

# Mental health & well-being

## A solid foundation for their future well-being

Parents play a vital role in supporting children's mental and emotional health and in building their confidence and resilience. It can be tough growing up, with children having to cope with many different situations and unfamiliar challenges like school, relationships and pressures of growing up. Many children find it hard to talk to their parents about the things which are worrying them. They might express how they feel through being moody, getting in trouble at school or at home or by becoming angry easily.

**Many thousands of children and young people go through periods of mental ill health.** When this happens to them, it can be impossible for them to make and keep friends, manage at school and feel good about themselves. It can be confusing for their parents and siblings. Many other children may not be diagnosed as having mental health problems but lack confidence and feel unhappy much of the time.

If your child is having difficulties, try to pick a time when the house is quiet and you can spend some time listening to your child and how they feel. Take them seriously and offer help and support if you can. More rarely, a child may experience difficulties that are more severe or long lasting and their feelings or mood may be so extreme or upsetting that they need professional help. If they are self-harming, running away, experiencing eating difficulties or extreme behavioural issues then you need immediate support. Talk to your GP.

### Facts about children and mental health

- One in 10 children and young people aged 5-16 has a diagnosable mental health disorder.
- Children who live in poverty or poor housing are more likely to have mental health problems.
- Children whose parents have mental health problems often need special help themselves to cope and enjoy their childhood.
- It is thought that in the UK 1 in 15 children and young people has self-harmed.

Source: Barnados.org.uk 2016

**1**

My son suddenly hates school and refuses to go.

**2**

Have you asked him about bullying or if anything else has changed in his life?

**3**

Talk to your school in the first instance.