

General Mental Wellness • 6 to 12 Years

Having good mental health sets the stage for future growth. How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts and moves offers important clues about your child's development.

Paying attention to changes and acting early can make a real difference for your child.



- They're cooperative, energetic, resilient and active in extracurricular activities
- They enjoy spending time with family while also becoming more independent, understand and express feelings, make friends and are proud of accomplishments
- They follow rules and routines, solve basic problems, seek praise and take small risks such as speaking in front of a group at school

It's a good idea to let your pediatrician know if you notice the following:

- They're clingy, withdrawn, restless, nervous, overly distrusting of others, irritable, defensive, rebellious, unable to be soothed or seem out of control, often complain of physical symptoms such as headaches, nervous stomach or wetting the bed
- They act out in class or refuse to go to school, lack interest in activities, are unable to follow directions or don't have friends
- They have negative self-talk, are unaware of how their actions affect others, are worried about failing or making mistakes

The most common issue affecting school-aged children is **anxiety**. An estimated **30-40%** of youth in the U.S. will struggle with an anxiety disorder at some point during their childhood. Other common concerns include: learning disabilities, such as reading disorders, and neurodevelopmental disorders like attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism.



Great ways to connect with your child between 6 to 12 years:

- Model positive behaviors such as understanding, respect, patience and sharing
- **Praise** your child and encourage them to be proud of themselves to help them make good choices as they age
- Take technology breaks to check in with your child and talk about their friends, how they're feeling and any challenges they're facing
- At the appropriate time, talk about the typical physical and emotional changes during puberty
- Be involved with and supportive of their school, extracurricular activities, friendships and hobbies
- Encourage reading, physical activity and talk about what they're doing and learning
- **Provide** a healthy diet high in protein, fruits and vegetables and limit fat, processed food and sugar
- Help your child develop a clear sense of right and wrong, responsibility and goal setting
- Set clear boundaries for your child and use discipline to re-direct and guide versus punishing
- Limit screen time and media exposure to violence, sexuality and substance use

Getting help early is better. Never worry alone. Consult your pediatrician.

Frequency Intensity Duration

If you notice changes in the frequency, intensity and duration of your child's behavior or mood, it's important to let your pediatrician know. List questions and concerns to share with your pediatrician:

How often is it happening? How intense is it? How long does it last?

Are these behaviors impacting your child in school, at home and with friends? Include your child's medications and family mental health history.



Questions/Concerns

If your child is experiencing a mental health crisis or suicidal thoughts, call or text **988**, Connecticut's Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

988 offers 24/7/365 access to trained staff who can help in mental health and substance use crises, provide referrals to resources and perform warm transfers to Mobile Crisis Intervention Services or emergency services including Urgent Crisis Centers in your community.

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS

LIFELINE

If your child is experiencing a life-threatening situation

Dial 911 immediately





Attention Health Care Provider:

If you have questions or need clinical guidance, ACCESS Mental Health is FREE and available to you.

Call us: Monday-Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Hartford Hospital 855.561.7135

Wheeler Clinic, Inc. 855.631.9835

Yale Child Study Center 844.751.8955