



## Promoting Good Mental Health For Your Child

The first five years of your child's life are critical for many elements of their development. Your child's social and emotional development in the early years of their life can set them on the right path for their future mental health.

### How do children develop good mental health?

Your child's good mental health and resilience is assisted by a range of protective factors that you can give them as they grow.

As a family and a parent you can:

- **Practise positive and responsive parenting.** Interact with your child and enjoy their reactions as they discover new things such as how to stand and walk and, as they develop, to dress themselves.
- **Learn about and understand child development.** The first five years of your child's life is a critical developmental period where they have extraordinary physical and mental growth. Talk to other parents and the educators at your child's early childhood service to learn more about the key changes during these years.
- **Develop a good relationship with your child.** Communicate clearly, be consistent, provide your child with clear boundaries and – above all – show them lots of love.
- **Develop good relationships with the educators at your child's early childhood service.** Make time to speak to the educators at your service regularly about your child as well as simply getting to know them.
- **Give and receive support and education within your own family.** Your family can be a fantastic source of support and knowledge when you're raising a child. They may also have a lot to learn from you as you learn more about your child and about early childhood development. Make time for clear and supportive communication with your family.
- **Be involved with, and connected to, your child's early childhood service.** Read the service's newsletters and participate, where possible, in events they hold for families. Try to get to know the educators and other parents.

All these factors help your child to develop the key skills that they need for good mental health development:

- Positive relationships and secure attachment to you and other key caregivers
- A sense of belonging and connectedness
- Social and emotional skills
- Positive self-esteem
- Cognitive skills.

As a parent, the first five years provide you with an extraordinary opportunity to lay the foundations for your child's lifelong mental health. High quality early childhood services can help support and enhance your ability to provide your child with good mental health that will help them throughout their life.

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