— Maj. John McCrae
Canadian doctor and
WWI artillery commander

We Remember

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Protecting Nova Scotia's Wild Places for Generations to Come.

Submitted by Nova Scotia Nature Trust

Whether you're hiking windswept coastlines, paddling quiet bays, or exploring woodland trails with your family, Nova Scotia's wild places shape how we live, play, and connect.

But these landscapes and the species that depend on them are at increasing risk. The Nova Scotia Nature Trust is working urgently to protect them — not just for us, but for our kids, and for future generations.

The In Our Nature campaign is an ambitious effort to raise \$4 million by December 31, 2025. For this very limited time, donations can be leveraged to unlock additional funds from government and other partners, giving the campaign the potential to generate \$20 million to safeguard rare wildlife and natural treasures — if we act quickly.

"The catastrophic effects of climate change and the staggering loss of biodiversity are escalating, and evident all around us," says Bonnie

Sutherland, Executive Director of the Nature Trust. "From rare species like the Blanding's Turtle and Piping Plover, to the coastlines, wetlands and other wild landscapes that define our province, so much is at stake."

"Right now, every dollar donated can unlock four additional dollars to save land," she adds. "A \$100 donation becomes \$500, and a \$1,000 gift grows into \$5,000 to help protect the special places you love." But the 4-to-1 leverage opportunity is only available until December 31.

For families across Nova Scotia, this is a chance to protect the places where our children explore, learn, and grow. Sutherland's message is simple but urgent: "It's in our nature to step up for what we love. Now is the time. The urgency has never been greater."

Visit nsnt.ca to give today and help ensure the wild places we love are here for our children, forever.

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Exclusive fall voucher with Parent-Child Guide readers

By Rhea Hamlin, Ross Farm Museum

This past summer, Ross Farm Museum proudly participated in the Canada Strong Pass program, focusing on domestic tourism and making cultural experiences accessible to everyone. While the

program concluded in early September, we are excited to announce our own initiative to continue this mission.

Therefore, we are sharing an exclusive fall voucher with Parent-Child Guide readers! Enjoy a \$10 discount on a family day pass, available until December 10th. To take advantage of this offer, bring the voucher to the museum, and our friendly gift shop staff will be ready to assist you.

Starting Monday, October 14th, we will shift to our Fall and Winter hours. Our gift shop and café will be open Wednesday to Sunday from 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM and 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM, respectively. The museum site will be open for visitors on Saturdays and Sundays from 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

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Back-to-School: Building Connection Through Performing Arts

Submitted by Stagecoach

Helping Children Feel Seen, Heard, and Connected This Fall

Back-to-school season can feel overwhelming for both kids and parents. New classrooms, unfamiliar faces, and shifting routines can sometimes leave children feeling isolated or unsure.

That's where performing arts comes in. Not just as a creative outlet, but as a powerful tool for building connection, friendship, and a true sense of belonging.

Why Performing Arts Builds Connection

In drama, dance, and singing classes, children are able to collaborate, communicate, and express themselves together. They're not just learning routines or memorising lines; they're learning how to:

- Work as a team toward shared goals
- Listen actively and support others
- Develop empathy and emotional awareness
- Build trust and friendships in a supportive space
- Feel included and valued
- Find their voice and share it
- Learn how to navigate social situations with confidence

Performing arts creates an environment where children feel safe to be themselves, try new things, and grow alongside peers who are doing the same.

How Performing Arts Helps Beyond the Stage

Connection is a key part of emotional well-being. When children feel connected to their peers, teachers, and community, they are more confident, resilient, and open to learning.

Performing arts helps children:

These are skills that don't just apply on stage, they're life skills that support healthy relationships in school and beyond.

Why Choose Stagecoach?

At Stagecoach Performing Arts, connection is at the heart of everything we do. Our small class sizes, supportive teachers, and inclusive environment create a space where children build lasting friendships while developing their creativity.

Whether your child is outgoing or reserved, they'll find a place to belong, and people who cheer them on.

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Audrey celebrates 50 years of The War Amps CHAMP Program

For seven-year-old Audrey Otis, being a part of The War Amps Child Amputee (CHAMP) Program has meant connecting with a support system that has a longstanding legacy in Canada.



