

Here are some things you can do if you are concerned about your child's wellbeing.

1. Listen to the child. A parent who listens well communicates far more effectively than one who talks well. It is very tempting for a parent to use one-on-one time to offer advice. It is far more beneficial for your child to have the opportunity to be the one doing the talking.

Effective listening means:

- ✓ listening without judgment of your child's behaviour
- ✓ listening with empathy for their feelings
- ✓ listening with genuine concern for their wellbeing.

The more you learn to listen effectively, the more your child will talk to you.

2. Make an appointment to see your local GP. Go along with a young child. Your older child or teenager may benefit from a talk to the GP without a parent present.
3. Your GP can make a referral to a child-focused mental health service and/or clinical psychologist who specialises in helping children.
4. You can make direct contact with several specialist mental health services for children and adolescents (some suggested services are listed overleaf).
5. Speak to your child's school psychologist or school chaplain.
6. Discuss your concerns with your partner and your child's teacher.

Make sure that you are honest and open with your child about your concerns and your actions. It is important that your child can trust you.

Many of us will struggle with our wellbeing at some point in our lives.

The earlier that we can help a child who is struggling with theirs, the easier it will be for them to grow into a happy and resilient child.

Some useful free services you, a parent or an older child in your primary school class can access directly include:

The Positive Times – is a new online 'newspaper' offering an array of articles, strategies and information about wellbeing and positive education in Australian schools and colleges. *Positive Times* is free for all educators to access.

www.positivetimes.com.au

Mental Health Emergency Response Line
08 9224 8888

Kids Help – for kids and teens
www.kidshelp.com.au
1800 55 1800

Healthdirect Australia – offers details of helpful organisations
1800 022 222

Rural Link – after hours telephone service for rural communities
1800 552 002

Headspace – online and telephone services
www.headspace.org.au
1800 55 1800



Is my child feeling okay?



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Every child is a **unique** and **special** individual

who learns things in their own way, in their own time.



This table offers some examples of when and when not to be concerned.

Cause for concern	Things are okay	Things are okay for now, but keep a close check	Time to take action
My four-year-old is not sleeping through the night	They are getting enough sleep overall (even if you are not!) and appear happy and energetic throughout the day.	They have great difficulty getting back to sleep even when a parent is with them. They appear happy and rested throughout the day.	They have great difficulty getting back to sleep even when a parent is with them. They appear tired and irritable during the day.
My seven-year-old is frightened of dogs.	They tell you they are nervous about dogs but do not actively avoid interacting with them.	They are visibly upset when confronted with a dog, but do not avoid places where a dog may be present.	They are extremely upset when confronted by a dog and actively avoid places where a dog may be present.
My ten-year-old constantly disagrees with me.	They are generally cheerful. They enjoy school and have other family members and friends who they enjoy spending time with.	They are sensitive and sometimes anxious. They enjoy school most of the time and have friends they enjoy spending time with.	They are generally irritable and sad. They do not enjoy school and often appear to be socially isolated.
My teenager is on a diet.	They eat healthily most of the time, they do not eat secretly and they express body confidence in their choice of clothes.	They eat healthily most of the time, they do not eat secretly, but they often express dissatisfaction with their body shape.	They eat sporadically, and often express dissatisfaction with their body shape (verbally or in clothes choice).

This means it can be difficult for parents to know the difference between healthy and unhealthy feelings, thoughts and behaviours. Many negative feelings, thoughts and behaviours are temporary and a normal part of growing up. However, if your child is expressing difficulty enjoying and engaging in everyday life, it may be time to seek help.

If you are concerned that your child may need some extra support to deal with their feelings or behaviours, look back over the past two weeks and ask yourself these two key questions.



Is my child behaving in a way that often prevents them functioning effectively in day-to-day life?



Would I describe my child as generally stressed or distressed over the past two weeks (rather than happy and content)?

If you can answer **yes** to one or more of these questions, it could be very beneficial to get some extra help and support for your child.