



Mental Health Association in Texas

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For Immediate Release

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AUSTIN, TX (August, 2006)—Having healthy, happy kids is the goal of most everyone raising and caring for children. To achieve overall health and well-being in children it is important to care for their physical and mental health equally. To bring awareness to children's mental health and physical health, the Mental Health Association in Texas has released the **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Toolkit** that focuses on building the overall health and well-being of the state's young Texans.

Children naturally experience mood and behavioral changes as they grow, but not everyone is informed of what is considered normal development or appropriate behavior for a child as they progress in age. This informational toolkit is filled with resources and tools to help families and communities understand and maintain the mental health of infants, children and teens. It also gives information on where to seek help should a child need help coping with these changes.

Here are some ways to encourage and build children's mental and physical health as found in the **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Toolkit**:

- ◆ Teach and encourage children to communicate. This can help determine if he or she is feeling good physically and mentally.
- ◆ Teach children that balance is important. Work, play, relaxation, healthy eating, and exercise all contribute to a strong and healthy body and mind.
- ◆ Teach children to cope with stress, solve problems, and get enough rest.
- ◆ Plan times for children to do fun things on their own and with the family.
- ◆ Praise and encourage children. This helps them build self-esteem and gives them the confidence to try new things.

The **Child and Adolescent Mental Health** toolkit is appropriate for families, health and mental health professionals, advocates, educators and others to use while caring for children's mental health. Some of the contents of the toolkit include:

- ◆ Bilingual Children's Mental Health Brochures and Mini-Posters
- ◆ Fact Sheet: Positive Parenting
- ◆ Resources: State and National Children's Mental Health
- ◆ Children's Mental Health Presentation Materials
- ◆ Tip Sheet: Working with the Media to Promote Children's Mental Health
- ◆ Radio Public Service Announcement (PSA): Children's Mental Health

Mental health helps children choose the way they think, feel, and act as well as how they deal with problems in their life. In *Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General* it is reported that there are at least 13.7 million children in the U.S. with a diagnosable mental health disorder. Untreated mental health disorders can lead to school failure, family conflicts, drug abuse, violence, and even suicide.

The **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Toolkit** and other bilingual materials are available through the Mental Health Association in Texas' parenting website www.ParentingInformation.org, www.InformacionParaPadres.org and www.mhatexas.org. A healthy mind and a healthy body are keys to having a healthy life.