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SCHOOL READINESS

FALL REGISTRATION GUIDE
pg 14-15

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Printing on October 22, running to December 10, 2025

Advertising Deadline October 3, 2025

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

Jennifer Park, General Manager

Design & Layout: Denise Postma

Printer: TC Transcontinental Printing Halifax

Funded by the Government of Canada

Canada

School Readiness

By Claudette Bouman

Dear Parents,

I hope you and your children took time to frolic in the summer sun. Visits to beaches, camping, and road trips were among my family's favourites during July and August. It was important for us to dismantle the school day and week routines before re-establishing them in the fall.

September is a special time; it marks time for a fresh start. And it's extra-special for children starting school for the first time. With a new school or new grade, change is in the air. I don't remember my first day in kindergarten, but I do remember my first day at secondary school at age eleven. It was a mix of thrilling and frightening.

Let me talk about readying children for school this coming September. For a long time, schooling in Nova Scotia was organized into three levels:

- Elementary: covering Grades Primary (Kindergarten) through Grade 6.

- Junior High/ Middle School: spanning Grades 7 to 9.

- High School: including Grades 10 to 12.

More recently, Pre-Primary, for children aged 4-5, is available as a precursor to primary school.

School readiness refers to a range of abilities, knowledge, and behaviors that prime a child for success. Readiness includes physical, reasoning, social, and emotional development, as well as speaking, reading, and writing skills. To be ready always requires a bit of an effort for children and

teenagers but perhaps it's most critical at the Pre-Primary and Kindergarten stages.

If you think of a school career as a stairway then parents, not just teachers and school personnel, should be positioned right there beside children to help when needed.

Some parents opt to keep their 4-year-olds at home or in nursery school/day-care for one more year before introducing them to elementary school. This is a discretionary decision that should fit a child's and parent's needs. Children's abilities vary and differ at every stage of development. This is true even for children born to the same parents and raised in the same home. I only need to think of my own son and daughter.

How can you best help your child to get ready for school or a new grade? At any grade level, it's first and foremost important to set time aside for your children and teens on a regular basis. For the youngest beginners, they need to know as much as they can absorb in the language they can grasp. Encourage questions, show and tell, take them to the school and, if possible, introduce them to the school principal or other school staff to reduce potential anxiety. Long before school starts, children should be involved at home or daycare in activities which provoke a good deal of talking, reading, writing, exploration, thinking, and social behaviours such as taking turns and sharing spaces.

Once early school readiness is established, climbing that stairway, stage by stage, becomes easier. Children's attitudes and habits are well established in elementary school and segue into the higher grades.

Some children seem to be born ready; others shy away from any new situation. Even if you as a parent did not have totally positive experiences at school (who does?) you should encourage and promote optimism for school to your child.

"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.



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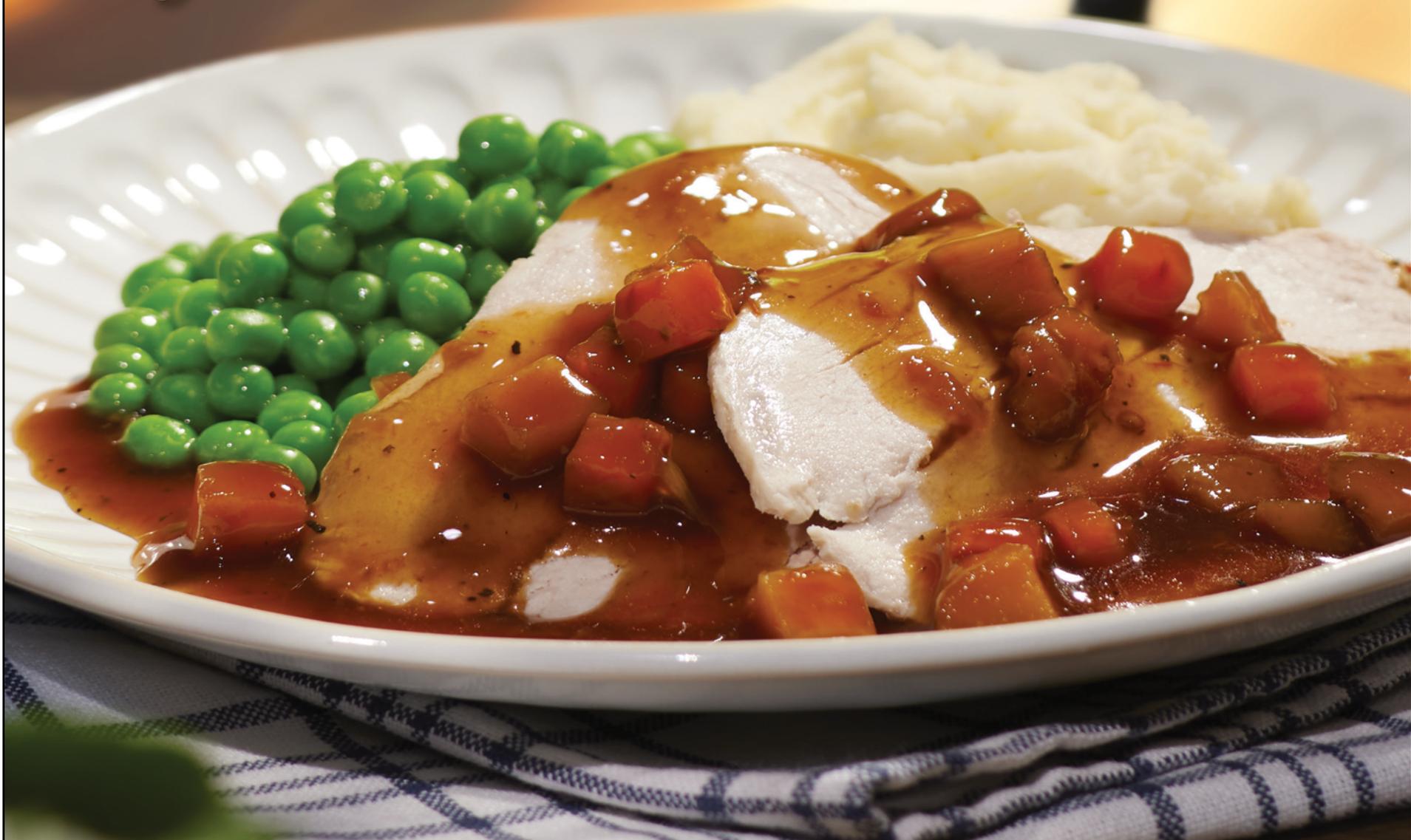
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HRM MLAs and MPs Working Hard for YOU!

