# SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH

Children's mental health shapes how they think, feel and connect with others. Building strong emotional skills in early childhood helps kids to develop confidence and resilience, cope with stress and change, build healthy friendships as well as learn and grow at school and at home. Your support and love are powerful tools in helping your child feel secure and capable.

## WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH

**Spend quality time together daily to build a strong connection.** Your connection helps your child to feel safe and confident. Spend one-on-one time every day, even for just a few minutes. Eat meals together and talk about your day. Encourage connection with other caring adults (teachers, relatives, neighbors).

**Create open communication.** Let them know that they can talk to you about anything.

**Be a good listener.** Children don't always need advice — they often just need to be heard.

**Help them learn how to name their emotions.** Being able to name their feelings gives them power over their emotions and helps them to share them with you. Use books, stories, or pictures to explore feelings together.

**Promote a healthy lifestyle.** Make sure they get enough sleep, are eating a healthy diet and getting daily exercise.

**Limit screen time.** Pay attention to how they are using screens. Encourage reading, playing or going for a walk, riding their bike or playing outdoors instead.

**Play together.** Play is children's natural language for expressing themselves and learning about the world. Kids process feelings, practice problem-solving, build social skills and strengthen imagination and creativity through play.

**Show unconditional love.** Children need to know they are loved no matter what.

- Say "I love you" often — not just when they succeed.
- Offer hugs, smiles and reassurance after mistakes.
- Separate behavior from identity: "I didn't like what you did, but I still love you."

**Tips for talking:**

- Stay calm and patient. Your tone teaches them how to handle big feelings.
- Model feelings. "I felt disappointed when it rained, but we found another fun plan."

## SMALL MOMENTS MAKE BIG IMPACT

Every conversation, every cuddle, every game builds your child's emotional foundation. You don't need perfect words — just your steady, loving presence.

**LET THEM KNOW OFTEN HOW MUCH THEY ARE LOVED, VALUED AND THAT THEY BELONG.**

**Learn more at bstrongtogether.org**

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