

Month by Month: Building Bright Futures!



The Muskoka Best Start Resource Calendar

2026



Early Learning in Muskoka

When children are nurtured in environments where their social, emotional, cognitive, and physical health is considered, they thrive in countless ways.

While a child's principal source of supportive relationships and learning experiences are at home, many Ontario children also attend child care and child and family programs.

Licensed Child Care Programs

The Ministry of Education is the provincial lead for early learning and child care. The District of Muskoka is the system manager for early learning and child care in Muskoka.

Licensed child care programs include:

- **Child Care Centres:** Provide programs and services for children ages 0 to school age and facilitate the development of physical, emotional, intellectual and social skills through play-based learning.
- **Muskoka Home Child Care:** Provide children from birth to age 12 with a safe, fun, and nurturing learning environment from the comfort of an approved home. Play-based learning experiences encourage the development of social, cognitive, fine-and-gross motor skills in a small group setting.
- **School-Age Programs** (Before/After School, Full Day Camps): Provide a fun, safe place for children from Junior Kindergarten to age 12, before school, after school and on full-days when schools are not open, such as school holidays and professional development days.

EarlyON programs play an important role in supporting children's learning, development, health, and well-being. Evidence from diverse fields of study tell us that children grow in programs where adults are caring and responsive. Children succeed in programs that focus on active learning through exploration, play, and inquiry. Children thrive in programs where they and their families are valued as active participants and contributors. (This excerpt is taken from the Ministry of Education's publication *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*).

EarlyON Programs welcome children under six years of age and provide an environment where caregivers and parents can:

- Take part with their children in a range of programs and activities
- Get answers to questions related to child development
- Get information about programs and services that are available for young children and their families
- Connect with early years professionals, as well as other parents and caregivers in the community

**To learn more about the MELP
or Child Care Fee Subsidy
in Muskoka visit:
www.muskoka.on.ca
or call: 705-645-2412 ext. 4140.**

High-Quality Programs - In 2023, the District of Muskoka collaborated with educators from licensed child care programs to develop a new model for Quality Improvement called the Muskoka Early Learning Partnership (MELP). The goal of the program is to enhance, document, and scaffold children's learning to nurture a fulsome, caring environment that fosters the whole child.

Child Care Fee Subsidy - Fee Subsidy can help make child care more affordable for families in Muskoka by paying for some, or all child care fees for licensed centre, home-based child care, or approved recreation day camps. Eligibility is based on a family's net income and need for child care, such as for work, education or special needs.

Licensed Child Care in Muskoka

Every day, early childhood educators (ECEs) provide Ontario's children with safe, responsive, and caring interactions that build a strong foundation for their development and well-being.

Children who participate in high-quality learning environments experience increased verbal communication, reading, math, and science skills, as well as a host of other benefits.

Licensed Child Care Centers in Muskoka

Agency	Phone	Ages
Huntsville Co-operative Nursery & Day Care Centre	705-787-1010	15 months to school age
Huntsville Riverside Childcare	647-832-8044	15 months to school age
Muskoka Family Focus & Children's Place Bracebridge, Gravenhurst, Huntsville	705-645-3027	Varies by location
Macaulay Tree House Day Nursery Bracebridge	705-645-1956	Varies by Location
Muskoka Lakeland Childcare Gravenhurst	705-717-3837	2 years to school age
Muskoka Lakes Preschool Glen Orchard	705-765-2067	18 months to school age
Serendipity Daycare Centre Huntsville	705-789-6649	15 months to school age
Stepping Stone Early Learning Academy Gravenhurst	705-796-6889	15 months to school age

Licensed Before and After School Programs in Muskoka

Agency	Schools
Muskoka Family Focus & Children's Place	Huntsville PS, Riverside PS, Spruce Glen PS, Pine Glen PS, Irwin Memorial PS, VK Greer PS, Bracebridge PS, Gravenhurst PS, KP Manson, Muskoka Beechgrove, St. Mary's and Monsignor Michael O'Leary Catholic Schools
Macaulay Tree House Day Nursery	Monck, Macaulay, and Muskoka Falls Public School
Muskoka Lakes Preschool	Glen Orchard Public School
Friends Forever Childcare	MacTier Public School

To learn more about
Licensed Child Care in Muskoka
visit www.muskoka.on.ca



How Does Learning Happen?

The Ministry of Education recognizes that during the first years of life the brain develops at an astounding rate and is dramatically influenced by a child's early experiences with people and surroundings. That is why the Ministry is committed to strengthening the quality of early years programs and ensuring these programs are centered on the child and the family. It is also the basis of their important 2014 publication *How Does Learning Happen?* which views children as competent, capable of complex thinking, and rich in potential.

The Ministry recognizes four foundational conditions that are important for children to grow and flourish. These four foundations should be experienced by children every day, regardless of age, ability, culture, language, geography or setting. They are aligned with the Kindergarten program in Ontario and are expected of all early years and licensed child care programs in Ontario:

Belonging

Belonging refers to a sense of connectedness to others, an individual's experiences of being valued, of forming relationships with others and making contributions as part of a group, a community, and the natural world.

Well-being

Well-being addresses the importance of physical and mental health and wellness, including such aspects as self-care, sense of self, and self-regulations skills.

Engagement

Engagement suggests a state of being involved and focused. When children are able to explore the world around them with their natural curiosity and exuberance, they are fully engaged. Through this type of play and inquiry, they develop skills such as problem solving, creative thinking, and innovating, which are essential for learning and success in school and beyond.

Expression

Expression (to be heard, as well as to listen) may take different forms. Through their bodies, words, and use of materials, children develop their capacities for increasingly complex communication. Opportunities to explore materials support creativity, problem solving, and mathematical behaviours. Language-rich environments support growing communication skills, which are the foundations of literacy.

A focus on these four foundations throughout all aspects of early years programs ensures optimal learning and healthy development.



For more information on How Does Learning Happen? go to: www.ontario.ca/page/how-does-learning-happen-ontarios-pedagogy-early-years



01 January

2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 New Years Day	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 Family Literacy Day	28	29	30	31
1	2	3	<i>"Play is our brain's favourite way of learning."</i> --Diane Ackerman			

Register for Kindergarten

Welcome to kindergarten! We can't wait to meet you!