Audrey wearing her artificial arm at The War Amps 2025 Atlantic Child Amputee (CHAMP) Seminar in June.

Audrey recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of the CHAMP Program with peers from across the Atlantic provinces at the organization's CHAMP Seminar in Halifax. The seminar was a special moment for her to meet other kids with amputations and see that she is not alone.

Born without her right arm below the elbow, Audrey was enrolled in the CHAMP Program when she was just nine months old.

"Audrey's amputation has never slowed her down," says Mary LeBlanc, Audrey's mom. "She faces every day with determination, creativity and a bright smile."

As a "Champ," Audrey is eligible for financial assistance for arti-

cial limbs and adaptive devices, as well as peer support through the CHAMP Program. CHAMP was established in 1975 by the war amputee veterans who founded The War Amps and continues today thanks to donations from the public to the organization's Key Tag Service.

"Thanks to donations to The War Amps, Audrey has received prosthetic arms that help her reach new milestones," LeBlanc says. "She was recently fitted with a prosthetic arm that makes it easier for her to grab and release objects. She also has a prosthetic arm that supports her in activities like doing the bridge in gymnastics and swinging on the monkey bars at the park. These tools have opened up a world of possibilities for Audrey."

In addition to providing life-changing funding for these artificial arms, LeBlanc says CHAMP has given Audrey confidence, support, and connection through War Amps events like seminars, which are unique opportunities for families to share experiences and learn about the resources available to them.

"From the bottom of our hearts, thank you to every donor. You've truly made a difference in our daughter's life."

The War Amps receives no government grants; its programs are made possible through the public's support of the Key Tag Service. For more information, or to order key tags, visit waramps.ca or call toll-free 1 800 250-3030.

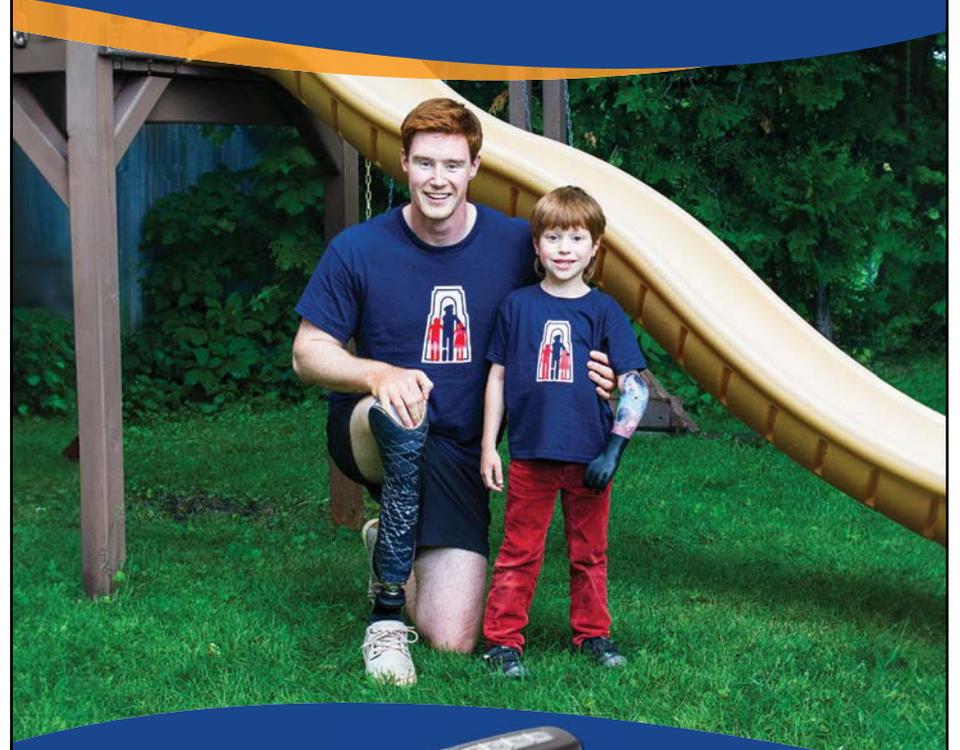


Audrey has fun at the playground.



