

Caring for Your Child's Mental Health

Tips for Parents



While kids are very resilient, they are not unbreakable. If they see or hear too much that frightens them, their world feels unsafe, and they become insecure. In some cases, children who have faced traumatic situations in their lives, such as being exposed to divorce, violence, loss of someone they love or a similar situation, are severely impacted and experience problems that won't go away on their own. These could include depression, anxiety, challenges at school and the possibility of substance abuse.

Positive mental health is critical to a child's healthy development. Study after study has shown that children with mental health challenges who are receiving appropriate treatment are more successful in their schools, homes and communities. With a family's support and the right treatment, children have a much greater chance of living a healthier life.

What to Look for:

- Is your child having trouble eating regularly or sleeping?
- Does your child act out or have difficulty regulating his or her mood?
- Is your child skipping school?
- Does your child want to be left alone or start crying for no reason?
- Is your child withdrawn from your family or his or her friends?
- Is your child getting into trouble at school?

What to Do:

- Talk with your child. Help him or her understand that the feelings he or she has need to be addressed. Show him or her your support.
- Look for a care provider who speaks the language you prefer and who makes you, your child and your family feel comfortable.
- Look for help nearby. Ask your child's teacher or school principal. Many mental health services agencies partner with public elementary, middle and high schools to provide therapists on-site.
- Don't feel like you have to face this situation alone. Ask about treatment programs where your family can be involved.
- Work with your child to set at least one goal for treatment. That will help him or her be more involved in the process. Offer your child praise when he or she sticks to this goal.
- Don't be a roadblock for your child. Make sure he or she attends appointments.
- Ask questions.
- Don't blame yourself for your child's challenges. No one is judging you or your family. We all face many different situations in our lives that can lead to challenges even though they are not our fault.



For more information, visit avivacenter.org/consejos or call 213-637-5000, ext. 3769.



Aviva Family and Children's Services

Aviva Family and Children's Services (Aviva), a nonprofit social services organization, believes that *every* child and *every* family in our Los Angeles community deserves the chance for a brighter future. We provide compassionate support, therapeutic services and guidance to at-risk children and families.

From our modest beginnings in 1915, Aviva has grown exponentially, and now serves more than 6,500 children, youth and families each year. We help families and children (ages birth to 21), most of whom come from homes well below the federal poverty level.

Children are very resilient, but they are not unbreakable. No matter their age, children can be deeply hurt when they have been exposed to a traumatic situation, such as violence, divorce, loss of a loved one or similar circumstance. When children see and hear too much that is frightening, their world feels unsafe and insecure. As a result, they sometimes become depressed or suffer from anxiety or challenges at school and at home. The best thing you can do is help your child get treatment.

Many people face challenges and struggles in their life; you and your family are not alone. It's okay to ask for help. With more than half the families we serve of Latino descent, Aviva is uniquely qualified to help. We provide confidential, culturally sensitive and in-language services to help you keep your family united.

SERVICES

WRAPAROUND SERVICES empower families to take the lead in their own treatment. These services help address critical behavioral problems and helping stabilize the home environment so the family can remain together. A team of specially trained staff works intensively with the child and family to create a goal-oriented plan of care, a family safety and crisis plan. One team member is the Parent Partner who can relate directly to a family's struggles since his or her family was once in crisis, too.



COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES meet the needs of children and families where they are most comfortable. Our team of therapists and case managers create a collaborative approach between the client, the family and the professional staff. Specific programs include support at 22 LAUSD schools; Out-Patient Community Mental Health Services, Therapeutic Behavior Services, Juvenile Hall and the Juvenile Justice



Program, and Gang Intervention and Prevention Programs.

Therapeutic Behavior Services assists youth and families to cope with challenging behaviors and mental health issues.

Gang Intervention and Prevention Programs are designed to empower youth to improve their academic performance, school attendance and increase their school involvement as they develop responsible and competent behavior.

FOSTER FAMILY AND ADOPTION SERVICES is a licensed agency that provides trained, caring families for children (ages birth to 18) who are among the most vulnerable and neglected in Los Angeles County. We firmly believe that family is the foundation of a child's emotional well-being and that every child needs and deserves the love and security of a nurturing family. Aviva is among the select agencies that are licensed by Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services.



RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT SERVICES provide a 24-hour, therapeutic residential treatment center for abused and neglected teenagers. Located in Hollywood, this group foster home for up to 36 teens provides a safe, supportive and structured environment to address the teens' emotional, behavioral, social and educational needs.

WHO WE ARE

Aviva is **250 staff members** strong. In 2014, we conducted **90,000+ hours of therapeutic sessions**.

All of Aviva's mental health and social service programs are nationally accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA), an international, independent, nonprofit, human service accrediting organization.

For vulnerable children and families, Aviva is an unwavering beacon of hope.

CONTACT US

For more information, visit avivacenter.org/consejos or call 213-637-5000, ext. 3769.