Depending on the school your child attends, registration may be ongoing throughout the year but generally begins in January and February. The earlier you register your child, the sooner the school can start preparing for their arrival. Children starting Junior Kindergarten must be 4 years of age before December 31, 2026 and children starting Senior Kindergarten must be 5 years of age before December 31, 2026.

To register your child for Kindergarten, you will need the following information:

- Proof of age for each child.
- Name and phone number for family doctor.
- Ontario Health Card number (optional).
- Child's immunization record.
- Residence road name and 911 address.

To register your child for Catholic school you may also need:

- Student or parent's Roman Catholic Baptismal Certificate (elementary only)
- Superintendent's approval letter for non-Catholic admission to elementary school (if applicable)

Kindergarten opportunities in Muskoka

Lodestar Montessori School (Casa Campus)

265 Maple Street, Bracebridge, ON P1L 1K3
705-645-1443

office@lodestarmontessorischool.com
www.lodestarmontessorischool.com

Muskoka Christian School

370 South Mary Lake Rd., Port Sydney ON P0B 1L0
705-385-2847

mcs@muskoka.com
www.muskokachristianschool.com

Muskoka Montessori School

228 Chub Lake Road, Huntsville, ON P1H 1S4
705-788-3802

info@muskokamontessori.ca
www.muskokamontessori.ca

Near North District School Board (MacTier Public School)

963 Airport Road, Box 3110, North Bay, ON P1B 8H1
705-472-8170

info@nearnorthschools.ca
www.nearnorthschools.ca

Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board

46 Alliance Boulevard, Barrie, ON L4M 5K3
705-722-3555

info@smcdsb.on.ca
www.smcdsb.on.ca

Trillium Lakelands District School Board

Muskoka Education Centre
1271 Cedar Lane, Bracebridge, ON P1L 1W9

1-888-526-5552
info@tldsbc.on.ca
www.tldsbc.ca



Learn more about kindergarten in Ontario at www.ontario.ca/page/kindergarten

02 February

2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Groundhog Day	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 Valentine's Day
15	16 Family Day	17 Lunar New Year Random Acts of Kindness Day	18 Ramadan Starts	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 Pink Shirt Day	26	27	28
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			1 in 5 children are affected by bullying. Wear pink this February and raise awareness around this issue. Visit www.pinkshirtday.ca for more information.			

March is Nutrition Month!

Support a positive relationship with food. Children are exposed to many messages about food, health, and bodies through media, family, friends, and school. How we talk about food affects how children feel about it. Here are some tips to help your child develop a positive relationship with food:

1 Know your feeding role

- You decide where to eat, when to eat and what to offer.
- Trust your child to decide which foods to eat from the foods you offer and how much to eat.
- Offer a variety of foods at mealtimes. Offer at least one food that you know your child will eat.
- Focus on enjoying the meal and conversation together rather than what your child is eating.

2 Lift the pressure off food

- Eating a variety of foods is a skill that takes time to develop.
- Your child will eat best if mealtimes are relaxed. Instead of telling children to eat “one more bite” or to finish their plate, let them decide when they have eaten enough.
- Avoid using food as a reward or punishment.

3 Talk about food in a positive way

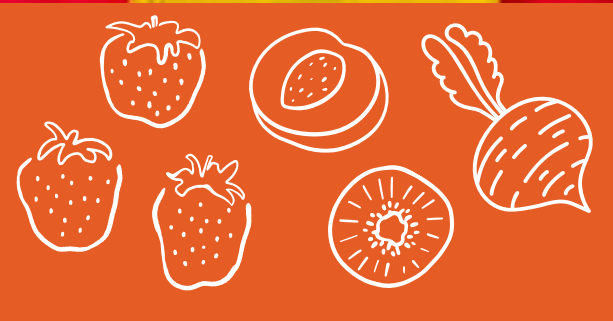
- Call food by its name. For example, broccoli, candy, hamburger, cookies.
- Avoid labeling foods as “good”, “bad”, “healthy”, “unhealthy”, “treats” or “junk food”. These words can sound like judgment of food choices which may lead to children feeling shame or guilt around eating, body image concerns, dieting or other eating problems.

4 Make food and meal time fun

- Get your children involved in cooking; to start, try a fun and easy meal (e.g., build your own taco or pizza night, salad bowls, etc.).
- Take time to explore food using the senses. What does it look, feel, smell, taste and sound like?
- Eating meals with others is a great way to connect, spend time together, and to share our culture and tradition through food.

5 Be a positive role model!

- Show your child that you eat and enjoy a variety of foods. Children notice when you restrict or avoid certain foods.
- Keep diet culture out of the home.
- Notice how you talk about yourself.



03 March

2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 International Women's Day Daylight Savings	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 Saint Patrick's Day	18	19	20 Spring Equinox Eid ul Fitr	21 World Down Syndrome Day
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 International Transgender Day of Visibility	1	2	3	4
			Food4Kids Muskoka provides packages of healthy food for kids aged 4-13 years with limited or no access to food each weekend. For more information visit: food4kidsmuskoka.ca .			

Healthy smiles start early!

Dental health is important to overall health and well-being.

Tips to keep your child smiling!

- Clean your baby's gums after each feeding, especially before bedtime using a soft, clean, damp washcloth.
- Brush your child's teeth at least two times daily for two minutes with a soft toothbrush, especially before bedtime.
- Use fluoride toothpaste once the first tooth appears. Use an amount the size of a grain of rice.
- Floss your child's teeth daily.
- Visit a dental provider by age one or within six months of seeing your child's first tooth.

