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Dickinson-Iron District Health Department Kicks off “Back to School” Month

Kingsford and Iron River, Michigan, August 2016 - Public Health is always working to protect families and communities. The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department wants to help families and teachers take the right steps to ensure a “happy and healthy” child. It is important to protect children from common childhood illnesses. The healthier a child the more prepared they will be to learn.

Shuffling your child back to school these days takes more than a new wardrobe and a shiny apple. Making sure your child is up-to-date with their immunizations and hearing and vision screenings, and providing special instructions for the school nurse are part of the back to school routine. In addition to searching for the newest fashions and the best back to school deals, parents are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of their children, including tips for buying and loading a backpack that will help protect their child’s back from injury.

For a child, going back to school is often a mix of emotions. Along with the excitement about getting a new teacher, seeing their friends and participating in sports, many children may be worried about not making friends, homework, and missing the fun of summer. While some children are anxious about going back to school, their parents and teachers worry about keeping them healthy, safe and free from infection while in school.

Making sure a child is up-to-date on all vaccinations, hearing and vision checks, and properly nourished, can give the child a healthy start to the school year. “Parents need to keep their child’s immunizations up-to-date to safe guard against infectious diseases, get their vision and hearing checked on a regular basis, and promote a healthy diet and encourage activity throughout the week,” states Ruth Manier, Community Health Services Director. In addition, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) offers these healthy and safety tips that can help in preparing your child for that first day back:

- Remind your child that he/she is not the only student who is a bit uneasy the first day of school.
- Point out the positive aspects of starting school: It will be fun. He’ll/she’ll see old friends and meet new ones.
- Find another child in the neighborhood with whom your youngster can walk to school or ride with on the bus.
- If you feel it is appropriate, drive your child (or walk with him/her) to school and pick them up on the first day.

“Giving our children a healthy start to the school year is one of the best things we can do in preparing them for “Back to School,” states Manier. Families along with schools and communities can work together to make the start of school not only exciting and fun, but ensure that each and every student is sent “Back to School” healthy and ready to learn.

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