

Healthy Children

December 2018 Parent Newsletter



Be Tobacco Smart

Talking to kids about tobacco from an early age is important, but for some people it can be hard to know what to say, or when to say it. We do know that beginning the conversation as early as five or six years old and being open to talking about tobacco throughout the years, is important in helping children and youth make healthy choices.

A new resource is now available to help parents, health providers and teachers begin the conversation. The purpose of this booklet is to share health information in a meaningful and appropriate way with young children, while honouring the role of tobacco in many Indigenous communities throughout the province.

Titled *Be Tobacco Smart*, this booklet tells the story of three young children who find tobacco litter on the ground. Guided by their new friend Duke the Dog, they learn about how tobacco can harm their health, the environment and even their pets! Along the way, they meet Elder Eagle, who shares with them why tobacco is special to many Indigenous people. Using activities such as, word searches, crossword puzzles and colouring pages, the booklet provides an opportunity to begin discussions about tobacco with very young children – whether it is with parents, community health providers or teachers.

➤ To access this resource, visit <https://www.albertaquits.ca/helping-others-quit/teachers-and-school> or call 780-422-1350

Articles

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Cyberbullying 101:
What it is and what
you can do!

In Alberta, Alberta Health Care covers the cost of eye exams by a Doctor of Optometry for all children until they turn 19. Many vision and eye health conditions have no symptoms and can only be detected through an eye exam. For more information about childhood eye examinations and to find an optometrist in your area, please visit www.optometrists.ab.ca



Cyberbullying 101: What it is and what you can do!

By learning what cyberbullying is, how it could affect your child and what you can do about it, you'll be better prepared to talk with your child and respond to their questions or concerns. Cyberbullying is a type of bullying that uses technology (smartphones, computers, tablets etc.) to intimidate, put down or spread rumours about someone using social media or social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, gaming sites, blogs, etc.). It also includes making something public that was meant to be private, like photos and videos.

Social media sites, as well as email and texting have become one of the main way kids communicate and socialize. Because of these sites and access to them, cyberbullying has become a reality for today's children.

Cyberbullies often feel safe because they hide behind their computer or phone. The only limits to what can be done are based on the bully's imagination and access to technology.



Research suggests that cyberbullying may have damaging effects to children, like low self-esteem, anxiety, missing or skipping school, poor grades, anger, depression, violence against others and suicide. Cyber threats can cause more harm than face-to-face bullying, because there's no escape. It can happen any time, any place.

What you can do about cyberbullying:

- Talk with your child often about their online activities and behaviours.
- Encourage your child to speak out against bullying of any kind.

- Teach your child not to post or say anything that they wouldn't want the whole world – including you – to read.
- Check in with your child often to make sure everything is okay.
- Watch for changes in your child's behaviour when using their phone or computer.
- Make sure your child feels comfortable coming to you with any issue.

➤ **To learn more about cyberbullying, please visit Alberta Health Services**
www.teachingsexualhealth.ca