

# Mental Health and Wellbeing for young children

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King's Infant School  
*The British School of Madrid*

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# Emotional Wellbeing

The emotional wellbeing of children is just as important as their physical health.

Good mental health allows children and young people to develop the resilience to cope with whatever life throws at them and grow into well-rounded, healthy adults.



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# The good old days....

Is this a new problem?

Did this exist when we were children?

What has changed?



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# Is society more stressed?



## TO DO LIST

1. **SO**
2. **MANY**
3. **THINGS**



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# Society has changed....



## Technology

Phones, cameras, video cameras, laptops. We are always connected.

This is life and we have to prepare our children for it!



## Staying Local

Families lived locally, children attended local schools and wider family lived locally.



## Big boys don't cry!

This has changed....we encourage children to express their feelings and emotions.

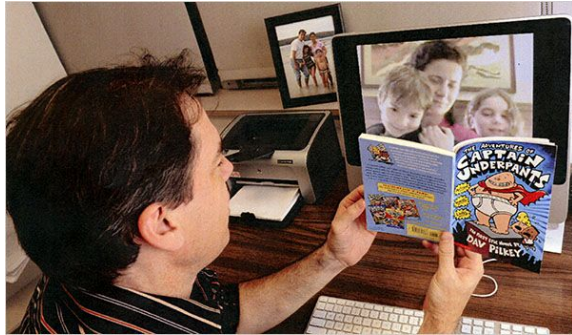


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# Our children at KIS



Our children lead busy, stressful lives but take most of it in their stride, sometimes we all need a day off!



Timetable 							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							



If tomorrow you got the day off work, the kids are at school and all the housework is complete....

What  
would  
you  
do?

# Don't apologise, don't make excuses, be honest!

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century parents have to work, travel, hear the children read, help with homework, cook dinner, drive to work, answer 100's of emails and live!

Children are able to understand if you explain. It is not about how much time, the best toys or the best outing, it is about spending quality time with your family.



# Don't pass on your anxiety!



# What is normal?

- Mostly things that happen to children don't lead to mental health problems on their own, but traumatic events can trigger problems for children and young people who are already vulnerable.
- Changes often act as triggers: moving home or school or the birth of a new brother or sister, for example. Some children who start school feel excited about making new friends and doing new activities, but there may also be some who feel anxious about entering a new environment.
- Children and Teenagers often experience emotional turmoil as their minds and bodies develop. An important part of growing up is working out and accepting who you are.
- Some young people find it hard to make this transition to adulthood and may experiment with alcohol, drugs or other substances that can affect mental health.

# HOW BIG IS MY PROBLEM?

5	<b>EMERGENCY</b> Earthquake, Fire, Danger to yourself or others
4	<b>GIGANTIC PROBLEM</b> Fighting, Someone is hurt, Destruction to the class
3	<b>BIG PROBLEM</b> Small accident (spilled something, fell down), Not feeling well, you are bleeding
2	<b>MEDIUM PROBLEM</b> Someone is bothering you, you need something,
1	<b>LITTLE PROBLEM</b> Runny nose, need to go to the bathroom, lost your supplies, Having trouble on work
0	<b>GLITCH</b> Not getting called on, not getting the supply you wanted, losing in a game

# Things that can help keep children and young people mentally well include:

- being in good physical health, eating a balanced diet and getting regular exercise
- having time and the freedom to play, indoors and outdoors
- being part of a family that gets along well most of the time
- going to a school that looks after the wellbeing of all its pupils
- taking part in local activities for young



# Other factors are also important, including:

- feeling loved, trusted, understood, valued and safe
- being interested in life and having opportunities to enjoy themselves
- being hopeful and optimistic
- being able to learn and having opportunities to succeed
- accepting who they are and recognising what they are good at
- having a sense of belonging in their family, school and community
- feeling they have some control over their own life
- having the strength to cope when something is wrong (resilience) and the ability to solve problems.



# What mental health problems commonly occur in children?

- **Depression** affects more children and young people today than in the last few decades, but it is still more common in adults. Teenagers are more likely to experience depression than young children.
- **Self-harm** is a very common problem among young people. Some people find it helps them manage intense emotional pain if they harm themselves, through cutting or burning, for example. They may not wish to take their own life.
- **Generalised anxiety disorder (GAD)** can cause young people to become extremely worried. Very young children or children starting or moving school may have separation anxiety.
- **Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** can follow physical or sexual abuse, witnessing something extremely frightening or traumatising, being the victim of violence or severe bullying or surviving a disaster.
- Children who are consistently **overactive** ('hyperactive'), behave impulsively and have difficulty paying attention may have **attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)**. Many more boys than girls are affected, but the cause of ADHD aren't fully understood.
- **Eating disorders** usually start in the teenage years and are more common in girls than boys. The number of young people who develop an eating disorder is small, but eating disorders such as **anorexia nervosa** and **bulimia nervosa** can have serious consequences for their physical health and development.



# Parental Support

- If they have a warm, open relationship with their parents, children will usually feel able to tell them if they are troubled.
- One of the most important ways parents can help is to listen to them and take their feelings seriously.
- They may want a hug, they may want you to help them change something or they may want practical help.
- Children and young people's negative feelings usually pass. However, it's a good idea to get help if your child is distressed for a long time, if their negative feelings are stopping them from getting on with their lives, if their distress is disrupting family life or if they are repeatedly behaving in ways you would not expect at their age.



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Play is  
the work of  
the child.

- Maria Montessori

# Useful Links

- <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/c/children-and-young-people>
- <http://www.youngminds.org.uk/>
- <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-early-childhood-mental-health/>
- [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/414024/Childrens\\_Mental\\_Health.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/414024/Childrens_Mental_Health.pdf)