

Childhood Mental Wellbeing

Childhood is an important time in the development of lifelong mental wellbeing. Mental wellbeing is more than just being happy. It is having self-esteem and self confidence, being connected to others and enjoying the good feelings that come from participating in and giving back to your community. When children develop the best possible mental wellbeing, it lessens the likelihood of future substance abuse or mental problems.

Mental illness and mental wellbeing are not opposites. Children with mental illness can enjoy good mental wellbeing, while children with no symptoms of mental illness can struggle with poor mental wellbeing. All children benefit when they connect with others, feel valued and learn important skills. Here are some ways to help your child develop good mental wellbeing.

Connect with others: Connecting with others increases self-worth and offers a source of support and encouragement during hard times. Help your child to build and grow relationships with people close to them and with the wider world. Connections can be made by joining teams, clubs and groups, volunteering and spending time together with family and friends.

Be active: The benefit of being active are not just physical. Activity causes chemical changes in the brain that make us feel good. Physical activity can also help children form relationships and learn new skills which build self-esteem.

Try new things: Encourage your child to try new things and be willing to do the same. Learning new things challenges us and setting/reaching goals makes us feel proud and capable.

Give to others: Small acts of kindness can give us a sense of purpose and improve self-worth. Children can be encouraged to give to others by saying thank you to someone who has helped them, phoning a relative or friend who needs support or offering a helping hand to others.



Health advice as easy as 8-1-1

Did you know you can get trusted health advice around the clock from a registered nurse by dialing Health Link at 8-1-1? Health Link is Alberta's free, 24/7 health information and advice line. They can help assess symptoms and help you decide if you need to seek medical attention.

The Cost of Dental Treatment

Fixing decayed teeth can be expensive. Think about fixing a problem earlier than later. A cavity (tooth decay) can quickly get bigger and increase the cost for treatment. But what really saves money is preventing the problem in the first place. Here's a look at how tooth decay happens and how you can prevent it.

- **Tooth decay happens when germs stick to teeth.** Prevent tooth decay by brushing two times a day.
- **Sugar and germs produce acid.** Prevent decay by reducing sweet and sticky snacks and limiting sweet drinks.
- **Acid weakens tooth enamel.** Prevent decay by drinking water with fluoride (when possible) and using fluoride toothpaste to strengthen teeth.
- **Some surfaces of teeth decay more easily.** Prevent decay by asking your dentist about dental sealants to protect teeth.

Some families may have access to children's free dental care through Alberta Child Health Benefit. For more information call 1-877-469-5437 or visit www.employment.alberta.ca/achb.