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Why Phonics Builds Strong Readers

Submitted by Oxford Learning

For generations, parents and educators have debated the best way to teach children how to read. Should we rely on “whole language” methods, which encourage students to memorize entire words, or should we return to the tried-and-true foundation of phonics? At Oxford Learning, we believe the answer is clear: phonics is the key that unlocks literacy and empowers children for lifelong learning.

The Building Blocks of Reading

Language begins with sound. Long before children ever see letters on a page, they hear words spoken around them. They listen, imitate, and gradually learn to distinguish one sound from another. This natural process of listening and blending sounds allows children to understand and use language with precision.

Reading builds on that same foundation. Just as children combine sounds to speak, they must learn

to connect sounds to written symbols — our alphabet. With only 26 letters, English may seem simple, but these building blocks create limitless combinations. When children learn phonics, they discover that words are not mysterious shapes to memorize; they are patterns that can be decoded. This logical, step-by-step process fosters confidence and independence in reading.

The Pitfalls of Memorization

Whole-language methods suggest that children can learn to read by memorizing entire words. But memorization comes at a cost. Instead of recognizing the system and structure of written language, children are left with a random list of words to remember. With tens of thousands of words in English, this quickly becomes overwhelming.

Even more concerning, whole-language teaching encourages guessing. If a child doesn't know

a word, they are told to “try” — to estimate based on context or appearance. While this may seem helpful in the short term, it undermines accuracy and precision. Words are not interchangeable. Each one carries a specific meaning, and children deserve to understand and use language with clarity.

When children rely too heavily on memorization and guessing, their ability to think critically suffers. They may struggle to solve problems, make connections, or feel confident in their own skills. Over time, this can impact not only academic achievement but also self-esteem.

Phonics and the Power of Thinking

Phonics-first instruction provides children with the tools they need to succeed. By teaching them to break words into their parts, we are not just teaching reading — we are teaching thinking.

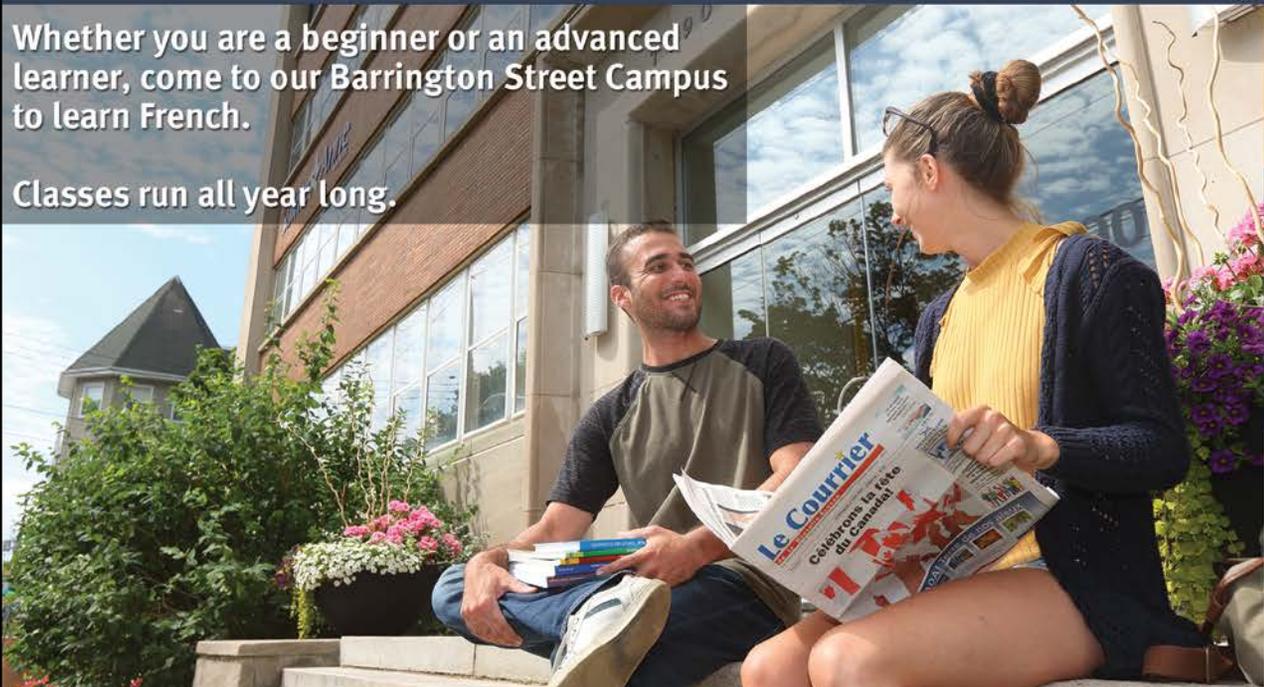
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Health & Wellness