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

As summer winds down and a new school year begins, there's a sense of excitement in the air. Whether you're returning to a familiar school or stepping into a new one, this is a fresh start and a chance to set new goals, make new friends, and take on

new challenges.

Students: Your curiosity and creativity are what make our schools thrive. This year don't be afraid to ask questions or try something new. Every day is a new opportunity to grow as leaders, teammates, and strong members of your community.

Educators and school staff: Thank you for the passion and care you bring to work. As you prepare for your classrooms and lessons, know that you will make a lasting impact on the lives of your students and your community.

Families: Your support is essential. As

partners in education, your encouragement and involvement help build a sturdy foundation for success. Let's continue working together to ensure every child feels safe, supported, and inspired.

Here's to a school year filled with remarkable achievements. Welcome back and



best wishes for a fantastic year ahead!

Braedon Clark
Member of
Parliament | Député
Sackville-Bedford-
Preston

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

Wela'lin Cole Harbour

My name is Leah Martin, I am your provincial MLA for Cole Harbour. I am also a proud member of Millbrook First Nation. I hope everyone is enjoying the heat and embracing all the amazing fun our community has to offer in the summer, with Lawrencetown and Rainbow Haven to Abenaki and beyond, there is so much to see and do before we have to send our kids back to school! That's right, the new school year is

right around the corner. Are you prepared?

As families across Cole Harbour return to school routines, I want to take a moment to wish all students, parents, caregivers, and educators a smooth and successful start to the year and to share a few reminders to help keep our kids safe, healthy, and ready to learn. Below I've included some of my best tips for success as we head into the coming weeks.

1. Keep Up with Sun Safety

Even as the weather begins to cool, the sun can still be strong during recess and after-school activities. A quick morning sunscreen routine, along with a hat or protective clothing, goes a long way in protecting children's skin during outdoor time.

2. Dress for Changing Weather

Fall in Nova Scotia can be unpredictable. Dressing in layers and having a jacket or rain gear on hand helps ensure kids stay comfortable and focused

throughout the school day.

3. Stay Hydrated and Fuelled

A reusable water bottle and nutritious snacks help support focus, energy, and overall well-being. Water-rich foods like fruit are a great addition to lunchboxes and after-school snacks.

4. Ease into Routine

The shift back to early mornings can be challenging. A steady bedtime routine and a little extra patience during the first few weeks can



go a long way in helping kids (and parents!) adjust.

As your MLA, I'm proud to stand with families in Cole Harbour as we move into this next chapter together. If you see me at a school event or around the community, don't hesitate to

stop for a chat—I'm always here to listen and to help however I can.

Wishing you all a safe, healthy, and inspiring start to the school year.