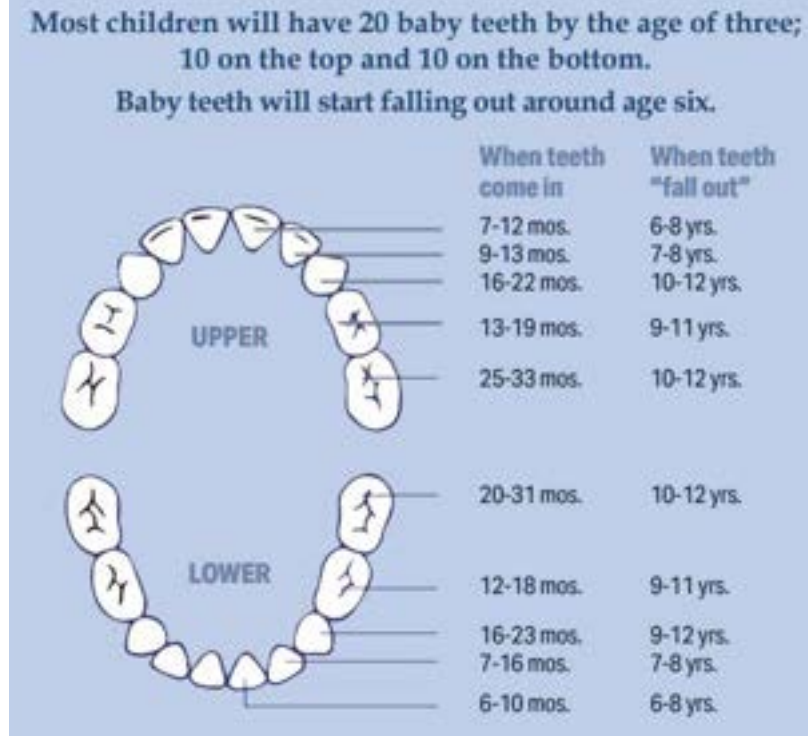
Fuel Your Smile!

Think before you drink and make water your choice of drink.

Snack smart - not sweet, by choosing snacks that are healthy, low in sugar and that don't stick to teeth.

Meet our dental team! We offer FREE screenings to all children and youth aged 17 years and under. Screening can determine if your child qualifies for any publicly funded programs.

To book a dental screening appointment, call 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 ext. 8804 or visit www.smdhu.org/dental



04 April

2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 Passover Begins World Autism Day	3 Good Friday	4
5 Easter Sunday	6 Easter Monday	7	8	9 Passover Ends	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22 Earth Day	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3	4	5	World Health Day is April 7th and is celebrated annually. Each year World Health Day draws attention to a specific health topic of concern to people all over the world. Visit: www.who.int/campaigns/world-health-day			



May is Speech and Hearing Month!

Speech-Language Pathology is dedicated to assisting each child to achieve their maximum potential in communication skills.

The Muskoka Parry Sound Pre-school Speech and Language Program provides:

- Information about Speech, Language and Hearing.
- Assessments with a Speech-Language Pathologist.
- A range of interventions with a Speech-Language Pathologist and/or a Communicative Disorders Assistant.
- Educational sessions on Speech and Language Development
- Referrals to other Developmental Services: Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, and child development services.

The information below outlines typical speech and language development in young children. If you have concerns that your child may need speech and language support, please contact One Kids Place.

By 18 Months:

- Uses at least 20 words consistently.
- Understands the concepts “in, on, out & off”.
- Points to several body parts when asked.
- Responds with words or gestures to simple questions.

By 1 Year:

- Follows simple one-step directions, e.g. “sit down”
- Consistently uses three to five words.
- Combines lots of sounds as though talking, e.g. “abada baduh”.
- Uses gestures to communicate, e.g. waves “bye-bye”.
- Shows interest in simple picture books.
- Turns or looks up when you call his/her name.

By 2 Years:

- Follows two-step directions, e.g. “Go find your teddy bear and show it to Grandma”.
- Uses 100 to 150 words.
- Forms words and sounds easily and effortlessly.
- People understand his/her words 50-60% of the time.
- Holds books the right way up and “reads”.
- Listens to simple stories, songs and rhymes.
- Consistently combines 2-4 words in short phrases
- Uses at least 2 pronouns (you, me, mine).

By 3 Years:

- Understands ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’, and ‘why’ questions.
- Creates long sentences, using five to eight words.
- Correctly uses ‘k’ (as in cat) and ‘f’ (as in fish).
- People understand his/her speech 75% of the time.
- Is aware of the function of print and has a beginning interest in, and awareness of, rhyming.

By 4 Years:

- Follows directions of three or more steps, e.g. “First get some paper, then draw a picture, last give it to Mom”.
- Uses adult-type grammar in full sentences.
- Correctly uses most speech sounds and speech is understood 90% of the time.
- Can generate simple rhymes, e.g. “cat-bat”, and matches some letters to their sounds, e.g. “T says ‘tuh’”.
- Hears the TV audio as the same loudness as other family members.

Connect with us!
Visit: www.onekidsplace.ca
or Call: (705)476-5437(KIDS)
1-866-626-9100



ONE KIDS PLACE
LA PLACE DES ENFANTS

CHILDREN'S TREATMENT CENTRE
CENTRE DE TRAITEMENT POUR ENFANTS

05 May

2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Mental Health Week is May 4th to 10th - Mental Health week is an annual event to celebrate and raise awareness about the importance of mental health. For more information visit www.cmha.ca/mental-health-week .					1	2
3	4	5 National Day of Awareness for MMIWG and 2S people Cinco de Mayo	6	7 Child and Youth Mental Health Day	8	9
10 Mother's Day	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18 Victoria Day	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27 Eid al-Adah	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4		

Infant and Child Development

If you are interested in the Infant and Child Development Program, contact: 1-800-668-8555 or complete a referral form by visiting www.thefamilyhelpnetwork.ca

You can help build the most beautiful brain in the first five years of your child's life.

What is child development?

Child Development involves learning and mastering skills called developmental milestones during predictable time periods.

Children develop skills in 5 main areas:

- Cognitive
- Social and Emotional
- Speech and Language
- Fine Motor skills
- Gross Motor Skills

Developmental milestones happen in order: A child needs to develop some skills before they can develop new skills.

