

# Mental health of children



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Running head: SUPPORTING A CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH Supporting a child's

mental health Importance of mental health and factors that affect Mental health can be defined as the state of comfort within which the individual comprehends his own capabilities and can survive the normal stresses of life, can be productive and can contribute to the society. It is the basis for the well-being and effectual functioning of an individual. Mental health is an important aspect of every human being and it is essential to take care from the time a baby is born till it reaches adulthood. The mental health of an individual is often influenced by social, biological and psychological factors, which determine the development of that person. A child's mental health is difficult to fathom as they may not be able to explicitly express that themselves. It can be evident when the child displays anxiety, excessive mood swings, poor performance at school and similar behavioural disorders. These lead to the child becoming volatile and depressed causing discord in the family and community. There are various factors that cause disruption of a child's mental health. The most critical factor is the biological factor as it is unpredictable and often is undiagnosed until too late. They can be caused though genetics, some form of chemical imbalance in the body or some form of damage or injury to the central nervous system. Some families have a history of mental illnesses and genetically that can be passed on to a child. Severe or critical illnesses during infancy or childhood stage can also damage the brain and cause some mental illness. (Zenah, 2009)

Environmental factors that can affect a child's mental health would be extreme stressful environment, exposure to violence or the loss of someone very close and dear. Divorced parents or too many times of shifting homes or the society as a whole can impact a child's mental health. Early Intervention:

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how important is it? Early detection and intervention of social and emotional problems of infants and toddlers is a must. Positive experiences lay the foundation for healthy future growth and development. (Perry & Kaufmann, 2009). Early intervention during infancy begin at home with the family supporting and encouraging the child to be able to think on his own, make his own decisions and understand the importance of relationships. It has also become mandatory for all education institutions to ensure that early childhood intervention or best practises are implemented from the very start of education . i. e. preschool. Children should be provided with correct intellectual, social emotional and motivational skills, which will enable them to interact with others confidently, express their own feelings, establish relations and be able to control their behaviour. To develop their social emotional qualities, one should focus on their skills and teach them to practice self control, ability to interact, handle anger and disappointment, and solve problems on their own. Parents and siblings also need to support and guide the toddler to regulate emotions and stress and be able to appreciate others feelings as well. (Krogh & Slentz, 2001) Best practices of a preschool teacher The best ways a preschool teacher can promote healthy mental development would be create a sense of belonging by building strong positive relationships between other students and with self. The teacher should facilitate the child to develop competencies and accomplish goals, create a secure and safe environment, encourage decision making and positive behaviour. Good physical health and helping children develop social skills support good mental health. The teacher should train all staff including the parents on the symptoms and effects of a child's mental health and its implications so that the teacher's work is backed up at home and

everywhere. References Zeanah, C. H. (2009). Handbook of infant mental health. Print. Guilford Press Perry. D. F & Kaufmann. R. K. (2009). Integrating Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation with the Pyramid Model. Georgetown University Centre for Child and Human Development. Retrieved from: [http://www.challengingbehavior.org/do/resources/documents/brief\\_integrating.pdf](http://www.challengingbehavior.org/do/resources/documents/brief_integrating.pdf) Krogh, S. Slentz, K. (2001). The early childhood curriculum. Print. L. Erlbaum Associates