Wela'lin,

Leah Martin
MLA for Cole Harbour

A Message from Brad McGowan, MLA Cole Harbour -Dartmouth

Now that our summers are longer and hotter, it still pays to be aware of the dangers heat illnesses can pose even in late summer and early fall. High temperatures and humidity can put you at risk for heat-related illnesses, especially if you're working or exercising outside.

Some people, like infants and young children, seniors, and people with chronic medical conditions, have a higher risk for developing heat-related illnesses. If this sounds like you or someone you know, then taking any steps you can towards prevention may make the difference.

The best forms of prevention include drinking plenty of water, staying in shaded or cool areas, taking frequent breaks if you have to

work outside, wearing lightweight, light-coloured clothing, avoiding leaving children, infants or pets unattended in vehicles, checking on older neighbours and others vulnerable to heat-related illness, and offering air-conditioned shelter and water to affected individuals if needed

If recognized early and treated properly, a mild illness can be cured and prevented from progressing to something more severe. However, people might not always show symptoms before they develop a more serious illness.

Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion can include fatigue, weakness or reduced energy, dizziness, headache, nausea, rapid pulse and heavy sweating. Anyone who experiences



these symptoms needs immediate medical attention. Move them to a shady area and give them water. Remove any excess clothing and place ice packs or cold wet towels in the neck, armpit and groin areas.

While hopefully no-one we know will suffer from this, it is always good to be ready just in case. Have a safe and happy long summer!

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A Message from Damian Stoilov, MLA Bedford South

Summer is in full swing here in beautiful Bedford South, and I couldn't be more excited to share some of the exciting things happening in our community. Whether you're spending time with the kids in one of our neighbourhood parks, cheering them on at soccer or baseball, or just enjoying a well-earned ice cream along the waterfront, there's something special in the air this season.

Bedford South continues to be one of the fastest-growing communities in Nova Scotia. New families are putting down roots, local businesses are thriving, and community services are expanding to keep up. With that growth comes opportunity and responsibility. The Province is making real progress on projects that will shape the future of our neighbourhood, such as the Mill Cove ferry terminal and

adding a1-2 new school in Bedford to the five-year school capital plan.

I recently had the opportunity to welcome Premier Tim Houston to Bedford South, and alongside Bedford Basin MLA Tim Outhit we visited 11 businesses, organizations, and healthcare facilities around Bedford. On our tour we had the opportunity to celebrate the Roastory coffee shop's grand opening and the Chickenburger's 80th anniversary. We met staff and saw the incredible work being done at the new West Bedford Transitional Health. And we heard from manufacturing business owners about the challenges they're facing as a result of the ongoing trade dispute with the United States, a stark reminder that there is still important work to be done to support Nova Scotia's local businesses.

I want Bedford South to be a place where families feel heard, supported, and proud to call home. If you have an idea, a concern, or just want to talk about how we can make our community even better, please reach out. You'll often find me at local events, in one of our fantastic local coffee shops, or knocking on doors around the riding - don't be shy about saying hello!



Damian Stoilov
MLA for Bedford South

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Navigating Back-to-School Season with Confidence: The Power of Extracurricular Activities

Submitted by Stagecoach

Back-to-school season is often a whirlwind of excitement, nerves, and anticipation. Enrolling your child in extracurricular activities can make the transition from summer break to school routines smoother and more empowering.

These activities aren't just ways to fill time—they offer powerful opportunities for children to:

- Build confidence and independence
- Discover new interests and passions
- Improve academic performance
- Develop social and emotional skills

Why Extracurricular Activities Matter

Extracurricular activities are far more than just a way to pass the time after school. They give children space to explore what excites them, develop essential life skills, and build the kind of self-assurance that supports their growth

both inside and outside the classroom.

Studies show that students involved in extracurricular activities are more likely to attend school consistently, perform better academically, and demonstrate positive social behaviors. Most importantly, these activities create a space where children feel seen, supported, and capable.

One of the most powerful benefits of extracurricular programs is the sense of structure and belonging they offer. Whether your child is passionate about robotics, drama, sports, or visual arts, participating alongside peers with similar interests fosters connection, creativity, and the confidence to try new things. These programs often emphasize teamwork, mentorship, and hands-on experiences—helping kids overcome challenges, develop real-world skills, and celebrate their efforts, all while building strong self-esteem.

In addition, extracurricular activities provide a safe, stable environment that helps students settle into a consistent routine during the back-to-school period. For parents, this brings peace of mind knowing their child is engaged and supported. And for kids, that stability becomes a launchpad for exploring passions and growing with confidence.

Tips for a Confident Back-to-School Start

- Talk openly about what your child is looking forward to this school year. Encourage their curiosity.
- Let them help choose an extracurricular activity that excites them. When they choose for themselves, they're more likely to stick with it.
- Celebrate effort, not just success. Confidence grows when children know it's okay to stumble as they try new things.