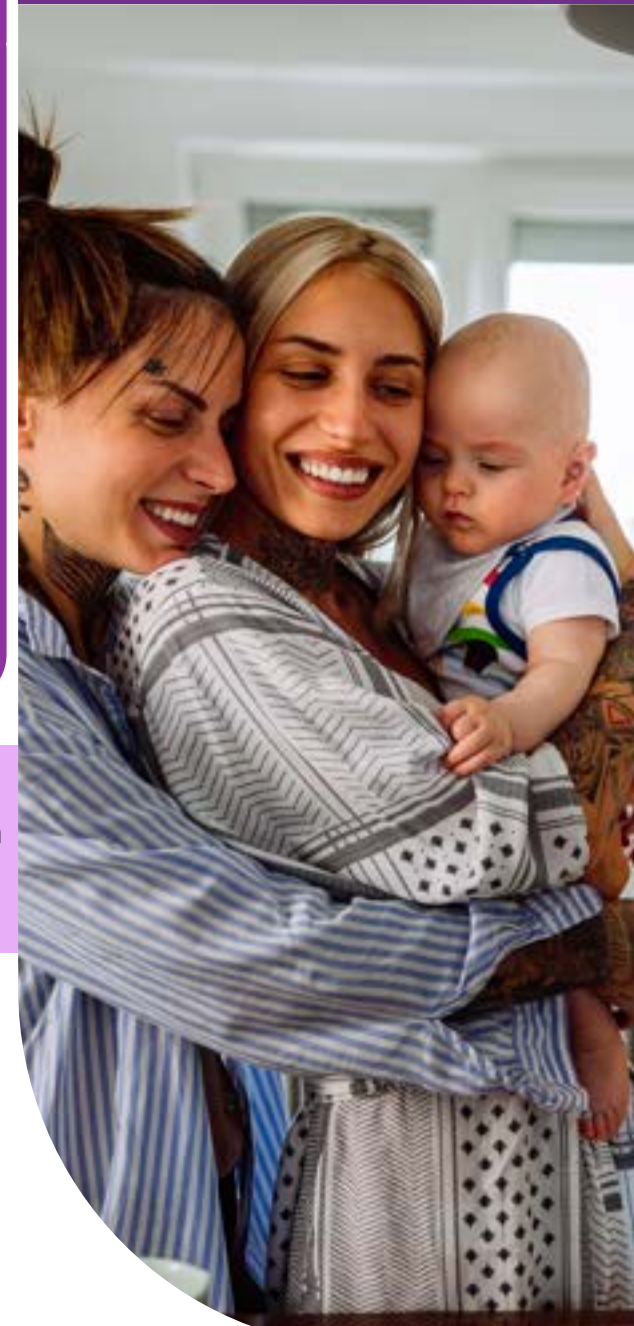
What Are Some Ways I Can Support My Child's Development?

- Include activities that use all 5 of their senses (sight, sound, taste, touch, smell)
- Learn to understand and support your child's age-appropriate developmental milestones
- Provide a loving and kind **relationship** with your child
- Be engaging and **responsive** your child's cues and behaviours as their communication
- Be **respectful** of their likes and dislikes
- Help your child feel safe and secure with consistent daily **routines**
- Have fun including your child in your daily **routines** to help to promote their skill development
- **Play** with your child – YOU are your child's best toy
- Offer lots of **repetition**; this helps your child's brain make strong connections for learning
- Limit screen time based on age of your child (cps.ca/en/active-actifs/how-much-for-preschoolers)

Did You Know...

- Your baby's brain is 25% developed at birth, 80% by 3 years, 90% by 5 years.
- There is a strong connection between a child's early experiences and the development of their brain in their early years.
- Each part of the brain grows a little larger and a lot more active based on what your child sees, hears, tastes, feels and smells.

Hands TheFamilyHelpnetwork.ca offers FREE supports for parents of children from birth to school entry who wish to learn more about supporting their child's development and support children from birth to 18 years of age who have a developmental delay.



06 June

2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 Father's Day Indigenous Peoples Day Summer Solstice	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	June is Pride Month. To learn more about Pride in Muskoka visit www.muskokapride.com 				

EarlyON Child and Family Centres

EarlyON centres offer free, high-quality drop-in programs for families and children from birth to 6 years old.

What will you find at EarlyON programs in Muskoka?

- A welcoming and inclusive play-based environment.
- Free drop-in programs that are child and family centered for parents and caregivers with children 0-6 years of age.
- Opportunities for your children to socialize with other children, and learn through exploration, play and inquiry.
- Connections with other community service providers.
- Opportunities for you to meet and socialize with other parents or caregivers.
- Professional, experienced staff who are available to offer guidance and answer questions about your child's development.
- Workshops and other information that will support you in your role as a parent or caregiver.

Programs offered by EarlyON:

- Baby Talk 0-18 months
- Eat, Learn, Grow – free lunch program 0-6 years
- Outdoor programs at Morrison Meadows – Forest Families and Nature, Play, Kinship
- Food for Thought - Virtual parent education program – Guest Speakers, includes free dinner delivered
- **And so much more!**

Locations:

Days and times vary. Please visit our website for more information.

Bala 1008 Maple Avenue	Dwight 1004 Dwight Beach Road	MacTier 9 Haig Street	Port Severn 25 Community Centre Road
Baysville 10 University Avenue	Gravenhurst 180 Brock Street	Morrison Meadows 1177 Fraserburg Road	Port Sydney 607 Muskoka Road 10
Bracebridge 46 Dominion Street	Huntsville 35 Silverwood Drive	Port Carling 3 Bailey Sreet	Severn Bridge 1035 Southwood Road

Connect with us!

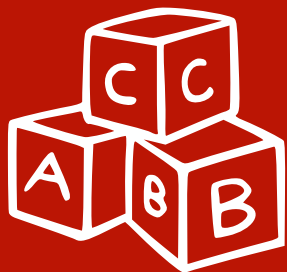
Visit: www.muskoka.on.ca/earlyon

Visit our Facebook page for daily updates, program locations and times at www.facebook.com/earlyonmuskoka

or call: 705-645-2412 ext. 4140



EarlyON
Child and Family Centre



07 July

2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>"How one handles success or failure is determined by their early childhood."</i> --Harold Ramis			1 Canada Day	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18 Muskoka Pride Week begins
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4				

What you can do to prepare your child for school.

Although we may think about academic skills first when helping our children get ready to start school, there are many other skills that are just as important, such as self-help, social interaction, reasoning, and emotional regulation.

- Your child will have to make many choices at school. Practice this by offering your child choices at home while eating, dressing, and playing.
- Schedule play dates or visit EarlyON centers for social interaction with other children. Encourage lots of opportunities for turn-taking and sharing.
- Create moments when your child will need to wait. If this is difficult, try counting out loud. Keep it brief to start, and then gradually lengthen.
- Practice sitting on the floor in a circle format for songs or stories.
- Encourage self-help skills as far as your child is able, including putting on a coat and shoes, cleaning up after snack, opening and closing snack containers, hand washing, and toileting.
- Encourage asking for help with words if your child has them, or with gestures and sign language.
- Practice preprinting skills, such as beading, lacing, and using peg boards.
- Introduce children's safety scissors while supervised. Even snipping paper for a collage is good practice.
- While outside, talk about nature that you encounter. Discuss the seasons and weather.
- Sort lots of items together during play and while doing chores around the house. Sort in a variety of ways, such as by colour, shape, function, and size.
- In everyday life, talk about colours, shapes, numbers, and letters that you see around you.
- Enjoy building and constructing with your child using a variety of materials. Encourage self-expression and problem solving.
- Engage lots of large-muscle activities, such as running, kicking, catching, and throwing balls, action songs, and using outdoor equipment.

