



A Healthy and Strong Mind for your Child

A child's mental health is of paramount importance to their happiness. Starting in a new school, with unfamiliar faces and new routines can sometimes bring feelings of worry and anxiety. Adults have the knowledge and experience to be able to recognise and identify their various emotions; this leaves us better-equipped to deal with them. Children do not innately have that knowledge. Bearing in mind that more challenging emotions can manifest themselves physically as well as mentally, it can be very confusing and even frightening experience for the child who does not understand what they are feeling.

Here are some practical guidelines for ensuring the mental well-being of your child:

Talk to your child:

Take the time to sit down with your child and have a conversation each day about their thoughts and feelings. We all lead hectic lives and it can sometimes feel like there isn't a spare minute in the day! It is essential, however, that you find a time to give your undivided attention to your child. They will be more likely to talk openly and honestly when they know they are truly being listened to and taken seriously.

Model Positive Behaviour:

Children imitate behaviour they observe. For this reason it is helpful for you to exhibit positive behaviours in relation to coping with emotions. If they see you lash out at others when you are stressed, or stop eating when you are sad, they will learn this behaviour and implement it as a coping skill. You can instead ensure you model more positive behaviour such as utilising positive statements; maintaining a healthy diet; being active; talking about problems; relaxation techniques etc.

Don't Try and Solve Everything for your Child

Parents, with the best of intentions, can often try and solve every little problem or issue for their child. While it is understandable that you do not want your child to experience challenging times or disappointment, it is important to remember that this is actually hugely important for their development. Building up emotional resilience is essential for maintaining strong mental health. As adults, we know life can be full of disappointments and situations where we may feel uncomfortable or even unhappy. It is childhood that prepares us for being able to deal with such situations maturely and with perspective. Therefore, it is important to give children the opportunity to experience this disappointment, and equip them with skills to cope with it accordingly. You can help your child through these times by talking to them about the problem, help them to rationalise it, discuss coping strategies etc.