

May is Mental Health Month: Celebrate Children's Mental Well-Being!

You may not realize it, but chances are a child or adolescent you know has a serious mental health need. In fact, mental health problems affect one in five young people.

Mental health problems are painful—emotionally, spiritually and socially—especially for children and adolescents. Words that make fun of mental health create a sense of shame, feelings of guilt and loss of self-esteem. Children and adolescents exposed to such a negative view of themselves feel rejected, lonely and isolated. For a child with a mental health problem, this “stigma” is often the greatest barrier to a complete and satisfying life.

But you can help. There are many things that parents and caregivers can do to support children's emotional health and well-being. Make a commitment to help the children and adolescents in your life. May—officially recognized as “Mental Health Month” by Congress since 1949—is the perfect time for parents and caregivers to focus on children's and adolescents' mental health. You can demonstrate your support for Mental Health Month by:

- **Learning more about mental well-being in children.**
- **Celebrating the accomplishments and strengths of children.**
- **Fostering self-worth and independence in children.**
- **Helping children express their feelings.**
- **Promoting mutual respect and trust.**
- **Recognizing the strengths in all children.**



Systems of Care

- **Appreciating each child's uniqueness.**
- **Encouraging individual talents.**
- **Helping children set goals based on their abilities and interests.**
- **Showing confidence in their ability to handle problems and tackle new experiences.**

The *Caring for Every Child's Mental Health Campaign* is part of the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children and Their Families Program of the federal Center for Mental Health Services. Parents and caregivers who wish to learn more about mental well-being in children, please call 1-800-789-2647 (toll-free) or visit the Web site at www.mentalhealth.org/child to download a free publications catalog (CA-0000) or bookmark with nurturing tips (Order No: CA-BK-MARKR). The federal Center for Mental Health Services is an agency of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.