You may already be engaging your child in these types of activities and that's great. Continue to have fun playing together!



08 August

2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
The Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program provides free home visiting services to help young children get a healthy start in life. It is a voluntary program for families who may benefit from additional support during pregnancy or any time up until children begin school. Call: (705) 721-7520 ext. 6850 or 1-877-721-7520 Visit: www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/HealthUnit/Services/HealthyBabiesHealthyChildren.aspx					 simcoe muskoka DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT <i>Your Health Connection</i>	
2	3 Civic Holiday	4	5	6	7	1
9	10	11	12	13	14	8
16	17	18	19	20	21	15
23	24	25	26	27	28	22
30	31	1	2	3	4	29
						5

Catch up, Keep up, Stay on Track!

Getting vaccinated is an important way to keep ourselves and others healthy and safe from serious and sometimes life-threatening diseases. Protect yourself and others around you by making sure you get all recommended publicly funded vaccines on time.

Routine Immunization Clinics

Publicly funded vaccines are offered at clinics located in all health unit offices for residents of Simcoe Muskoka only. We provide vaccines for infants, children, youth and adults who are eligible or overdue for routine immunizations and who do not have access to vaccines through a health care provider. These vaccines are available by appointment only. Appointments can be booked on our website.

Report an Immunization

Parents and guardians are responsible for reporting their child's immunizations to public health to keep records up to date per standards of the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) and the Child Care and Early Years Act. Please note that in Ontario health care providers do not automatically report immunizations to their local public health unit. Reporting and viewing immunizations can be done online by visiting smdhu.org/ImmsOnline.

Request an Immunization Record

To obtain a copy of the record that is on file with Public health, you can scan the QR codes below. **CANImmunize** is a free, secure, mobile app that helps you safely manage and store your family's vaccination records - all in one convenient place.

GO TO

The health unit website



OR

Download the APP from



***If you do not have an immunization record, are not sure which vaccines you require, or are anxious and need additional support from the nurse, please call so we can book a longer appointment time for you 1-877-721-7520 (toll free) or 1-705-721-7520, weekdays between 8:30a.m. to 4:30p.m**



09 September

2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
	6	7 Labour Day	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22 Fall Equinox	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30 National Day For Truth and Reconciliation	1	2
3	4	5	<i>"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."</i> --Nelson Mandela			

Muskoka Home Child Care - Your home away from home.

At the Muskoka Home Child Care Agency (MHCCA), we understand the importance of finding the best quality program for your child and your family.

We see children through a lens of being rich in potential as they navigate their first years of life. Children often surprise the world with how capable and competent they are, and we support this by providing experiences and space to play and be curious.

We support our team by helping them reach their maximum potential. We do this by meeting our providers, families, and children where they are on their learning path.



The **Child Care and Early Years Act** and the document **How Does Learning Happen?** guide our philosophy in all of our interactions with children, families, Providers and staff.

We view children as wondrous, joyful, and inquisitive and we find fulfillment in honoring their uniqueness. We pride ourselves on providing quality care in our community that supports our families in feeling welcomed, valued, and connected as we create a learning environment that invokes curiosity and engagement while igniting a lifelong love of learning.

The Ministry of Education (MEDU) helps to guide our regulations and policies. Our dedication and drive come from a continued reflection of quality care. And our passion drives us to continue researching this ever-evolving science as we grow as a team.

Whether you are a family looking for child care, a provider interested in joining our team, or if you're seeking resources related to child care, we have everything you need on our website, District of Muskoka, Muskoka Home Child Care Agency.

Connect with us!

Email:

homechildcare@muskoka.on.ca

or visit:

www.muskoka.on.ca/muskokahomechildCareAgency/



Scan the QR Code for more information.



10 October

2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>'Every day in a hundred small ways our children ask, 'Do you see me? Do you hear me? Do I matter?' Their behaviour often reflects our response.'</i> -L.R. Knost				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 Thanksgiving Day	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 Halloween
1	2	3	4	5		

Learning to talk about feelings.

It's never too early to start talking about feelings with kids.

It is important for children to understand that life is filled with normal ups and downs and the high and low feelings that come with that.

So how do we know when children need professional help?

Are the negative behaviours or emotions you are observing:

- out of your child's normal character and/or do they stick around for a prolonged period?
- having a negative impact on your child's ability to enjoy every day life and/or on family or relationships?
- getting in the way of progress at school?

Have you already tried everything you can think of to help your child regulate their emotions?

If the answer is **yes** to one or more of these questions and you are feeling concerned:

- Talk to your family doctor
- Reach out to your school mental health counsellor or school staff
- Contact your local child mental health service
- Contact a registered therapist who works with children
- Reach out to our team at MiND-AID to chat about possible options and pathways to care

This great little **Emotions Chart** is a handy tool to use when words are hard to find or when children are learning the right words to use to describe their feelings. Maybe stick it on your fridge at home and model openness and self-awareness to your child by pointing at the little blob that you feel most like.



MiND-AID is a free local service that provides mental wellness and system navigation support to parents of small children as well as teens and young adults.



Contact us at:

www.MINDAIDMUSKOKA.com

or call: (844) 646 3243.

11

November

2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Daylight Savings Ends	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Diwali Begins	9	10	11 Remembrance Day	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20 National Child Day	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	<i>"Children don't say, 'I had a hard day at school today; can you I talk to you about it?' They say, 'Will you play with me?'"</i> --Lawrence J. Cohen				

Mental Health in Children and Youth

Children and youth will experience brief problems throughout their early lives. However, when problems start to interfere with school, family, relationships, and everyday functioning, it may require more attention. Sometimes this is an indicator of a mental health concern.

