



Mental health difficulties

<https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/mental-health-matters/mental-health-difficulties>

In Australia, it is estimated that approximately one in seven children experience mental health difficulties and about half of all serious mental health problems in adulthood begin before the age of 14 years. One of the best ways parents, carers, early childhood educators and school staff can help children who may be experiencing a mental health difficulty is to learn about and understand how different problems present in children. As a parent, carer or educator you are not expected to have the knowledge of a trained mental health clinician, however it can be helpful to understand the difference between normal displays of emotion and challenging behaviours and more unhelpful feelings and behaviours which may be representative of a mental health difficulty.

It's important to know that most people, including children, will experience mental health difficulties at some point in their life. Getting help early for children's mental health difficulties is important, as it can affect their relationships, physical health and even their school work.

The earlier in life mental health difficulties are addressed, the better chance a child has at improving their long-term mental health and wellbeing.

Your child's school will have further information and resources that can help parents and carers understand more about children's mental health and wellbeing. School staff can also help you find out what children's mental health services are available in your local area.

Mental health professionals have developed a number of very successful ways for helping children with mental health difficulties and their families. Just like taking your child to the doctor with physical health problems, it is important to get help and advice for mental health difficulties.

Some of the more serious mental health difficulties that children may experience include:

- [Anxiety](#)
- [Depression](#)
- [Self harm](#)
- [Serious behaviour difficulties](#)
- [Trauma](#)

Having a general [understanding of mental health in early childhood](#) will help guide parents, carers, staff and educators in how to [respond to children who may be experiencing mental health difficulties](#). This includes understanding both [how mental health difficulties affect young children](#) and [older children](#), as well as understanding how [hardship](#) and [grief](#) can affect children. Finally, [knowing when to get help](#)

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is key in supporting the wellbeing of young people.

See also:

[Should I be concerned?](#)

[Mental health basics](#)

