

# Your Child's Mental Health: What You Should Know





There are many factors that can affect children and young people's social, emotional, and mental well-being. It's not always easy to know if your child's sadness, angry outbursts or some other emotional or behavioral problem is an indicator of something that may require professional attention.

## What to watch for



**Look for patterns of behavior vs. isolated incidents** that may appear as the following:

- Sudden changes in mood – including if your child is often sad, worried or fearful
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies they once liked
- Changes in sleep or appetite
- Bedwetting
- Nightmares
- Clingy behavior
- Acting out behavior such as tantrums
- Is spending most of his or her time alone instead of with friends or family
- Declining grades or interest in school
- Is hyperactive, impulsive or has trouble concentrating
- Is self-destructive or overly aggressive toward others

## Next steps

-  If applicable, **talk with the teacher** about your child's behavior in school, daycare, during lunch or on the playground.
-  **Speak to your pediatrician** especially if your child's behavior or emotional difficulties last for more than a few weeks and are causing problems. A mental health specialist can complete an evaluation to determine if treatment is necessary.

## Points to remember

-  Always seek **immediate help if a child engages in unsafe behavior or talks about wanting to hurt himself or herself** or someone else.
-  **Early treatment can** help address a child's current difficulties and **prevent more serious problems** in the future.

**For more support:** Health Advocate can connect you to the right mental health resources.



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