Mental Health Concerns

- Extreme moods not typical for their age group (overwhelming sadness, anger, etc.).
- Extreme anxiety that would not be considered 'normal' for the situation.
- Significant difficulties paying attention.
- Behavioural problems that may include, self-harm, aggression/violence, extreme hyperactivity, absolute defiance or withdrawal.
- Often responding to a situation in a manner that would be considered extreme or unusual.
- Sudden changes in behaviour.
- Changes in mood and behaviour due to events (loss, accidents, abuse, witnessing violence, separation, etc.).

What can you do as a parent?

- Monitor and keep a record of when your child has the most/least difficulties and what seems to help them.
- Seek medical attention to rule out medical concerns and ask about appropriate referral to a specialist (pediatrician, psychologist, therapist, etc.).
- Attend the Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) Counselling Clinic.

Scan the QR Code for more information.

familyconnexions.ca



Children and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) Counselling Clinic

The Counselling Clinic provides a confidential therapeutic session and can be your first step to accessing CYMH services. Sessions with therapists are scheduled by appointment and offered virtually or in person on Tuesdays in the Huntsville office and Thursdays in the Bracebridge office. Scheduled appointments can also be arranged in our Gravenhurst location. Our services and programs are available in English and French for children ages 0-18 and their caregivers residing in The District of Muskoka. When you first contact us to access our services, we will ask questions about your identity and culture to help us support you better.

CYMH Crisis Service

Simcoe Muskoka Family Connections has teamed up with Kids Help Phone to ensure 24/7 crisis support from a trained counsellor.

Those in the community supported in their time of crisis by a service provider (hospital, school, etc.) will be provided support by a SMFC Crisis Clinician between 9a.m. & 9p.m. Monday to Friday.

By following the prompts at 1-844-287-9072 you can access the appropriate crisis intervention.



Simcoe Muskoka
Family Connexions

Connexions Familiales
de Simcoe Muskoka

Call: (705) 645-4426 x 6270
to schedule an appointment

The confidential Child & Youth Mental
Health 24/7 crisis line can be accessed
by calling: 1.844.287.9072



12 December

2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5 Hanukkah Begins
6 National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women	7	8	9	10	11	12 Hanukkah Ends
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 Winter Solstice	22	23	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26 Boxing Day Kwanza Begins
27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve	1	2
3	4	5	Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)- Mental Health for all. Bracebridge - 173 Manitoba St. Suite 202. Call: (705)645-2262 / (800)245-5036 Huntsville - 8 Crescent Court Rd. Unit 3. Call: (705)789-8891 Gravenhurst - 1100A Muskoka Rd. S, Unit 1. Call: (705)687-1435 			



Early Literacy and your Local Library!

Talking, singing and sharing books is one of the most effective and fun ways to help ensure our little ones do the best they can when they get to school and throughout life.

Connect to your child through sharing books!

- Talk and ask questions - Connect the story to things in your child's life. For example, "Who's the tallest in your family?" Or ask about what is happening in the book.
- Choose a book you both like - Make reading time fun! Use silly voices or make the sounds of the animals in the pictures.
- Cuddle up for story time - Snuggle, hold or sit beside your baby to make sure they can feel your touch and see the pages.
- Share your own stories - Make it personal! Tell your baby your own stories, such as the story of their birth, how you chose their name, or what is going on around them.
- Read in any language - A child's brain is ready to learn languages at birth. The more a child hears a language, the more it helps them learn!

Your Muskoka Libraries

Huntsville Public Library
huntsvillelibrary.ca
705-789-5232

Georgian Bay Public Library — Port Severn
gbpl.ca
705-818-7749

Muskoka Lakes Public Library — Bala
muskokalakes.ca
705-762-1086

Bracebridge Library
bracebridgeliibrary.ca
705-645-4171

Georgian Bay Public Library — Honey Harbour
gbpl.ca
705-756-8851

Lake of Bays Public Library — Baysville
lakeofbayslibrary.ca
705-767-2361

Muskoka Lakes Public Library — Port Carling
muskokalakes.ca
705-765-5650

Gravenhurst Public Library
gravenhurst.ca/library/
705-687-3382

Georgian Bay Public Library — MacTier
gbpl.ca
705-375-5430

Lake of Bays Public Library — Dwight Branch
lakeofbayslibrary.ca
705-635-3319

Seguin Public Library — Rosseau
seguinpubliclibraries.ca
705-732-4231

**Borrow books, borrow 'things',
attend special events and
programs at your local Library!**

Contact your library for hours
and programming.

Did you know...

If you are a resident of Muskoka, you can get a free membership (library card) for any library within the District, thanks to our borrowing arrangement with them.

- Bring identification that proves your address in Muskoka, such as an Ontario driver's license or property tax bill
- You must follow the borrowing policies of that library



Developing early literacy skills in your child...

...begins by talking, listening, and reading with your child.

Activities to support your child's literacy development include the following:

Oral Language

- Ask your child simple questions.
- Look for a response that is 3-5 sentences long.
- Sing nursery and rhyming songs together.
- Talk to your child about their feelings.
- Ask your child what their favourite part of their day was.
- Describe family photos.
- Tell stories in the car, on walks, or in lines.
- Practice good listening.

Reading

- Keep books in easy reach.
- Read funny books together.
- Talk about what you read in the book.
- Some common questions and comments for you to use are: "What do you think this book will be about?" "What happened in the story?" "What did you learn?"
- Can recognize their own name.
- Put magnetic letters on your fridge for your child to play with.

Writing

- Form letters with playdough
- Explore drawing straight and curvy lines
- Draw pictures of loved ones
- Cut with safety scissors
- Make a book about their favourite topic
- Help your child learn to write their name.
- Write lists, notes, and messages together.
- Play with magnetic or plastic letters.
- Notice that print is all around us! Look for road signs, store signs, and more!



The proper tripod grip for writing.

To learn more about early literacy visit:
tldsb.ca/Kindergarten



The SmartStart Hub

The SmartStart Hub is a clear point of entry to child development services for parents and caregivers who have concerns about their child's development.

Development concerns could include:

- a child/youth's ability to move around
- a child/youth's ability to perform daily activities
- a child/youth's ability to understand other people or tell them what they want
- a child/youth's ability to get along with others, or the way their behaviour impacts their ability to participate in activities

Who can refer to the SmartStart Hub?

Anyone can refer, including:

- Healthcare Providers
- Parents / Caregivers
- Community Agencies
- School Personnel

Scan the QR Code for more information.



Do you have to go through the SmartStart Hub for services?

