

# Caring For Your Child:

*Mental Health Promotion & Well-Being Information for Parents & Caregivers*

Age	Key Messages	Taking Action
<b>2-6 years</b>	Sense of self and belonging to a family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use your child’s name often when speaking to her.</li> <li>• Be supportive of your child and give her lots of love and affection.</li> <li>• Do things together as a family.</li> <li>• Ask your child about likes and dislikes and allow them to make choices.</li> </ul>
	Children learn to develop trust in others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From the very beginning, your responsiveness to your child’s needs provides the nurturing she needs to develop trust.</li> <li>• Follow through on promises.</li> <li>• Be consistent – stick to rules and schedules.</li> <li>• Practice reflective listening with your child, repeat back to them what she is telling you.</li> </ul>
	Children’s physical, mental and emotional health improves when they are connected to nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take children outdoors to play every day, not just when it is sunny and warm!</li> <li>• Encourage free play outdoors.</li> <li>• Let children out of strollers to walk when it is safe. Skipping, hopping, running, jumping etc. are fun for children.</li> <li>• Go on walks with children and talk about what they see, hear, smell and feel along the way.</li> </ul>
	Limit screen time. Screens include TVs, video games, computers, tablets and phones. For children 2-4 years- 1 hour or less per day, for children 5-6 years- 2 hours or less per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore and play with your child</li> <li>• Role model physical activity and use screens in moderation</li> <li>• Give children your total attention</li> <li>• Keep TVs, video games, computers, tablets, and phones out of children’s bedrooms and turned off at mealtimes</li> </ul>
<b>2 years</b>	Children learn to separate from their parents (at about 2 years, children like to play near other children and may briefly join their play and then withdraw to watch again)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If your child cries when you leave her with another caregiver, try to be cheerful and confident so your behavior does not make her worried or afraid.</li> <li>• Be positive and encouraging from a distance when your child plays well with other children.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for your child to socialize with other children.</li> </ul>
<b>3 years</b>	<p>Most children are enthusiastic about playing with other children</p> <p>Children are learning how to share and take turns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize play dates, or enroll your child in preschool programs.</li> <li>• Talk to your child and model how to take turns and share when you are playing with her.</li> </ul>

<b>3 or 4 years</b>	<p>Children learn to use words to solve conflicts, and they begin to develop control of their emotions</p> <p>Children learn that it is okay to make mistakes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervise your child playing with others, but try not to solve all her problems.</li> <li>• Be positive and encouraging from a distance when your child plays well with other children.</li> <li>• Coach your child to use feeling words and “I” statements when dealing with conflict.</li> <li>• Provide a quiet time-out activity if your child needs to relieve frustration.</li> <li>• Encourage and praise your child for effort.</li> <li>• Acknowledge mistakes and encourage trying again.</li> <li>• Set your child up for success by asking of him only what she is capable of accomplishing.</li> <li>• Acknowledge mistakes you have made.</li> </ul>
<b>3 - 5 years</b>	<p>Children learn to develop confidence and self-respect</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask questions and show interest in your child’s creations to help build self-pride.</li> <li>• Accept your child for where she is in her development.</li> <li>• Challenge your child with new and interesting experiences to encourage curiosity and a desire to learn more.</li> <li>• Through encouragement ensure your child knows you believe in her.</li> </ul>
<b>4 years</b>	<p>Children are learning to feel true empathy for others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk about respecting the feelings of others.</li> <li>• Model what it looks like to show respect for other people and their belongings.</li> <li>• Expect the best from your child.</li> </ul>
	<p>Children start to develop strong opinions and desires. They know what they like and dislike and can state their wants and needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask your child’s opinions and respect what she says. Encourage your child to tell you what he is feeling. Talk about real life situations and discuss ways of dealing with them</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for your child to socialize with other children</li> </ul>

## Resources

### Websites:

- Canadian Self-Regulation Initiative: [selfregulation.ca](http://selfregulation.ca)
- Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology: [csep.ca](http://csep.ca)
- Child and Nature Alliance of Canada: [childnature.ca](http://childnature.ca)
- The F.O.R.C.E Society for Kids’ Mental Health: [forcesocietyforkidsmentalhealth.com](http://forcesocietyforkidsmentalhealth.com)
- Gordon Neufeld Institute: [neufeldinstitute.com](http://neufeldinstitute.com)
- Healthy Families BC: [healthyfamiliesbc.ca](http://healthyfamiliesbc.ca)
- Healthy Schools BC: [healthyschoolsbc.ca](http://healthyschoolsbc.ca)
- Kelty Mental Health: [keltymentalhealth.ca](http://keltymentalhealth.ca)
- StrongStart Program (0-5 years): [sd23.bc.ca/ProgramsServices/earlylearning/strongstart](http://sd23.bc.ca/ProgramsServices/earlylearning/strongstart)
- [caringforkids.cps.ca](http://caringforkids.cps.ca)

### Books:

- Tiffany Strelitz Haber & Kristie Edmunds - *The Monster Who Lost His Mean* (2012)
- Paul Tough - *How Children Succeed* (2013)

### Community Resources:

- Okanagan Boys and Girls Clubs  
[boysandgirlsclubs.ca](http://boysandgirlsclubs.ca)  
250-762-3914  
[info@boysandgirlsclubs.ca](mailto:info@boysandgirlsclubs.ca)
- YMCA Okanagan  
[ymcaokanagan.ca](http://ymcaokanagan.ca)  
– contact the child and youth program staff: 250-491-9622

## Cultural Awareness and Aboriginal Health

It is important to recognize and honour Aboriginal cultural differences in order to foster a sense of belonging, pride and well-being amongst Aboriginal children and youth. Aboriginal families can make connections to culture, language, and traditions, by linking with any of the following programs and services:

- **Westbank First Nation Community Services** 1900 Quail Lane, West Kelowna 250-768-0227
- **Ki'Low'Na Friendship Society** 442 Leon Avenue, Kelowna 250-763-4905
- **Metis Community Services Society of BC** 2949 Pandosy Street, Kelowna 250-868-0351
- **BC Aboriginal Child Care Society** <http://www.acc-society.bc.ca>

*All organizations listed welcome Aboriginal families, children, and youth from any background.*

### Did You Know?

Meal times are REAL times, and more powerful than you can imagine. They give you a chance to role model many behaviours for your preschooler in a pleasant atmosphere: conversations, new words, skills with cutlery, etiquette, exploring new flavours, and learning family traditions. But most importantly, mealtimes provide a predictable, secure framework for the day that your preschooler counts on to feel safe and connected.

Brought to you by the Central Okanagan Local Action Team as part of the Child and Youth Mental Health and Substance Use (CYMHSU) Collaborative funded in partnership by Doctors of BC and the BC government.

Concerned about your  
child's mental health?  
Contact Child and  
Youth Mental Health  
Services:

**(250) 861-7301**

For the full range of  
community services,  
supports and events,  
see Kelowna Community  
Resources:

**[www.kcr.ca](http://www.kcr.ca)**