

### WAYS TO IMPROVE CHILDREN’S MENTAL HEALTH

[Mental health](https://www.apa.org/pi/families/children-mental-health) is a crucial aspect of your child’s overall health, and yet can easily fall by the wayside. The [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/data.html) reports that depression and anxiety have increased over time in children, and that depression is an important concern in adolescents. Keep tabs on your child’s mental health and promote greater mental wellness by following these seven **mental health tips for kids**.

**7 Ways to Improve Your Child’s Mental Health**

1. **Encourage physical activity.**

Physical activity is a [miracle drug](https://phitamerica.org/benefits/the-miracle-drug/) for kids, providing a wealth of benefits from [reducing depression](https://phitamerica.org/news-blogs/blog/how-to-prevent-depression-in-children/) to preventing health issues. [Endorphins](https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/psychpedia/endorphins)—chemicals released in the brain after exercise—can “help relieve pain, reduce emotional stress, and offer a sense of well-being.”

Look out for the documentary [“Inactivity Pandemic”](https://www.inactivitypandemic.com/) in late March, which highlights the importance of physical activity on children’s health.

1. **Make sure they get enough sleep.**

Getting [adequate sleep](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/sleep/Pages/healthy-sleep-habits-how-many-hours-does-your-child-need.aspx) is vital for health at any age, and especially in childhood and adolescence. [Sleep deprivation](https://journals.lww.com/nursingmanagement/fulltext/2014/08000/sleep_deprivation_in_children__a_growing_public.5.aspx) is well known for wreaking havoc on cognitive performance and motor skills, but it can also negatively affect emotional health. Help your child control their temperament and balance their mood by monitoring their sleep schedule.

1. **Promote healthy eating.**

A healthy diet reinforces physical and emotional health. Poor nutrition or dehydration can adversely [affect your mood](https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/nutritional-psychiatry-your-brain-on-food-201511168626).

1. **Ensure a safe and positive environment.**

To the best of your ability, cultivate [a safe environment](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/mental-health/prevention-and-wellness-promotion/supporting-childrens-mental-health-tips-for-parents-and-educators#:~:text=Feeling%20safe%20is%20critical%20to%20students%27%20learning%20and%20mental%20health.). Feelings of security reduce stressors and promote positive emotions in children.

1. **Foster a sense of community.**

A sense of community is extremely important for kids’ mental health. It encourages a sense of belonging and promotes healthy social attachments. Children should have plenty of playtime with peers, and should feel secure in the love of their families and community. [Strong relationships](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/Strong-relationships-strong-health) are a powerful tool for bettering mental health.

1. **Bolster their self-esteem.**

Remember to give your child honest praise to boost their [self-esteem](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/self-esteem). Low self-esteem is closely linked to mental health problems.

1. **Teach them about mental health.**

When your child has [learned about mental health](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1525289/), they will be better able to assess their own mental wellness.

At PHIT America Foundation, we believe that physical activity is a [Miracle Drug for kids that can help to prevent depression](https://phitamerica.org/benefits/the-miracle-drug/8-reduces-depression-anxiety-more-smiles/), stress, and anxiety, and improve their mental health. That’s why we think that [physical education teachers have the most important job in America](https://phitamerica.org/benefits/most-important-job-in-america/) and that [PE is a necessity in schools](https://phitamerica.org/news-blogs/blog/why-kids-need-physical-education-in-school/) in order to build a healthier future for our children.

We aim to improve the physical and mental health of children all across the United States by providing kids with increased physical activity programs, like our [AMPED programs](https://phitamerica.org/key-programs/amped/); getting physical education back in schools; and helping children afford to play organized sports. [Sign our petition for healthy kids](https://phitamerica.org/key-programs/petition-require-physical-activity-30-minutes-3-times-a-week/), or visit our website to find out [how you can get involved](https://phitamerica.org/) and bring an AMPED program to a school near you! You can also help us get kids active and healthy by [donating to us](https://phitamerica.org/donate/) today!