No. If you are already dealing with or are aware of a children's services agency or organization you can still contact them directly. If you are not sure which one you need, our SmartStart Hub service is here to help. **Visit: onekidsplace.ca/smartstart-hub/**



is proud to work with our SmartStart Hub partners to support the children and youth in our communities.

Please contact One Kids Place or any of our listed partners below to help you find the services you need.



ahcl.org



communitylivingnorthbay.org



clps.ca



clhuntsville.ca



clsm.on.ca



parnipcas.org



thefamilyhelpnetwork.ca

***No formal diagnosis is required**

***Services are for children from birth to 19, or 21 if still in school.**

Food

Town of Bracebridge:

Manna Food Bank

Provides short-term food on a point system for those in need on a 3 week basis.

Call: 705-646-0114

Kennedy Building,
227 Wellington St
Bracebridge ON

Salvation Army Food Bank Community Family Services

No restrictions. Individuals needing basic supports.

Call: 705-645-2602

456 Manitoba St.
Bracebridge ON

Bracebridge Out of the Cold

Offering free, hot nutritious meals and drop-in programs.

No restrictions. Bus available
Call: 705-645-5713

Bracebridge United Church,
46 Dominion St.
Bracebridge ON

Emergency Food Boxes

Knox Presbyterian Church
Boxes filled with food and household staples are available for anyone in need.

Call: 705-645-4521

120 Taylor Rd.
Bracebridge ON

Town of Gravenhurst:

Gravenhurst Against Poverty

Anyone in need of food.
Weekly food programs Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays - call for information.

Call: 705-641-2225

Trinity United Church, -
290 Muskoka Rd. N.
Gravenhurst ON

Salvation Army Food bank

Individuals or families in need. Residency Requirements.

Call: 705-687-2131

620 Muskoka Rd. N.
Gravenhurst, ON

Town of Huntsville:

Salvation Army Food Bank

No restrictions - Clothing vouchers for Thrift Store available.

Call: 705-789-3398

4 Mary St E.
Huntsville ON

Society of St. Vincent de Paul St. Mary's Conference

Food Pantry can be accessed once a month. Delivery of food available to housebound individuals. Must be a resident of Huntsville or Lake of Bays.

Call: 705-789-0008

12 Centre St. N.
Huntsville ON

The Table Soup Kitchen Food Bank

Individuals and families in need shop for themselves based on the limits posted on food shelves, fridges, and freezers.

Call: 705-783-5827

Visit: thetablefoundation.ca

9 Hanes St.,
Huntsville ON

Township of Lake of Bays:

Winter Pantry Baysville/Dorset

Provides bi-weekly food support services from Oct – May. For those in need.

Call: 437-981-5311

St Ambrose Anglican Church,
2671 Muskoka District Rd. 117
Lake of Bays, ON

Township of Muskoka Lakes:

West Muskoka Food Bank

Food bank for those in need. Delivery available.

Call: 705-646-3997

Glen Orchard Community Centre,
3951 Muskoka Rd., Hwy 169
Muskoka Lakes ON

Township of Georgian Bay:

Honey Harbour/Port Severn Food Bank

Call: 705-528-2437

Baxter Ward Community Centre
25 Community Centre Dr.
Port Severn, ON

MacTier Food Bank

Community Food Bank for those in need.

Call: 705-774-1756

53 Haig St.,
Georgian Bay ON

Housing

Emergency Shelters:

Muskoka Interval House

24-hour anti-Violence crisis shelter for abused women and their children.

Call: 1-800-461-1740

Visit: www.mwag.ca

Chrysalis House

24-hour anti-Violence crisis shelter for abused women and their children.

Call: 1-866-789-8488

Visit: www.mwag.ca

Transitional Housing:

Alex's Place

Focuses on young people aged 16 to 24 that are at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

The District of Muskoka

Call: 705-645-2412 ext. 4960

Housing Programs:

Social Housing Program

Provides subsidized rental housing for eligible applicants who meet the qualifying criteria.

The District of Muskoka

Call: 705-645-2412 ext. 4960

Affordable Home Ownership

Offers options to eligible applicants, including rent supplements, financial assistance for home repairs and more.

The District of Muskoka

Call: 705-645-2412

Rent Assistance:

Rent Supplement Program

Supports individuals and families who need some assistance to make their monthly rent more affordable.

The District of Muskoka

Call: 705-645-2412

Society of St. Vincent De Paul St. Mary's Conference - Huntsville

Provides emergency financial assistance to individuals and families for expenses related to housing and health including utility and rental arrears, medical and dental expenses.

Call: 705-789-0008

CMHA Supportive Housing

Provides rent supplements to clients who have experienced serious mental illness, are homeless or at risk of being homeless and receiving ongoing service from the Agency.

Call: 1-800-245-5036

Emergency Assistance:

Government of Ontario

Short term financial support if you are in a crisis or an emergency.

Call: 1-888-789-4199

Visit: www.ontario.ca

Housing Support Fund

The District of Muskoka can help eligible individuals with a one-time payment for rent.

Call: 705-645-2412 ext. 4363

Homelessness Program

Programs are available to assist with and/or prevent homelessness.

The District of Muskoka

Call: 705-645-2412

Income Assistance

Ontario Works (OW):

Provides financial and employment assistance to eligible residents in temporary financial need.

Call: 1-888-999-1142

Visit: www.ontario.ca

Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)

Provides financial and employment supports for residents and their eligible family members through the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

Call: 1-888-999-1142

Visit: www.ontario.ca

McConnell Foundation

Provides financial assistance for various needs such as dental work, assistive devices, eyeglasses, etc.
Call: 705-645-2100 ext. 4190
or pick up an application at the District of Muskoka's Community Services office.

Ontario Electricity Support Program

Provides a monthly credit to eligible customers of an electrical utility.

For more information:

Call: 1-855-831-8151

help@OntarioElectricitySupport.ca

United Way Muskoka

A discretionary fund available to provide individuals in Muskoka who are experiencing, or are at-risk of poverty, emergency financial assistance with modest one-time grants to address basic needs.

Call: 1-855-487-5327 (LEAP Low income Energy Program)

Call: (705) 726-2301

Family Supports

Child Care Fee Subsidy

The District provides child care fee subsidy to eligible families.

Applications are completed for parents who are employed, in school or have a demonstrated special need.