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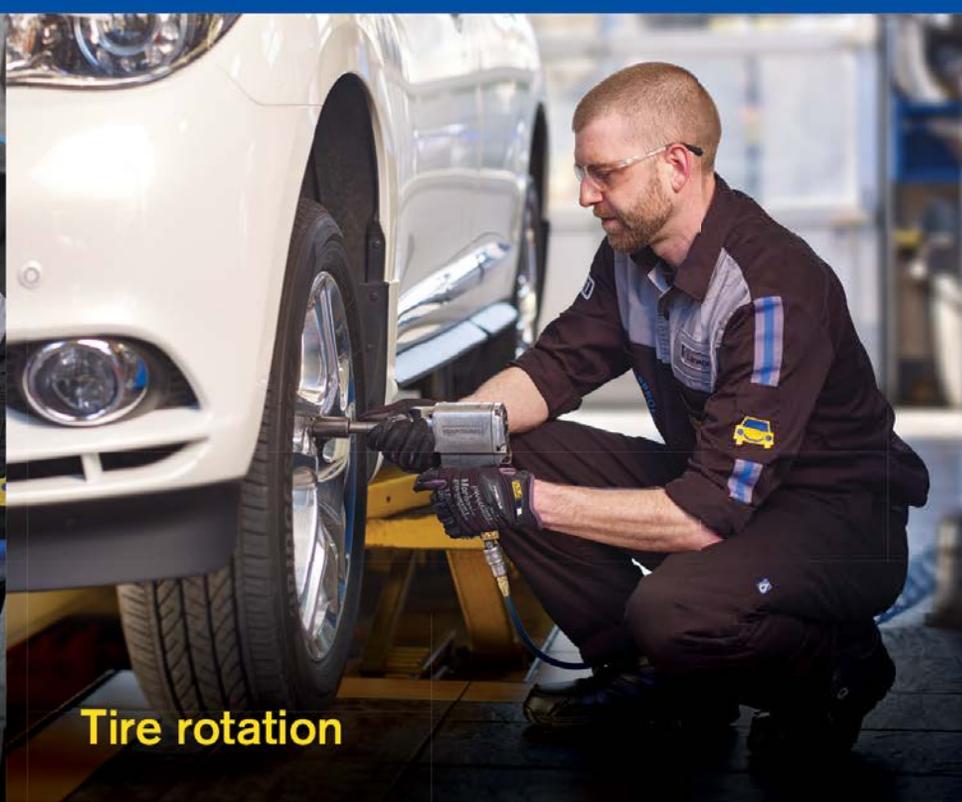


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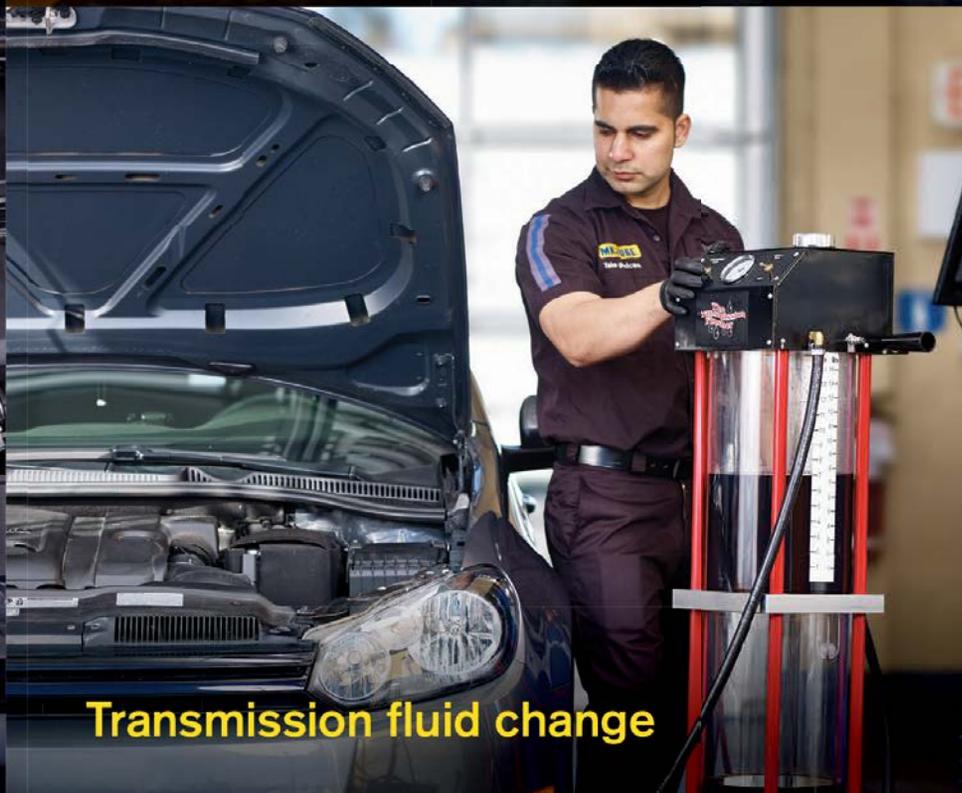
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MANY THANKS

to our camp staff for making our 2025 French camps great! Our camp kids had a wonderful summer. See you next year!