The First Visit

By Dr. Sarah Davidson DDS, MSc (Ortho) FRCD (C)
The Brace Space Orthodontists



The familiar fall, early winter season is upon us. Extracurricular activities, long dark work weeks and routine, holidays and a lot more. You may find it difficult to book all the necessary appointments for you and your kids before the hours of the day are filled with school and soccer and supper: Eye doctor – check. Hair cuts – check. Dentist – check.

Then your Dentist recommends that you see an Orthodontist for your child! Before you even have time to think about one more appointment to fit in, you think to yourself “ They are only eight, that’s far too young for braces. He still has baby teeth!”

So, why the First visit. What is to be expected and what is to be gained?

Eight years of age is a perfect time for an Orthodontic specialist to see your child. It is a transition stage between primary and permanent teeth that offers the orthodontist the opportunity to assess the developing bite and make predictions and possible recommendations for treatment that may either prevent problems from worsening or make treatment easier later on. Treatment without surgery and without extractions of permanent teeth is the gold standard whenever possible. The best chance of your child having this type of treatment, or perhaps avoiding treatment altogether, is to have an early screening exam with a certified Orthodontic Specialist.

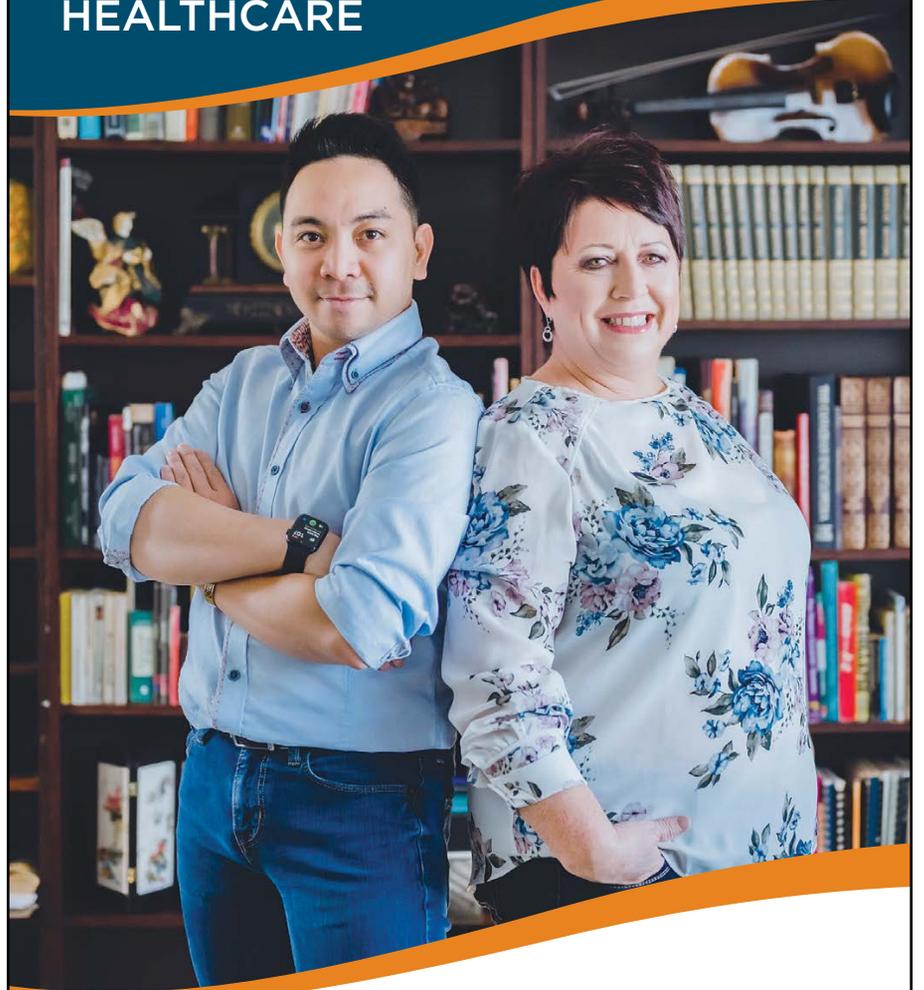
The first visit offers something else for you and your child. It offers you both a chance to meet with an Orthodontic specialist and have your questions answered. For many chil-

