

# SMART HEALTH SCHOOL PROGRAM



Kids do not automatically sit well! Many school-aged children sit at the computer with poor postures and many of these school-aged children will get sore from extensive computer use.

## What is Poor Posture?

The typical sitting/sedentary poor posture is made up of a slumped position, increased forward flexion through the spine, forward head position and shoulders rounded forwards. This kind of posture increases the stress on the neck, mid & lower back and shoulder areas and can lead to pain in any of these areas, as well as typical “tension” type head aches.

The two main factors that influence children’s postures are:

- Postural Habits
- The ergonomic set up of their workstation

## Postural Habits

The way we sit and move is governed by the “unconscious” or habitual part of our brain. We don’t think about it, we just do it. Establishing ideal postural habits in childhood is crucial to the postural habits that will develop as they grow and enter the workforce.

Recent studies have shown a direct link between the postural and working habits that children develop through their schooling and the working habits they have in the workplace as adults.



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## Ergonomics

Ensuring that the ergonomic set-up is ideal for your child when they’re working at their computer, laptop or tablet is critical to giving them the best possible chance to get into and work in the best possible posture. The next few information sheets will highlight the ideal ergonomic set up. It is really important that we remind kids on how to sit well; buttocks at the back of the chair, lifting their chest up and leaning back in to the backrest of the chair. Remember, this is much easier if their workstation is designed to encourage sound posture.

## What can you do?

Working on a laptop for long periods of time on the couch for example is not an ideal environment! You need ask questions like; does working at the kitchen table, on a dining chair, facilitate good or bad postures for your child? What position does your child’s head adopt when they’re using an iPad? Start looking at your environment and think about how you can assist your child to improve their posture. Getting the ergonomics and postural habits of school-aged children right is crucial as the postural habits you help them create today will stay with them for the rest of their lives!