

Healthy Living

Children's Mental Health



“The early years have a huge role to play in creating a foundation for mental health in the future. Childcare professionals play a vital role in supporting children to develop the emotional and social skills that will serve them throughout their lives.”

[Pacey.org.uk](https://pacey.org.uk)

Task 1

Reflect on the question's below with your team and discuss:

Practitioners:

- How do we ensure that all children in our care feel safe and secure? For example, creating a nurturing environment, promoting emotional regulation skills, and facilitating positive and social interactions.
- Do we feel confident in recognising and responding to a child's poor mental health? For example noticing changes in behaviour, mood, or interactions with others.
- Is it enough to know that a child is sad, angry, worried? How would we respond?

- Do we have enough information about a child's health, home life and living circumstances? If not, how can we ensure we do? Why is this important?
- Are we aware of the cultural differences in our settings and how they may influence a child's mental health and the way mental health issues are perceived and addressed within different communities?
- Do we feel confident enough and understand when to collaborate with other professionals? such as family support services or mental health specialists and how to make appropriate referrals for further assessment, and intervention?
- Do we recognise the importance of our own self-care as practitioners in maintaining our ability to support children's mental health effectively?

Task 2

The child:

Spend some time looking through the following Q cards, explore how children's mental health and wellbeing is a broad topic. A deeper dive into the different aspects, will enable you to better understand the behaviours, and needs of the children in your care:

- Self-regulation
- Managing anxieties
- Let's talk emotions.
- Sense of self

Embedding children's emotions into your practice involves recognising, acknowledging, and responding to all children's emotions in a supportive and nurturing way.

Having a sound understanding of children's mental health provides practitioners with the knowledge, skills and confidence required to effectively support the well-being of children in their care, laying the foundations for all children to lead positive, healthy, and happy lives.

Task 3

Click on the Help for Providers link about 'Emotions' [Emotions - Help for early years providers - GOV.UK \(education.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/emotions-help-for-early-years-providers)

Explore some of the suggested activities you can put into practice. Choose one activity to do with your children and feedback to your team. Think about how you can embed activities like this on a daily basis.