dren, the first visit is beneficial because it is just that, a first chance to meet and visit with the Orthodontist in a relaxed way. It is positive reinforcement for children who may have some dental anxiety. You can reassure your child that no treatment will be done at this initial visit. Often times a simple screening x-ray will be taken to ensure all teeth are present and developing normally and a few photographs may also be taken to help the Orthodontist point out interesting findings. It is all about gathering information. Children often have their own questions or concerns regarding their teeth or bite and establishing a rapport with the Orthodontist who may treat them someday is very important. And most times your child will be placed on a yearly recall until the time they are ready to discuss treatment options, if indicated.

So if you find yourself invited to a First visit, take the invitation! At our clinic it is free. Use it as an opportunity for you and your child to learn more about their teeth and bite and maybe get some insight on whether Orthodontics might be a part of your future as well!

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

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continued from page 13

Students learn to analyze, decode, and apply rules consistently. These habits translate into stronger comprehension, clearer communication, and sharper problem-solving skills.

When children master phonics, they feel empowered. They no longer need to guess or memorize endless word lists. Instead, they can approach new texts with confidence, knowing they have the skills to unlock meaning. This confidence supports not just reading but all areas of learning.

Reading is not simply about recognizing words on a page. It's about building the skills and confidence to think, question, and understand the world. Phonics provides the foundation for this life-long journey. At Oxford Learning, we're proud to continue this tradition, ensuring that children everywhere have the opportunity to read well, think clearly, and

thrive.

Oxford Learning's Approach

Since 1984, Oxford Learning has helped thousands of students across Canada build strong literacy foundations. Our programs go beyond tutoring. We focus on teaching children how to learn, not just what to learn. By emphasizing phonics-based reading, cognitive development, and critical thinking, we equip students with tools that last a lifetime.

We believe that every child is capable of becoming a confident, independent learner. With the right instruction and support, children don't just improve their grades — they discover the joy of learning and the confidence to achieve their full potential.

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HOME Décor

Embracing the New Traditional: A Guide to Timeless Design

By Holly Gouthro, Interior Consultant, DWD Interiors

Design trends are constantly evolving, but the past decade has seen a noticeable shift from the cool minimalism of grey and white to the comforting embrace of warm neutrals. Now, a captivating new trend is emerging, blending the timeless appeal of traditional pieces with a fresh, modern sensibility: New Traditional style. This aesthetic, widely celebrated across platforms like Instagram and TikTok, reintroduces a cozy and inviting feeling into our homes for the 2020s.

New Traditional design discards the austere lines and cool palettes of minimalism, instead championing curves, rich colors, and a touch of nostalgia. It beautifully integrates cherished older brown wood furniture, with its intricate details, alongside traditional-style rugs in updated, contemporary hues. Imagine your grandparents' classic style reimagined with modern finishes such as polished nickel and unlacquered brass. This style also celebrates the inherent beauty of nature, incorporating elements like natural stone and patinated metals.

The essence of New Traditional lies in the harmonious interplay between old and new. The comforting richness of deep wood tones and jewel-toned colors

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finds its perfect counterpart in modern lighting and clean lines. This creates a captivating juxtaposition, transforming the often-stuffy formal living spaces of old traditional styles into inviting and livable environments. It's a delicate balancing act, ensuring that each element contributes to a cohesive and welcoming atmosphere.

When adopting this sophisticated style, remember that the true magic lies in the details. It's not just about selecting larger furniture pieces; the accents you choose for pillows, drapery, and the style of your art and lighting all play crucial roles. These small, intricate details are what maintain the delicate balance between the cherished old and the vibrant new, ultimately crafting a home that feels both timeless and perfectly attuned to modern living.

Contact us today at holly@dwdinteriors.com www.dwdinteriors.com, 1203 Hollis St, The Westin, Halifax, NS, B3H 2P6, 902-422-0963



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