UN GRAND MERCI

à nos animateurs de camp pour avoir rendu nos camps d'été 2025 formidables! Nos participants au camp ont passé un été merveilleux. À l'année prochaine!



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Canadian Parents for French, Nova Scotia En français, SVP! Back to School 2025!

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

As school begins again in September, you may be wondering “What can I do to support and enrich my child’s French during the school year?” There are lots of activities and resources available through **Canadian Parents for French** partners.

French for Parents Classes in Nova Scotia
Feeling overwhelmed that your French skills need a serious reboot. Not to worry! Our partner, **Équipe d’alphabétisation Nouvelle-Écosse** is offering their popular “Je parle français avec mon enfant-langue seconde” classes, virtually and in-person, this fall. This is a 21 week pro-

gram to increase your knowledge of French. Open to parents of students in French immersion programs. For more information, contact french4parents@eane.ca

eane.ca/en/programs/french-courses-for-second-language-parents/

Virtual French for Parents Classes

CPF Alberta is also offering self guided and virtual French for Parents courses this fall. For more information, check out ab.cpf.ca/en/learning-french-lessons/ Learn at your own pace and time. Contact outreach@ab.cpf.ca for more information

Francofest

Do you want to take

your child to family friendly Francophone events? The **Francofest** takes place each year in October to November. There are many events from concerts to the Salon de Livre (French Book Fair)! The **Francofest** concert line up will be announced in September. www.francofest.ca

Alliance Française in the Hydrostone

Alliance Française Halifax offers many courses (in person and virtual) for all ages, as well as other resources and events. Become a member! As a member, you will be able to borrow books, magazines, CDs and DVDs from the Mondiatèque

continued on next page

Ross Farm’s Fall Activities

By Rhea Hamlin, *Ross Farm Museum*

That most wonderful time of the year! Summer is over, and it’s time to walk to school 5 kilometres in the snow uphill both ways.

Schools have undergone significant changes over the last two hundred years. Come and experience the stories our grandparents tell, try writing with a quill and pen, and hear the squeak of chalk on the board.

Fall was also the be-

ginning of the harvest season and the time for preparing for winter. Chores such as haying, bailing, flax breaking, harvesting, and a multitude of other tasks needed to be done, along with studies. We invite everyone—both young and young at heart—to experience life from 1820 to early 1900 before returning to school this fall.

Join us for our Family Participation Days from **August 30 to**

September 1. During these days, you can try your hand at wood punching, practice quill pen writing in the Schoolhouse, help with farm chores, twist metal in the Blacksmith shop, and help with household tasks in Rosebank Cottage.

Come and enjoy the quiet and peacefulness of fall on the farm, taking in the colours, smells, and fresh air.

All are welcome.








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continued from page 14

and access their online library for free. This is a perfect way to practice your French, discover new cultures and have some fun!

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Conseil Communautaire du Grand-Havre

With two community centres in Dartmouth and Bedford, the CCGH is open to all HRM francophones and francophiles. There are great events and programs coming up in 2025-2026. Many activities

for parents and kids, such as badminton nights, bowling league, concerts and holiday events; all in French! www.ccggh.ca

HéHo, the Francophone Hub

How to find out about organizations and activities in French across the HRM, sign up for **HéHo!** You will find out about great deals, outings, news, community, French-speaking services, entrepreneur networks, etc at **HéHo**. www.heho-halifax.ca/

French resources at your local library

The **Halifax Public Libraries** has many books and movies in French. You can use your library card to order French resources and have them delivered to your local branch. Check out French events on their website at www.halifaxpubliclibraires.ca

French Radio in Halifax

We have a French radio station in HRM! They have programming to suit all tastes in Francophone music. Check it out! c98fm.cmedias.ca/ You can find radio stations from all over the Francophonie on the internet. There are also many options for listening to French radio in your car or at home!

Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21

The **Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21** is Canada's sixth national museum. The Museum is located in the Pier 21 national historic site at the Halifax seaport where nearly one million immigrants landed in Canada from 1928 to 1971. The Museum has lots of bilingual events and activities throughout the year. quai21.ca/évenements

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Health & Wellness

Children With New Braces Back to School

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



Is your child heading back to school sporting new braces this year? Summer is a popular time at our clinic for children to get braces, so going to school with them is a brand new experience. We can help make it a smooth, happy, comfortable transition for everyone! Getting accustomed to anything new requires a little thought and proper preparation. New braces are no different. Learning new daily oral hygiene routines and changed meal options at school may be a bit overwhelming for both the child and the parent. There may be some anxiety or apprehension, but with a positive approach and a few hints, a beautiful, confident smile will be right behind! To help in this transition, we have put together some tips below to help make it a smooth and stress-free orthodontic experience.

Type of Braces:

Firstly, many braces are the revolutionary new clear, custom LightForce braces or clear braces for the front teeth, so there are no metal braces on the top front teeth to worry about. Kids and adults love them and they might want to prepare for the first day, by choosing one of the many colours of elastics. Maybe students want to choose their school colours or ones to match their first day outfits, or just choose their very favourite colours. The choice is up to them! And it is fun!

Braces-Friendly Foods:

During the summer, with family and friends around, it is easier to prepare the proper foods and pay attention to braces-friendly foods. But, if schools offer lunches or have vending machines, it may be too easy for children to grab something that is not braces-friendly. At the initial braces appointment time is taken to educate all patients as to how to decide if something is braces-friendly or not. Often favourite foods can be modified to make them braces-friendly with a bit of extra preparation. It is helpful to plan ahead and take the time to review a cafeteria menu, to see if there is something there that children with braces can eat. If there are not braces-friendly choices, it may become necessary to pack a lunch. This will make things easier. Favourable foods include mashed potatoes, spaghetti, mac and cheese, thinly

sliced lean meats and cooked vegetables. If a child is a picky eater, packing a lunch can sometimes make things easier for both the parents and the patients! Pasta, soups, and other soft foods are great options for a Thermos. Sandwiches can be cut into small bite size pieces. This makes eating and chewing much easier for students in braces.

So what are the 'no no' foods?

Say no to:

- Sticky (candy, gum)
- Hard (raw carrots, nuts)
- Large (pieces of meat, whole apples)
- Crunchy (chips, popcorn)

Say yes to:

- Nature soft fruit (blueberries, peaches, strawberries)
- Hard boiled, fried or deviled eggs
- Soft crackers (Goldfish)
- Naturally soft raw veggies (peppers, mini tomatoes, cucumbers)
- All veggies (steamed, roasted or grilled to soften, or julienned into small pieces

that can be more easily chewed)

- Smoothies and soups
- Veggie dips (hummus)
- Soft dairy products (cheese string, yogurt, cottage cheese)

Drink Lots of Water

Taking a full water bottle to school in the morning and drinking it throughout the day is key. It helps keep children hydrated plus cleans out any food particles that may remain in the mouth. Regularly drinking water can also relieve a dry mouth, something that can often happen with new braces. It is important to stick to plain water over any sugary liquid, like juice, soda or sports drinks. These can cause staining and increase the risk of developing cavities. One of the biggest concerns new patients have is that they will not have time to brush and floss at school. If school schedules do not permit the time, a mouthful of water to

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Bridging the Gap After the Summer Slide

Submitted by Oxford Learning

As summer draws to a close, parents often reflect on the joys of vacations, family time, and carefree days. However, the transition back to school can sometimes be daunting for students. The occurrence known as the “summer slide” refers to the loss of academic skills and knowledge that students often experience during the long summer break. This slide can be particularly pronounced in subjects like math and reading, leaving kids feeling unprepared and anxious as they return to the classroom.

Understanding the Summer Slide

Research shows that students can lose up to two months of math skills and reading proficiency over the summer. This regression can lead to a widening achievement gap, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. As parents, it’s crucial to recognize the signs of summer slide and take proactive steps to mitigate its effects before the school year begins.

Strategies to Overcome the Summer Slide

While supplemental edu-

cation is an excellent way to help children catch up, there are also simple strategies parents can implement at home:

- **Encourage Daily Reading:** Set aside time each day for reading. This could include books, magazines, or educational articles. Discussing the material can enhance comprehension.
- **Incorporate Math into Daily Life:** Use everyday situations, such as cooking or shopping, to practice math skills. This hands-on approach makes learning relevant and enjoyable.
- **Set Goals:** Work with your child to establish academic goals for the year. Having clear objectives can motivate them and provide a sense of direction.
- **Stay Organized:** Help your child organize their school materials and schedule. A structured environment can help reduce anxiety and improve focus.
- **Foster a Growth Mindset:** Encourage your child to

view challenges as opportunities for growth. Celebrate their efforts, not just the outcomes, to reinforce the idea that hard work leads to improvement.

Conclusion

As the school year approaches, it’s essential for parents to be proactive in addressing the summer slide. Supplemental education at Oxford Learning offers a valuable resource for helping children regain lost skills and build confidence. By combining personalized instruction with home strategies, parents can ensure their children are not only prepared for the new school year but also excited about learning. With the right support, every child can thrive academically and embrace the challenges ahead.

