

Family Support NEWS BRIEF

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 CENTER FOR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES



Supporting the Mental Health of Children

Family support professionals know the challenges that families have faced over the past couple of years. Families have experienced several stressors, some uniquely related to the pandemic, such as access to services, changes in employment and finances, lifestyle, including access to others, and many others. These high levels of stress can have a lasting impact on parent's and caregiver's mental and emotional health. In addition to the effect stress has on parents, their infant's or child's mental health also can be affected.

The Impact of Children's Mental Health

The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that 16% of children under six years old have mental health difficulties and require care early.¹ The attachment between parent and child can have positive outcomes for children such as social and emotional skills, self-regulation, and problem solving. When neglect, abuse, or trauma take place, the child's mental health is affected. This can have long lasting impacts not only in childhood, but adulthood as well.²

There are several signs that children can display when they are experiencing mental health issues. Parents should be aware of these symptoms and talk with their healthcare provider if they notice them in their child. Some indicators of child mental health concerns include the following:³

1. Trouble sleeping.
2. Not meeting developmental milestones.
3. Continuous crying.
4. Problems with feeding.
5. Not gaining weight.
6. Gastric problems.

When parents are educated on the signs of child mental health concerns, action can be taken early to mitigate the negative impact and outcomes.

Talking with Families About Children's Mental Health

It is important for family support professionals to acknowledge and address mental health concerns that families have concerning their children. The first step can be to have a conversation with parents and ask if they have noticed any signs that would indicate a mental health concern. Moving forward from that conversation, you can provide education for the family on child mental health. Additionally, family support professionals can connect the parents to resources such as mental health counselors or programs, Early Intervention, and behavioral health services.

Pennsylvania Child Mental Health Supports

In Pennsylvania, parents and child care professionals' staff have access to a free resource through the Pennsylvania Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program. The consultants in the program offer onsite or virtual observations in the classroom, screenings, creation of action plans for children and classroom staff, and referrals for more support.

To find out more information on this service and for additional resources please visit

www.pakeys.org/iecmh

Resources for Families and Family Support Professionals

[SAMHSA FindTreatment.gov](http://SAMHSA.gov/FindTreatment)

Administration for Children and Families: Behavioral Health

Zero to Three Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Guiding Principles

Children's Bureau: Learning and Coordination Center ACF Video Series

Works Cited

- 1 Gleason, Mary Margaret. "Mental Health in Infants and Young Children: Pediatric Mental Health Minute Series." American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org/en/patient-care/mental-health-minute/mental-health-in-infants-and-young-children/
- 2 Bell, Sharon. "Yes, Mental Health Includes Babies." ZERO TO THREE, 26 June 2023, www.zerotothree.org/resource/yes-mental-health-includes-babies/
- 3 Stygar, Kyja; Zadroga, John "Infants Have Mental Health Needs, Too." Mayo Clinic Health System, Mayo Clinic Health System, 20 Apr. 2021, www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/infants-have-mental-health-needs-too#:~:text=Indicators%20of%20infant%20mental%20health,Restlessness.

Creating Connections through Meaningful Conversations

Are you looking for ways to support social connections among parents and family members? Looking for an engaging way to get parents involved in your program? Been curious about Be Strong Parent Cafes but unsure if your organization is ready to dive in?

We invite you to join us on September 20 from 10 to 11 a.m. to learn more about Be Strong Parent Cafes and how you can bring cafes to your communities!

During this time, we will describe the cafe process (including a mini round of cafe conversations!), help you consider what you will need to form a team and deliver cafes, and describe the application process for the upcoming Parent Cafe Training Institutes (PCTI) in early November 2023 (Eastern Pennsylvania), late November 2023 (Western Pennsylvania), March 2024 (Southcentral Pennsylvania), and April 2024 (Northcentral Pennsylvania).

Please note this session is required if your organization plans to attend a PCTI in 2023-2024 to be certified to deliver Be Strong Parent Cafes.

[Questions? Contact Rijelle Kraft.](#)

Take the first step on your cafe journey and [register for the Be Strong Parent Cafe Information Session](#) today!

This professional development opportunity is delivered through a partnership among the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning and the Pennsylvania Strengthening Families Leadership Team and is facilitated by Center for Schools and Communities.

Upcoming Family Support Webinar

Save the date for the October 4, 10 a.m. ET, Family Support webinar, focusing on recruiting families to participate in services.



Family Support Team

Family Support at Center for Schools and Communities provides training and technical assistance to Parents as Teachers providers, Children's Trust Fund grantees, and the Strengthening Families Leadership Team.

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[Pennsylvania Parents as Teachers](#) at Center for Schools and Communities

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Parents as Teachers Online Courses

Foundational and Model Implementation

For new parent educators and new supervisors of affiliate programs. Login is required.

[Register for October 23- November 3](#) Foundational and Model Implementation course

[Register for October 23-31](#) Foundational Course

Foundational 2: 3 Years through Kindergarten

[Register for October 2-6](#)

Questions regarding registration for Pennsylvania PAT courses? Contact [Jennifer Esposito](#).

Register for other courses offered by National Parents as Teachers at their [website](#).

SAFE Kids Worldwide Home Safety Tips

Every parent wants their children to grow up healthy and strong in the place where they choose to live: at home. The good news is that there are simple and easy steps that families can take to protect their children.

Preventing Falls

- Inspect regular safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs and at the top of stairs on other levels.
- Use proper technique when lifting, carrying, or moving children.
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Poison Prevention

- Store all household products, including cleaning products, in their original containers.
- Keep cleaning products in their original containers.
- Don't use a secondary container to store cleaning products.
- Don't use a secondary container to store cleaning products.

Water Safety

- Always supervise children in and around water.
- Use proper technique when lifting, carrying, or moving children.
- Use proper technique when lifting, carrying, or moving children.

Safety from Fire

- Create and practice a home fire escape plan with two ways out of every room.
- Test smoke detectors on every level of your home.
- Test carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your home.
- Test fire extinguishers on every level of your home.

Every year, more than 2,200 children die from injuries at home.

Home Safety Tips

Everything you need to know to keep your kids safe in your home.

Safe Kids Worldwide's flyer about simple and easy steps to help protect children in and around the home is a great resource.

[View Home Safety Tips flyer.](#)

