

There's a difference between feeling sad and being depressed. Occasional sadness is a normal part of growing up. If children are sad, irritable, or no longer enjoy activities, and this goes on day after day, these can be signs of depression.



Behaviors may be signs of an underlying depression if they are:

- Intense
- Frequent
- Persist over long periods of time
- Inappropriate for the child's age
- Interfere with the child's life

The CDC estimates that **4.4%** or approximately **2.7 million** children in the U.S. have diagnosable depression

Depression can be difficult to recognize because it can manifest in different ways depending on the child's age. In children and youth, irritability can be a sign of depression, while sadness is more common in adults. The biggest thing to look for in children and youth is a change in their typical behavior.

Early Childhood

- Changes in appetite or sleep patterns
- Lack of interest in activities
- Absence of joyfulness
- Physical complaints
- Difficulty concentrating
- Lower or higher energy
- Irritability

School-Age

- Moodiness/Irritability
- Acting out/Oppositionality
- Hopelessness
- Excessive guilt
- Decreased energy or agitation
- Heightened sensitivity to criticism
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Thoughts of self-harm and suicide (more common in older children)

Adolescence

- Irritability
- Substance use
- Lack interest in grooming/appearance
- Self-loathing
- Social withdrawal/isolation
- Poor school performance
- Feelings of emptiness
- Sleep disturbance
- Sudden weight change
- Self-harm and thoughts of suicide

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for ages 10 to 24

- LGBTQ+ adolescents and young adults are **4 times** more likely to attempt suicide
- Black children ages **5 to 12** are twice as likely to die by suicide
- Having one supportive adult in their life can reduce suicide attempts by **40%**
- Suicide among black teens is rising faster than any other racial or ethnic group with a **37%** increase between 2018 and 2021



Protective Factors

Having family meals together
Feeling connected to school/community
Resilience
Problem-solving skills
Sense of purpose

Treatment Options

Therapy alone
Medication alone
Combination of both

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