Additionally, the transition back to school is an ideal opportunity for parents to engage with teachers and school staff to identify any specific areas where their child may need extra help. Open communication can lead to tailored recommen-

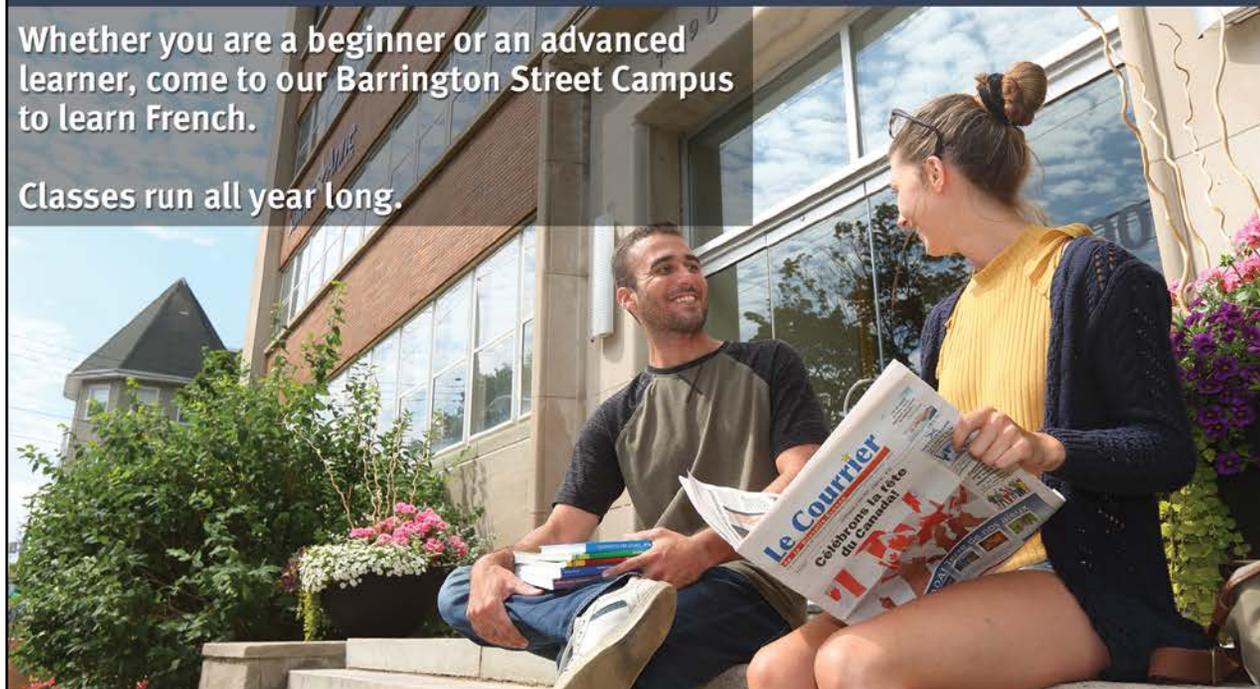
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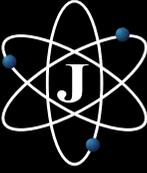
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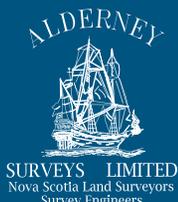
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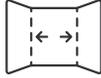


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rinse away debris and food particles is the next best option. Brushing then should be done when the child returns home from school.

A Braces Hygiene Kit

New patients at Orthodontic clinics are usually given a braces care kit. It is small enough to pack in a school bag and includes among other things:

- a soft-bristled toothbrush specially designed to work around brackets and fluoridated toothpaste for brushing after lunch, if time allows

- floss or ortho picks to get out bits of food
- orthodontic wax, which can be used to cover any part of braces causing irritation

The braces care kit is also a great place to store rubber bands if they are prescribed, to help correct a bite issue. If supplies are running low or used up, we are always happy to replenish at your next visit.

Ready Set Go

If participating in sports, parents often have questions about mouth guards. If students are playing a sport that requires a mouth guard normally, then they should also

wear a mouthguard for that sport when they have braces. As braces are constantly causing the teeth to move, a custom mouthguard will not work long enough before it has to be changed. There are braces friendly mouth guards that can be remodelled as your teeth move. These 'boil and bite' mouth guards specifically for braces, are a good option. Most sports stores carry them.

We work with our patients to provide them with experienced support throughout the treatment process. If at any time there are any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact your Orthodontist.

Before you know it, you will have the A+ smile you have been waiting for.

