



November 2018

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Active Transportation and Mental Health

Did you know that **Active Transportation** can strengthen child and youth mental health, which helps children and youth perform better academically, form social relationships, promote positive emotional feelings that increase self-worth and overall make healthier lifestyle choices?

Children's Mental Health Ontario reports that as many as **1 in 5 children and youth** in Ontario will experience some form of mental health problem and that 70% of mental health problems start during childhood or the teenage years..

Why Is Strong Mental Health Important for Children?

Strong mental health allows kids and youth to:

- Think more clearly,
- Develop socially and emotionally, and
- Learn new skills more effectively.

It also helps to:

- Build confidence,
- Increase self-esteem, and
- Provide a **positive** mental outlook on life overall.

All of these benefits have significant positive impacts on children as they grow and enter different phases of life. A child with strong mental health is a child more likely to succeed and deal with challenges in all aspects of life, including transitions into high school, college/university and work or starting their own family one day.

Use Active School Travel To Stay Mentally Fit!

Active School Travel (AST) is an easy way for parents/guardians to strengthen the mental health of children and youth. Simply walking and/or wheeling to and from school leads to increased social connectedness, which can boost confidence and self-esteem and encourage positive behaviour and skills. In adults, it also helps manage stress and promotes wellness.

Active School Travel is simple and can easily be added into your daily routine!

- Walk and/or wheel to school or to the bus stop
- Park and walk a block to school
- If Active School Travel every day is a challenge, choose one or two days a week to try and make a change.

Be proactive, and help to strengthen your child's (and your own) mental health!

Sincerely,

YCDSB Active School Travel Team

