

HUDSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS WELLNESS NEWSLETTER FALL 2016



HUDSON
Public Schools
Achievement & Character

The Importance of Limiting Screen Time for Children

In a world where children are "growing up digital," it's important to help them learn healthy concepts of digital use and citizenship. Parents play an important role in teaching these skills. Here are a few tips from the AAP to help parents manage the digital landscape they're exploring with their children.

- **Limit total screen time to <1 to 2 hours per day.**
- **Discourage screen exposure for children under 2 years of age.**
- **Keep TVs/internet-connected devices out of children's bedrooms.**
- **Monitor what media your children are using and accessing, including any websites they are visiting, apps and social media sites they may be using.**
- **Treat media as you would any other environment in your child's life.** The same parenting guidelines apply in both real and virtual environments. Set limits; kids need and expect them. Know your children's friends, both online and off. Know what platforms, software, and apps your children are using, where they are going on the web, and what they are doing online.
- **Set limits and encourage playtime.** Tech use, like all other activities, should have reasonable limits. Unstructured and offline play stimulates creativity. Make unplugged playtime a daily priority, especially for very young children.
- **Families who play together, learn together.** Family participation is also great for media activities—it encourages social interactions, bonding, and learning. Play a video game with your kids. It's a good way to demonstrate good sportsmanship and gaming etiquette. And, you can share your own life experiences and perspectives—and guidance—as you play the game.
- **Be a good role model.** Teach and model kindness and good manners online. Set an example by limiting your own media use. In fact, you'll be more available for and connected with your children if you're interacting, hugging and playing with them rather than simply staring at a screen.
- **Know the value of face-to-face communication.** Very young children learn best through two-way communication. Engaging in back-and-forth "talk time" is critical for language development.
- **Create tech-free zones.** Keep family mealtimes and other family and social gatherings tech-free. Recharge devices overnight—outside your child's bedroom to help children avoid the temptation to use them when they should be sleeping.

Media and digital devices are an integral part of our world today. The benefits of these devices, if used moderately and appropriately, can be great. But, research has shown that face-to-face time with family, friends, and teachers, plays a pivotal and even more important role in promoting children's learning and healthy development. © 2015 - American Academy of Pediatrics
<http://goo.gl/FD4E8e>

2016 MetroWest Adolescent Health Surveys Results will be Available Late Spring

The MWAHS has administered its biennial Adolescent Health Survey to Quinn Middle School and Hudson High School students in November. The survey collects self-reported data on high-priority health and risk behaviors, including substance use, bullying, mental health, violence, sexual behavior, and physical activity. It also captures data on emerging and evolving behaviors in the adolescent population, such as cyberbullying, sexting, prescription drug misuse (including opioids), and use of electronic cigarettes. Survey data has informed regional initiatives to address youth substance use, bullying, and mental health, as well as policy changes in several U.S. states related to tobacco use. Surveys are confidential, students do not enter their names. Survey questions regarding sexual behavior are only asked of students in grades 9-12. Students in Grades 6-8 are asked different questions pertaining to mental health, drug, alcohol and tobacco use. goo.gl/33F0UY



Hudson Health Dept. Mental Health Screening Kiosk

The new Hudson MindKare® kiosk is the first publicly accessible mental health screening kiosk in Massachusetts. The screening is completely private, and can screen for anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder, eating disorder, substance use disorder, and alcoholism. The kiosk can also screen for adolescent depression by parents or caretakers of adolescents.

Nearly 1 in 5 Americans suffer from mental illness each year. Individuals often don't seek treatment because of fear or stigma. Placing kiosks in public locations reduces stigma and allows checking in on your behavioral health to become as commonplace as checking your blood pressure.

MindKare® kiosks are freestanding stations that offer a quick way for individuals to check on their mental and behavioral health by providing online self-assessments, information on mental health disorders, and local treatment and recovery resources. You can also take the same screening online at: <http://bit.ly/2df9aUJ>

Don't Forget to Get Your Flu Shot

Why should people get vaccinated against the flu? Influenza is a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes even death. Every flu season is different, and influenza infection can affect people differently. Even healthy people can get very sick from the flu and spread it to others. "Flu season" in the United States can begin as early as October and last as late as May. During this time, flu viruses are circulating at higher levels in the U.S. population. An annual seasonal flu vaccine is the best way to reduce the chances that you will get seasonal flu and spread it to others. When more people get vaccinated against the flu, less flu can spread through that community.

How do flu vaccines work? Flu vaccines cause antibodies to develop in the body about two weeks after vaccination. These antibodies provide protection against infection with the viruses that are in the vaccine. The seasonal flu vaccine protects against the influenza viruses that research indicates will be most common during the upcoming season. You can get a flu vaccine by asking your primary care provider, going to a pharmacy, or flu clinic through Hudson Board of Health.

Who should get flu vaccine? Everyone 6 months of age and older should be vaccinated for flu. The only exceptions are people with a severe allergy to something in the vaccine. www.cdc.gov/flu

Hidden in Plain Sight *A Parents Only Hands-On Exhibit*

Hidden in Plain Sight was held at Hudson High during Back to School Night and at Quinn Middle School during Parent/Teacher Conferences. This exhibit was put on by Jessica Healy from the Hudson Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition and parent volunteers from HYSAP. The event was very successful and exceeded our goals for attendance and outreach. Over 500 parents viewed the exhibits which were mock setups of a child's bedroom with drug and alcohol clues hidden in everyday items. Parents also received valuable information to educate themselves and their families on the dangers of drug and alcohol use.



ATTENDANCE AWARENESS 2016

Don't let absences add up!

Too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school. Students should miss no more than 9 days of school each year to stay engaged, successful and on track to graduation. Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks. Being late to school may lead to poor attendance. Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up. Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Good attendance will help children do well in high school, college, and at work.

Here are some tips: Talk about the importance of showing up to school every day, make that the expectation. • Help your child maintain daily routines, such as finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep. • Try not to schedule dental and medical appointments during the school day. • Don't let your child stay home unless truly sick. Complaints of headaches or stomach aches may be signs of anxiety. • Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before. • Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent. www.attendanceworks.org/



Hudson Health Department
(978) 562-2020
hudsonhealthdept.org

Hudson Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (HYSAP)
(978) 562-2020
hudsonhealthdept.org/substance-abuse Works to measurably transform adolescent substance use by building community capacity and supporting substance abuse prevention, early intervention, and treatment.

Advocates
(508) 628-6300 advocates.org
Advocates champions people who face developmental, mental health, or other life challenges. We partner with individuals and families to shape creative solutions to even the greatest obstacles. Services include: Counseling, Psychiatric Emergency Services, Autism Services, Brain Injury, and much more.

Wayside Youth & Family Support Network
508-879-9800 waysideyouth.org
Wayside provides a wide variety of mental health counseling and family support services to children, young adults and families in Massachusetts.

NAMI National Alliance on Mental Illness Metrowest
508-251-9595 namimetrowest.org
NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

Hudson Food Pantry
(978) 562-5280
hudsoncommunityfoodpantry.org/
A nonprofit, charitable organization that distributes food to those who have difficulty purchasing enough food to avoid hunger.