Dr. Sarah Davidson is a Board-Certified Orthodontic Specialist with The Brace Space Orthodontists. She is a co-owner of The Brace Space @ Bedford, The Brace Space @ Sackville, The Brace Space @ Dartmouth (formerly Stuart & Davidson) and The Brace Space @ Halifax (newly opened), offering conventional braces, LightForce braces and Invisalign for children, teens and adults. For more information, contact (902) 455-7222 or (902) 252 7222

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ditions that complement supplemental education efforts. Encouraging a love of learning and curiosity will also help children develop a positive attitude towards their education, making the adjustment smoother. By taking these proactive steps, parents can foster resilience and a lifelong passion for learning in their children.

The Role of Oxford Learning

Oxford Learning specializes in providing personal-

ized educational support that addresses the unique needs of each student. Their approach combines academic enrichment with confidence-building strategies, ensuring that children not only catch up but also excel in their studies.

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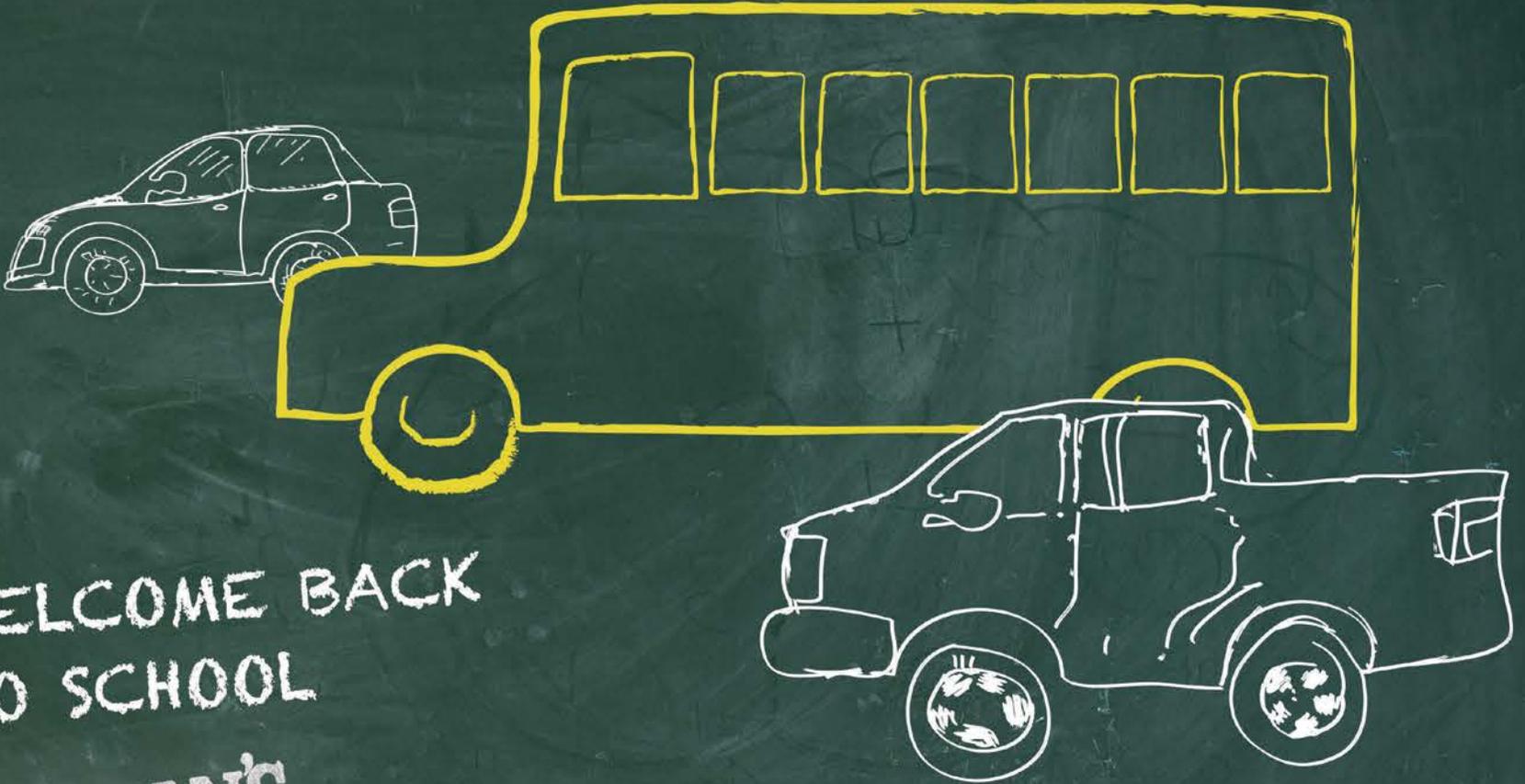
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