

Depression

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
- Having one supportive adult in their life can reduce suicide attempts by 40%

- Black children ages **5 to 12** are twice as likely to die by suicide
- 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.

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

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