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#### COVID-19 Resources

DHS  
<https://dhs.iowa.gov/childcare-covid-19>

HCCI  
<https://www.idph.iowa.gov/hcci/products>

CCR&R  
<https://iowaccrr.org/providers/links/resources2020/>

CDC  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Call your Child Care Nurse Consultant (CCNC) if you have any questions about child health and safety, or any special training needs.



<https://earlychildhood.iowa.gov/>

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# Quality Care For Kids

## A newsletter for Scott County Child Care Providers

Written by **Kim Gonzales MBA, BSN, RN**

### May is National Children's Mental Health Awareness

M A Y 2 0 2 2



Spring Greetings! Many may ask what helps to define mental health. Mental health encompasses emotional, psychological and social well being and also helps to determine how one reacts to stress, decision making and relationships with others. As early childhood professionals, caring for children's mental health is an essential part of day to day interactions and teaching young children. By understanding, caring and supporting children's mental health it helps to develop positive mental health. Positive mental health is fundamental to a child's healthy development and is equally important as physical wellness. According to CDC "Being mentally healthy in childhood means reaching developmental and emotional milestones, and learning healthy social skills and how to cope and stay resilient when there are problems." When children are supported by parents and other caregivers it makes a positive difference to help decrease stressors and other negative experiences that can put a child's mental health at risk. A recent report from CDC highlighted that "Poor mental health among children continues to be a substantial public health concern". Every day, an early childhood professional has many opportunities to help support a child with overall wellness, both physically and mentally. Some opportunities are done without any planned instruction and happen spontaneously while others are planned such as special activities or built in to lesson plans. There are many simple activities that can help support positive mental and physical health. If a young child seems to be struggling, early identification is important as young children can experience depression, anxiety and other types of mental health conditions that can be treated. Some warning signs of concern are in the box to the right. If a concern arises, it is important to speak with the parents regarding the concerns and the need to seek medical evaluation to help assist the child who may need further intervention. Resources and supports are also available to parents who are concerned about their child's mental health. Parents can contact their child's primary doctor to discuss their concerns and work with the physician for any needed referrals.

#### **Warning signs that may indicate a child is struggling:**

- \* Persistent sadness that lasts two weeks or more
- \* Withdrawing from or avoiding social interactions
- \* Hurting oneself or talking about hurting oneself
- \* Talking about death or suicide
- \* Outbursts or extreme irritability
- \* Out-of-control behavior that can be harmful
- \* Drastic changes in mood, behavior or personality
- \* Changes in eating habits
- \* Loss of weight
- \* Difficulty sleeping
- \* Frequent headaches or stomachaches
- \* Difficulty concentrating
- \* Changes in academic performance
- \* Avoiding or missing school

**A child who is experiencing any of these should be evaluated further by a health professional.**



Check out **8 Strategies for a Healthy Spring** that can be downloaded from CDC! Once downloaded, each topic can be clicked on for more information!

Topics include:

- ◆ Sun Safety
  - ◆ Sleep
  - ◆ Exercise
  - ◆ Healthy Food
  - ◆ Healthy Beverages
  - ◆ Oral Health
  - ◆ Tobacco Cessation
  - ◆ Health History
- <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/pdf/infographics/healthy-spring-H.pdf>

#### Resources on Children's Mental Health

Your Life Iowa  
<https://yourlifeiowa.org/childrens-mental-health>  
CDC  
<https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/parents-caregivers>  
Child Mind Institute  
<https://childmind.org/topics-a-z/>  
Sesame Street Communities  
<https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/>