Call: 705-645-2412 ext. 4140

Child & Youth Advocacy Centre

Helps young people who have experienced abuse.

Call: 705-327-0118

Children's Foundation of Muskoka

Provides funding for recreational, educational, cultural, medical and emotional needs for Muskoka children up to the age of 18.

Call: 705-641-9455

Visit: childrenofmuskoka.com

Elizabeth Fry Society

Serving youth and adults who are at risk of or experiencing criminalization and homelessness.

Call: 705-725-0613 ext. 0

Healthy Smiles Ontario

A dental program for kids aged 17 and under from low-income households.

Call: 1-844-296-6306

Visit: ontario.ca/healthysmiles

Canadian Dental Care Plan

A plan that helps cover the costs of dental treatment for eligible Canadian residents.

Call: 1-833-537-4342

Visit:

www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/dental/dental-care-plan/apply.html

Children's Services Community Facilitator

Helps eligible families acquire essential items for their children.

The District of Muskoka

Call: 705-645-2412 ext. 4415.

Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program

Healthy Babies Healthy Children is a FREE voluntary program, helping children get a healthy start through home visits from a public health nurse. Visiting services are offered to eligible families from pre-birth to school age.

Call: 705-721-7520

or 1-877-721-7520

Visit:

www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/HealthUnit/Services/HealthyBabiesHealthyChildren.aspx

Muskoka Parry Sound Sexual Assault Services

Offers online crisis chat, counselling, drop-in programs, help Line, legal support services.

Call: 705-646-2122

or 1-800-461-2929

Visit: www.mpssas.org

Christine's Place

Supports women and their partners as they explore all pregnancy options.

call: 705-952-0647

Visit: christinesplace.org

Additional Contacts and Services

Child Care Services

Child Care Fee Subsidy	705-645-2412 x 4140 or 1-800-461-4215
Community Facilitator	705-645-2412 x 4415 or 1-800-461-4215
EarlyON Muskoka	705-645-2412

Financial Supports

Canada Child Benefit	1-800-387-1193
Child Care Fee Subsidy	705-645-2412 x 4140 or 1-800-461-4215
Child Disability Benefit Enquiries	1-800-387-1193
Ontario Child Benefit	1-800-387-1193
Ontario Trillium Benefit	1-877-627 6645
Ontario Works	1-888-999-1142

Health Services

Birth Certificates	1-800-461-2156
Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit www.smdhu.org	705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520
North East Region Virtual Care Clinic www.nevirtualcare.ca	1-888-684-1999
Home and Community Care (NSM LHIN)	310-2222
Health811	811 or 1-866-797-0007
Trillium Drug Program	1-800-575-5386
Hospice Huntsville	705-789-6878
Hospice Muskoka Serving South and West Muskoka	705-646-1697

Mental Health Services

Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions	705-645-4426 or 1-800-461-4236
MiND AID Muskoka – System Navigator	844-646-3243
Canadian Mental Health Association - Bracebridge	705-645-2262 or 1-800-245-5036
Canadian Mental Health Association - Gravenhurst	705-687-1435 or 1-844-771-2474
Canadian Mental Health Association - Huntsville	705-789-8891
CMHA Muskoka & Area Crisis Line	1-888-893-8333

Specialized Services for Children

Community Living Huntsville	705-789-4543
Community Living South Muskoka	705-645-5494
Hands The FamilyHelpNetwork.ca Great Beginnings, Infant and Child Development Services, Autism Services	705-645-3155 or 1-800-668-8555
One Kids Place - Treatment Centre Speech-Language, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Autism Services onekidsplace.ca/smartstart-hub	705-789-9985 or 1-866-232-5559

Licensed Child Care Programs

Binoojii House	705-375-3029
Bracebridge Children's Place	705-645-3027 or 705-645-2229
Gravenhurst Children's Place	705-687-6664 or 705-645-3027
Huntsville Co-op Daycare Centre	705-787-1010
Huntsville Riverside Childcare	647-832-8044
Macaulay Tree House Day Nursery	705-645-1956
Muskoka Family Focus & Children's Place	705-645-3027 or 1-800-461-7404
Muskoka Home Child Care Agency	705-645-2412
Muskoka Lakeland Childcare	705-717-3837
Muskoka Lakes Preschool	705-765-2067
Serendipity Day Care Centre	705-789-6649
Stepping Stone Early Learning Academy	705-687-8448 or 705-796-6889

Recreation/Day Camps

Bracebridge Recreation	705-645-3037
Gravenhurst Recreation	705-687-3412
Huntsville Recreation	705-789-1751
Macaulay Tree House Day Nursery	705-645-1953
Muskoka Family Focus & Children's Place	705-645-3027
Township of Georgian Bay	705-538-2337
Township of Lake of Bays	705-635-2272 or 1-877-566-0005
Township of Muskoka Lakes	705-765-3156
YMCA Gravenhurst	705-687-9899

Muskoka Area Schools

Bracebridge Public School	705-645-5209
Glen Orchard Public School	705-765-3144
Gravenhurst Public School	705-687-2011
Honey Harbour Public School	705-756-2433
Huntsville Public School	705-789-2318
Irwin Memorial Public School	705-635-2232
K.P. Manson Public School	705-689-2612
Lodestar Montessori School	705-645-1443
Macaulay Public School	705-645-5410
MacTier Public School	705-773-7980
Monck Public School	705-645-9986
Monsignor Michael O'Leary	705-645-8759
Muskoka Beechgrove Public School	705-687-2162
Muskoka Christian School	705-385-2847
Muskoka Falls Public School	705-645-2463
Muskoka Montessori School	705-788-3802
Pine Glen Public School	705-789-4791
Riverside Public School	705-789-2282
St. Mary's Catholic School	705-789-6481
Spruce Glen Public School	705-789-4591
St. Antoine Daniel Catholic School	705-534-3391
V.K. Greer Memorial Public School	705-385-2200
Watt Public School	705-769-3643

School Boards

Near North District School Board (MacTier)	1-800-278-4922
Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board	705-722-3555
Trillium Lakelands District School Board	888-526-5552

Before/After School Programs

Macaulay Tree House Day Nursery (programs vary by school)	705-645-1953
MacTier Public School	705-852-3322
Muskoka Family Focus & Children's Place (programs vary by school)	705-645-3027 or 1-800-461-7404
Muskoka Lakes Preschool	705-765-2067